



That they may teach the young women ...

To Christian Young Ladies

What should the relationship between a young lady and a young man be like?

What are the boundaries, and what can they talk about? Can they talk about emotional, personal, or spiritual things and questions; or should they stick to surface topics like the weather or social observations?

These questions were asked by a friend, which inspired me to share some things that God has graciously taught me in my own life.

I cannot answer these questions inside and out, but I will share what I have learned over the years. I pray that what I share will inspire and stir young ladies on to higher ground.

In relation to young men, in my own life I have experienced both extremes:

- Being extremely quiet, shy, and fearful, so much so that I could hardly get a word out if a young man did speak to me.
- Thinking I was simply having wonderful emotional freedom in relating with young men, so much so that I became indiscreet.

You probably have struggled in one of these two areas, depending on what your personality is like. I'll share more on these two extremes a little later.

I thank God for delivering me from both extremes, and that I am now free through Jesus' precious blood! I'm not saying that I'm perfect, but that I have been able to find victory in this area. Satan still likes to throw temptations, and sometimes I fall, but my Shepherd quickly helps me get back up.

One of the things I discovered was that the only way I could relate with a young man properly was to first be free emotionally. This meant a continual laying down of my

emotions toward young men, and dying to self. It is natural to be attracted to young men; God made us that way. But, in these years of waiting, it is needful to lay these desires and emotions on the "shelf" ... and save our hearts for the man that God is saving for us. Emotional freedom comes when we are in love with Jesus ... loving Him with all our hearts! It is not just relaxing around young men, but resting in Christ with our guard on.

I have discovered that *it is totally possible*, through the power of the Holy Spirit, *to be free* in this area of relating with young men; as long as I desire it with all my heart, and desire God's will to be done in my life. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other *Ye cannot serve God and mammon (the flesh).*" Mt. 6:24

The question arises then, "Just what should the relationship between a young lady and a young man be like?" One simple way to put it might be like this: A relationship between a young lady and a young man (outside of courtship) should be so "light" that it can scarcely be called a "relationship."

If we as ladies are discreet and shamefaced like God wants us to be, and are keeping our minds and hearts, we will not generally *approach* a young man first with a greeting. A discreet young lady will not be wishing the young men would talk to her. If a young man does speak to her, she will politely respond, but will not intentionally make more conversation to try to keep him as long as she can. Just because a young man may greet us on Sunday morning does not mean he has any special interest in us. We would do well at those times to not be too quick to assume that he has a special interest toward us, when in reality he is just being

respectful and friendly. We do need to be on guard when a young man greets us, because not all the young men in our life are discreet. If *we* are discreet however, we won't need to worry ... the froward won't hang around very long.

There are some exceptions for approaching a young man. Perhaps for a trifle question such as, "Did my little sister just run by?" or "Do you know where (an object) is?" Another exception would be to resolve a conflict between the two of you or to apologize for an error on your part. If we need to ask him a more important question, we can usually use our dad or brother as a channel through which to ask him. The men usually do a better job at figuring things out than we do anyway!

The most important thing is to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us in these areas. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Ro. 8:6

In the day that we live in, there are many available ways to communicate besides speaking to someone in person. Electronics are rampant, and communication is also ... communication that is no longer proper or upright. We have email, chat boxes, Facebook, buzz, texting, and the list goes on. Even though these are available ways to communicate, and some can be very useful, it doesn't mean that these ways are all right. Communicating through electronics should be off limits with any young man (outside of courtship) who is not your brother, even if he seems like a brother to you. This way of communicating can many times lead you into situations or areas of sin where you never intended to go. "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you far more than you want to pay!" "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Ga. 5:16

Another question put forward was what a young man and a young lady *should* talk about.

Generally speaking, it's best to stay with surface subjects. It's good to bring the Lord into a conversation, and maybe briefly of what He has done for us personally, but we should refrain from sharing too deeply of our personal life. I don't mean our family's life, but our *own* life. If the conversation is on the spiritual side, allow the young man to initiate it. As discreet young ladies, we do not want to be the ones to start spiritual conversations. Remember our *life* speaks louder than our words.

Also, asking a young man questions concerning spiritual or personal convictions should be off limits. God's Word speaks to wives telling them that if they have questions at church, they should ask their husbands at home. I apply this

to myself between my Daddy and me. If the wives are to do this, how much more should we as young ladies go to our fathers for answers!

When we start relating with others on things pertaining to personal convictions or opinions, it automatically begins to draw hearts together. When a relationship is started like that with a young man, it usually has to break apart sometime, and then there will be hurting hearts, even if the relationship has not gone very far. We may fool ourselves into thinking it will not be that way for *us*, but that is not according to reality. It simply does not work, even with the godliest young man.

