

Speaking at All Saints Cathedral Nakasero on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at 5pm

Topic: Courtship; God's way 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Introduction: Personal testimony.

Before I define courtship, I want to say something about **dating**. Some people take these two to mean the same thing. The main difference between dating and courtship involves the goals to be reached by spending time with a potential partner. Men and women who choose to date often have no commitment to consider marrying the other person. Maturity and readiness for marriage are not considerations in the decision to date. Instead, couples usually date with the selfish goals of having fun and enjoying romantic attachments.

One author said that **dating** is an unbiblical method crafted by the world with no boundaries or ethics with the following assumed rules and values:

In dating two people can mutually **claim** to be "boyfriend and girlfriend"

- Physically attracted to one another or (attracted to beauty, family, smile, tribe, need to test how girls in that tribe are etc). Motivated by lust.
- have a crush (Irene Kulabako used to show this programme, today we have "be my date" where you get someone and walk away immediately, what they do God knows)
- Dating has no boundaries or ethics.
- It starts off with kissing quickly accelerates to sexual intimacy.
- In most cases it ends a few months later when one feels a crush for someone else. Individual feelings end up devastated and wounded especially because of soul ties that were created from sexual intimacy. It has destroyed countless lives, resulted in unwanted pregnancies and abortions, and even split churches apart (consider sexual scandals in churches), choirs, pastors and girls, our teenagers have adopted the worldview of popular culture (movies have offered the best models). This has led many church youth groups to become places for dating and premarital sex (1 Corinthians 6:9ff). what is said in verse 9-11 all the issues mentioned come due to our lustful behavior, when we feel ourselves with sex in a way not acceptable, we end up in guilt and shame, we cover that up with more sex, drinking, idolatry (because the pagan you sleep with has a certain level of worship, verse 16 etc).

**Courtship, God's way - do you just begin from nowhere - starting point**

Courtship is a clear journey to marriage. **Courtship is undertaken only when both parties are prepared to make a commitment to marriage.** Dating tries to answer the question, *How can I find the one who will make me happy?* Courtship strives to

answer the question, *How can I honor God and discern His direction regarding my life partner?*

Courtship is a relationship between a man and a woman in which they seek to determine if it is God's will for them to marry each other. Under the protection, guidance, and blessing of parents or mentors, the couple concentrates on developing a deep friendship that could lead to marriage, as they discern their readiness for marriage and God's timing for their marriage.

**Courtship is a choice to avoid temptation and experience the blessings of purity.** It is a choice not to emotionally give away your heart, piece by piece, to many others through casual dating relationships and instead to give your whole heart to your life partner. Make a covenant together before God involving strict guidelines for not having physical contact or being alone to allow sexual sin, and walking in the light and having open communication with one another. *A friend of mine recently dropped out of a relationship because the man's family never marry someone they have not thoroughly studied thus they have to stay with her to find out if she can bear children. Quite a number of Christian men also want to test if the girl is truly a virgin, they rape them. One girl who had kept herself as a virgin was raped by the boy friend two weeks to the wedding claiming that the father wanted to be sure about this girl's faithfulness. This man was training to be a priest and the father was a priest.*

It is a choice to wait for God's best. It is a decision to walk by faith, to trust in God, to honor others above yourself. (Proverbs 3:5-7, 1 Cor. 6: 11)

Because each individual, family, and set of circumstances is unique, **each courtship will be unique.** I cannot give very strict guidelines but the overriding factor is that one must glorify God in courtship.

**Courtship happens when the two are adequately prepared for the responsibilities of marriage and family,** and are themselves emotionally healthy and spiritually mature (When two emotionally needy people get together in marriage it is usually a disaster). Cf people who want to get married and find love.

Fellowships, bible studies and planned outings will enable the development of a deep friendship to help discern the will of God before beginning the process of committing to each other more formally.

Courtship involves praying and discerning the will of God to be sure whether or not the other person meets the biblical criteria and qualifications of being a good mate, being able to raise children, and being a family leader. *Max Lucado said "a woman's heart should be so hidden in God that a man has to seek God to find her."*

Attraction should never be only physical. Based on 1 Thessalonians 5:23 we should be attracted to another person in four areas: **physically, emotionally, and intellectually & spiritually (this includes personality)**. That is to say, a person needs to meet the criteria in each of these four areas. For example, it is a huge mistake to marry a person because they are strong spiritually when not attracted to them physically. Or, it is a mistake to marry a person for their personality when their spiritual life is a mess, etc.

### Courtship Stage

- *After discerning the will of God you* should begin a process of spending time together.
- This process at some stage can involve marital counseling conducted by older, successful married couples with spiritual depth and experience in raising strong families.
- People in courtship must be mature and able to handle hard questions eg Would I be willing/able to put God's Will before my own will, even if it means that I must not date this person?
- Would my (potential) relationship be pleasing to God; would it bring Him glory
- Assess the reasons why you want a courting relationship.
- Evaluate if your motives are pure or if they are impure.
- Is courting simply a means of fun or a social adventure? Is it for the purposes of finding a potential spouse? Is it a way to carry out physical desires? Is it a way to have the benefits of marriage without the commitment? Is it a way to be free from loneliness? Is it a way to make someone else jealous? Is it something that is used to help self-esteem issues and merely used as self-therapy? 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16:7 says, "...for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." If your motives are pure and if you are in a good spiritual condition to be in courtship, then ask the Lord to guide you to the next step.