

So You'd Like to Go Out With Someone...

| to teens about teens series

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OK, so you see lots of people "going out with" someone at school. You would like to go out with someone too. How should you go about selecting that person?? When I ask teens (and all too often adults) what they want in a date/serious relationship/or spouse, they say things like, "I want someone who's cute, someone who makes me laugh, someone who likes to do things (like go to an amusement park, go boating, take trips, etc.), someone who wants to make something of himself/herself." As I ask further questions, they often don't come up with much more than that. While these things may be something that you want, you might want to consider more important concerns, things I would call character issues. Character issues can make or break a relationship. Why would that be?

As a counselor, I also deal a lot with people who are having trouble with relationships. What kinds of things cause difficulties in relationships? The basics are:

- lack of honesty
- lack of kindness
- lack of faithfulness
- goals of materialism as opposed to making a priority of relationships
- lack of understanding on how to build a good relationship
- lack of long-term goals and values in life.

I talk to a lot of people who have only a vague idea how they got into their unhappy relationship. When I ask them how they selected their date/fiancé/spouse, I often get a vague, puzzled look, and something like, "Oh, they were in my class" or "I met them at work", etc. That might be fine, but I would challenge you as teens (adults, you too), to **think deeply about what kind of person you would like to select.** Yes, I know, teens, maybe you are just trying to see who will go out with you. That doesn't necessarily mean that the person you have in mind is good for you. Your interests, goals, family background, and values may be very different. Try being more active in selecting someone. **Think about their character first, not last.** It can be hard enough to develop a good relationship with someone, even if they are honest, kind, faithful, and have a high priority on relationships, long-term goals, and values. I would encourage you not to make it even more difficult.

Relationships in a person's life are extremely important. I frequently see people struggling to be a responsible parent while trying to cope with a partner who is not supportive and helpful, and in fact, may be downright dishonest or unfaithful. While relationships never come with a guarantee, we can use wisdom and prayer, and seek God's guidance as we are selecting a person with whom we might consider spending our life.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. ~Prov. 3:5-6 NIV



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