We may think we're very mature, and certainly not silly like some other young people, but the same thing can and does happen ... hearts get hurt. It is because this way is not God's design for bringing a young man and a young lady together.

Maybe by now you're thinking, "But, if I don't ever get to know a young man, how will I know if he might be the one for me?" Surely we can trust God in this! He knows exactly who that special someone is. If it is His will for us to get married, He *will* surely bring the right one to us in *His* time no matter how far out in the boonies we may live. We do not need to find our husband. God already knows where he is. We see just a few pieces of the puzzle, but God looks down from above and sees the big picture. *That one*, when God brings him, is the one we *should* have a relationship with, and that relationship can then be without any of these boundaries we are referring to here.

It is good to be able to get to know a young man's family, without even necessarily talking to him personally. Getting to know each other as families usually gives us a good idea of what he is like, and what his spirit is like. Being together as families is God's way! We must be very careful though, as to what our motives are in beginning relationships in his family. Is our motive pure, or are we thinking in the back of our mind that "maybe if I get to know his sisters or mother ... maybe I'll see if this is the one God has for me"? If this is our motive, we must flee this youthful lust! There exists a great potential for hurt if we are the ones trying to initiate the relationship by "making points" with his mother or sisters.

I am not sharing these principles as inflexible rules, but as guidelines. As I said, I am not perfect in all of this and I am sure there is much that could be added. Wise parents can help so much in this area of relating with young men. Let them speak into your life, asking them questions in this area, and then gladly give them a listening ear and heart!

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If you do not have parents like this in your life, seek out a wise, older sister in your life to share with.

The two extremes

If you are a young lady that struggles a lot with fear, shyness, or self-consciousness, just speaking a few words to a young man may be very difficult for you, and you may even dread it. Each of the things mentioned above—fear, shyness, and self-consciousness—can all be summed up in a three-letter word: sin. God’s word says, “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.” Pr. 29:25 Fear here means: quaking, trembling, (extreme) anxiety, anxious care.

1 John 4:18 says: “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” I have experienced this kind of fear, and it truly is bondage! It can just tie you up in knots. With this fear, it causes us to look at young men as if they are the temptation or the enemy we should avoid. They are not enemies, and we do them wrong when we act in fear towards them. It can cause thoughts to arise in their mind like, “What’s wrong with this girl? Does she like me or what?” We should love and treat them, for the most part, like everyone else.

Self-consciousness and fear of man go hand in hand. We experience this fear when we do not fear the LORD, and are not secure in Him. The root problem is often in our thought life. On what are the majority of our thoughts? Do the following thoughts often stir in our mind: “What will *they* think of me if I do this, or act this way, or wear this? Do *they* think I’m godly? I need to show *them* that I am.” These types of thoughts are focused on self.

How then can we be free from this fear? First, we must confess our sin to our Heavenly Father, and be willing to forsake it. Then, believing, ask His forgiveness, and He will wash us whiter than snow! Also, the verse above says “... perfect love casteth out fear.” We find this perfect love nowhere but in *God Himself*. He *is* love! We must seek Him, and His love with *all* our heart, and He will reveal His true love to us. We will learn to fear *Him*, and trust *Him*. The epistles of John are full of the love of God. Psalms and Proverbs speak much about fearing the Lord and trusting Him. Proverbs 14:26-27 says, “In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.” Fear of man is a snare of death.

We can have strong confidence in our God, and we can rest in the hollow of His hand!

The fear of the LORD is different than the fear of man. The fear of the LORD means: respect, reverence, piety, or awesome thing.

A few key verses on trusting that I have been blessed by as I have meditated on them over and over are:

- “**Trust** in the LORD with all thine heart; and **lean not** unto thine own understanding. In **all thy ways** acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Pr. 3:5-6 In these verses, He first gives us commands, and following these, a promise.



Discretion is a treasure, hold it close!

- As for God, his way is **perfect**: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that **trust** in him.” Ps. 18:30
- “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.” Is. 26:3-4

We must find and place our security in Christ *alone*. We will never find true security and rest anywhere else. So, may we seek the LORD; cry unto Him, and He

will deliver us! It may not all happen at once, but if we turn your eyes on Jesus in every situation, He will so fill us with His abundant grace, that we will be amazed at how well the situation turns out. Let us keep fighting the good fight of faith; laying hold on the promises of God, and He will *never* let us down.

At one point I doubted whether I really could have victory. But I had to first *believe* God’s promises and *obey* Him, and then I got the victory. We *can* walk in victory through His grace! “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” And, “we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” Ro. 8:15,37

On the other hand, if you are a young lady that often struggles with holding your tongue, laughing too loud, trying to get attention (maybe even subconsciously), not guarding your eyes, etc., speaking to a young man may simply be a delight to you. These things are also sin and originate from the same root as fear: *pride*. Self is proud. It thinks that it is right and “has its rights.” Of ourselves, we are no more than filthy rags or worms. Why do we so often think we are something when we are nothing? “For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.” Ga. 6:3

Just like the young lady that struggles with fear, so also must the one that struggles with boldness desire with all her heart to be free from indiscretion, and confess her sin to God and ask His forgiveness ... which He will gladly do!

