

Dating & Courtship Part II

By Katie Beth Curtis



If dating might not be the right answer, is there an alternative? Yes, there is. There are, in fact, probably more than one. The more familiar one, though, is one which is referred to as "courtship."

Does that sound old-fashioned and Victorian? Many people think so. Courtship may stir up memories of barn-raising and quilting bees, but it has been used in "these modern times." And it is not very much different now than it was. It may be old-fashioned, but it's not out-dated.

Courtship, "in the old days," would usually involve a young man and a young woman, who were also mature adults. This young man would ask the woman's father for permission to "court" the young lady. After receiving permission, he might walk her home from church or other social functions. They might both go to an enjoyable social gathering, or he might come to her home for dinner or tea one day. This whole time, they would get to know each other better, as well as the other's family. Sometime later, the young man might again seek the Father, this time for permission to marry his daughter. The whole process would be a means to get to know each other better, and find out if they are compatible for marriage.

Nowadays, a courtship would be quite similar. Courtship never involves anyone but adults. The only people courting are those ready for marriage. Courting someone is nothing but trying to discover if this person is the one you will marry. A person doesn't begin something so serious until they are prepared to get married. This means that teenagers are not usually involved. When they are teens, they are friends with boys and girls and

communicate as friends. Because courtship is something waited for until adulthood, it helps prevent many problems in dating which are caused by immaturity. Courtship also doesn't lend itself easily to the easy breaking-up of dating. It is a serious commitment.

Courtship is, in all ways, completely different from dating, especially in the way these two people's goals. The two people have been friends for a long time. They both likely know the best and worst of the other, and would like to know the other better. There are no surprisingly awful character traits to be discovered after the wedding. Courting that person might lead to marriage, or, sometimes, to the discovery of that that person's not the right one. It is much better to find that out before the wedding rather than after. And because of the high level of purity maintained, there need not be a lifetime of regret, but rather of joy that all went so well.



This high level of purity is maintained by the way the two interact, a way totally different than dating's way. In courting, the couple doesn't act like a couple as much as simple friends. They spend time together with groups or in their church. They do serving activities together. They do some ministry together. And they also spend a lot of time with their families. Just as in Victorian times, the young man asks the young lady's father for permission to court her, and these two (the father and the young gentleman) maintain a friendship. Many evenings would be spent with one family or the other (if the families live close by), and the couple gets tied into one another's family. This all helps maintain that level of purity. If a person doesn't put himself in tempting situations, it saves him a lot of trouble! This method also helps the two get to know each other, seeing them serving and ministering and also in their own families. The way a girl treats her father and a guy his mother tells a lot about how they will treat their future spouses. As mentioned before, courtship helps people to see the real person without a mask on.

And if after asking the Father's permission, the gentleman asks the lady to marry him, those two will indeed be prepared. From start to finish, courtship's one goal is to prepare for marriage. As with anything, when a marriage has been prepared for, it is more likely to succeed. And a successful marriage doesn't sound old-fashioned and out-dated to me.