But first, she must see her sin for what it is. This is an area that is so common to us women: getting out of our place from where God wants us to be. We can be quickly and easily deceived, just like Eve was. This is true especially in our youth, when our passions can be so strong; we don't have much wisdom yet, and Satan is hitting us hard. We must especially be careful in this area of relationships with young men!

We should love discretion and hold it close like a treasure; for it *is* a treasure! It can protect us from so much evil and harm. "Discretion shall preserve (keep or save from injury or destruction; to defend from evil; uphold; sustain) thee, understanding shall keep thee: To deliver thee from the way of the evil man" Pr. 2:11-12. In Webster's 1828 Dictionary, "discreet" means: prudent; wise in avoiding errors or evil, and in selecting the best means to accomplish a purpose; cautious; wary; not rash.

"As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is **without** discretion." Pr. 11:22 I will share a good explanation I heard once on this verse:

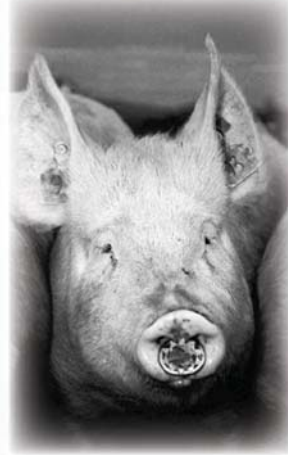
Do you like pigs or fools? If we are indiscreet, we will attract pigs (ungodly or foolish men). And if we keep it up, we will get married to a "pig." And then we will be "stuck in his nose" for as long as we both shall live! And we know what pigs do with their noses, right? ... root around in the mud (sin). Get the picture? We think, "Yuck! I'd never do that!" But let's be careful! It all starts out looking real good. It's amazing sometimes what a young man will do to get a young lady's heart!

On the young lady's part; God forbid that *we* would be the cause of a godly young man's stumbling! "That they (older women and our mothers) may teach the young women to be sober ... To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their husbands (authority), that the word of God be not blasphemed." Ti. 2:4-5

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness, and sobriety ..." 1Ti. 2:9 Shamefacedness means: (through the idea of downcast eyes) bashfulness, uncompromised and passionate modesty. Sobriety means: seriousness; gravity without sadness or melancholy.

Shamefacedness ties right in with discretion. Problems can also be avoided when we learn to have "downcast" eyes. This doesn't mean that we are constantly looking at the floor, but rather that we are guarding our eyes and

not just looking everywhere we please. Frequent eye contact with a young man can start a wrong relationship also, which is merely infatuation! If I am having trouble with knowing where to turn my eyes in certain situations or my eyes simply need a refuge at the moment, I simply drop them to the ground. It brings a relief, and gives me time to regroup my thoughts to Jesus. (Just looking off to the side or at the ceiling doesn't really work!) But dropping our eyes is one way that God has provided for an escape from temptations for us young ladies!



Care to be a jewel in a pig snout?

A young lady that often tries to get attention or flirts is—just like the young lady with fear—not secure in Christ. Did you know that the LORD gives each one of us more attention than any person on earth can? He does! He is very jealous over us. As we seek Christ our Heavenly Bridegroom, and love Him with all our heart, we will find security and rest in Him, for He is our Fortress. He invites us to feast on His love ... it is His banner over us!

Remember and *believe* this: "**Favour is deceitful**, and beauty is vain: but a woman that **fareth the LORD**, she **shall** be praised." Pr. 31:30 God's word stands true *forever*.

I look at these two extremes as two ditches that are on either side of the strait and narrow way. Let's stay in the way that Christ has laid out before us, which is to be emotionally free, and discreet. We can easily be deceived into thinking that we are "just being free," when really we have slipped off into the other ditch of indiscretion. As I write these things, God has spoken to me about some areas in my life where I need to have more discretion! We are all still growing.

I pray that you will be encouraged by what I have shared with you, which is what God and my parents have taught me. I give special thanks to them for their watchfulness over me as their daughter.

I pray that we can all wait upon God; that we may soar like the eagles—and run, not being weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

Take heart, even if it may seem there are not many around you who are following these principles. May we focus on pleasing God, not man; doing all heartily as unto Him, and we will have our reward in due time!

Press on dear sister! Don't give up! "But **seek ye first** the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Mt. 6:33.

"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." Ps. 45:10-11; So. 5:16

Your sister in Christ, A. B.