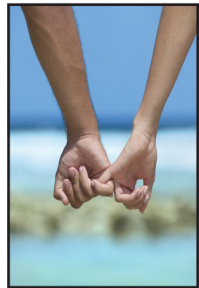


“OK, SO WHAT CAN WE DO??”

First things first: Examine what is stirring in you. Are you craving contact with another person? Know that *the desire to be in relationships is not bad* (since we’re made in God’s image, we’re *made to love*!) but we should not use others to fill us up. The reality is, **only God can do that.**



If you are asking “*how far is too far?*” you may have good intentions—but a better question is “*how can I really love this person?*”

God is *the standard for Love* (see back panel) and we are made to love like Him—not to settle for less or to use each other. Know that “**rules**” are meant to uphold **real love** and the dignity of every person involved!

If you see people as a means to your own end, you will treat them that way. **Purity in action flows from purity of heart and thought.** Aim to act as God made us to be from the very beginning: *very good.*

The draw toward **physical and emotional expressions of love** will very quickly get stronger when you *really connect* with someone. It’s good to **acknowledge that fact** and not just push the feelings down—but it’s also *not OK* to simply **indulge**. There is a **balance** to be found.

Rather than being stuck in the two extremes, you can *re-focus*: **pray**, **think** and **be creative**!

- ◆ **Thank God** for the **good gifts** of the other person, your bodies, your desire to love, and your **ability to choose**!
- ◆ **Ask God** to show you how to take all that energy and direct it toward **loving like HE loves**.
- ◆ **Examine** what you have learned about relationships from family, culture, media, etc... it may feel overwhelming but ask God to **untwist any lies**.
- ◆ **Contemplate who, why & how** you are choosing to love! Let God guide your heart and *don’t brush off internal warnings*; pray about them and talk them out!

Commit to speaking the Truth with your body!

A sincere embrace or kiss speaks a language: it should bless the other with a message of love and commitment. Real love doesn’t push boundaries that warm you up for sexual intercourse. In Marriage, the body-soul union of spouses is a renewal of their vows.

Definitions to think about:

◆ **Friendships** are good and needed. Don’t confuse the healthy, close, **mutual admiration** of friendship with sexual attraction. Don’t let it get flirty, **just be you**.

◆ **‘Dating’** has classically meant a guy asking a variety of ladies out in order to get to know them, while keeping the idea of Marriage in mind. This same intent can be accomplished by hanging out in small groups at school, work, church, etc. **One-on-one time** (going out on dates) should be **fun** and **low-key**, but don’t get into the ‘friends with benefits’ or ‘hook up’ mentality.

◆ **‘Courtship’** is a foreign word to most. Our culture calls exclusive relationships ‘dating’ but usually gives little thought to Marriage. A good mindset is to not be wooed into a **more serious** relationship unless you have already been friends for a while and he or she is the type of person you think **you could marry**.

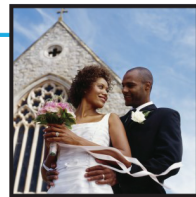
Courtship is where conversation and knowledge about the other & yourself *go deeper and deeper*. Spending a lot of **time around family and friends** will help you gain perspective about the other person as you start to pray and talk about Marriage.

◆ **Engagement** declares the intent to marry *but it’s not just about planning the reception*. Go on a Marriage preparation retreat *before* you set the wedding date! **Get specific** in conversations about **daily life expectations, finances and family**. Don’t let **fertility** be a mystery; take an NFP (Natural Family Planning) class so you truly know what’s going on. This time of **waiting for sexual union** will reveal the variety of ways you can **deepen your love** (see inside).

Public vows of Marriage

are meant to protect the intimate body-soul bond of love between **one man** and **one woman** so that they and their children have a **permanent** place to grow in love **together**! If one of these intentions is missing (to bond permanently or openness to procreating children), the **true meaning of Marriage** is not being upheld. Prior to the vows when a couple declares ‘*for better or worse until death do us part*’, each says ‘*I do*’ to the following:

- ◆ Do you come here **freely** and without coercion?
- ◆ Are you prepared to love and honor each other **for as long as you both shall live**?
- ◆ Will you **accept children** lovingly from God?



Love

...looking for a lifetime guarantee?

Start by keeping
your definitions straight.

LOVE is:

- ◆ A **choice** to make a gift of yourself to another person.
- ◆ To want & work toward the **best** for someone else, even when it is difficult. It goes *beyond emotion*.
- ◆ A **participation in God’s love**...*the real thing* is:
 - **FREE**: not forced or enslaved to urges.
 - **TOTAL/FULL**: not conditional. In Marriage, it is not partial or holding back any part of a person.
 - **FAITHFUL**: steadfast; never abandons. In Marriage, vows are permanent, only broken by death.
 - **FRUITFUL**: physically &/or spiritually life-giving.
- ◆ **Shown in different ways to different people!**
Various ways of giving and receiving love are appropriate between spouses, family members, friends, strangers in need, etc. Though many of us are in this habit, it is **not** an accurate word to use toward food, animals or objects.

LUST is:

- ◆ Not seeing the other as a person but as an **object**.
- ◆ Sexual desire that **distorts God’s love**. *Sexual desire* itself is *not* the sin - it is a *gift from God* that points to a *good* desire for love - but it can easily be twisted!
- ◆ **Using** (in thought or in action) **someone** (body or soul) for your own benefit. (FYI, Marriage isn’t an outlet for lust!)
- ◆ Can be a convincing **counterfeit** of real love.

Into the Deep

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Jen Messing

101 WAYS

to build up

REAL

LOVE

& show

AFFECTION



Let’s be honest.

Media isn’t the best place to get ideas about how to show physical affection or how relationships should start and progress.

If you want **real love**, you have to build a **real friendship**. That means not just looking for physical pleasure or emotional comfort.

If you are interested in defending your relationship against *using* each other, “**how far is too far?**” isn’t really the question to ask.

These ideas are a solid place to start or deepen a relationship. Get beyond what the culture tells you is normal—take time to *actually* get to know yourself and each other **for who you are** and see if you enjoy each other’s company!



ONE MORE SOUL

BRAINSTORM...

Not all these ideas will be your thing & that's okay. This is just a launching point—the ideas will run out only as soon as your imagination gives up. Be yourself! If you are truly friends, simple things will be fun.

surf or sail ■ go fishing ■ figure out a puzzle ■ **swing** at a playground ■ *get up early to see the sunrise* ■ *take an interest* ■ **a funny card** ■ *examine ways you can improve your character* ■ **PRAY** ■ **PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER** ■ pray *together* ■ **SEEK** answers to your **QUESTIONS** about the faith ■ sit up talking at a 24-hour restaurant ■ help each other do chores ■ people-watch at the mall ■ share an order of **hot wings** ■ play a board game ■ *volunteer* at a nursing home or children's shelter ■ make **popcorn** on the stove ■ **best friends** ■ *figure out lyrics to songs on the radio* ■ have a picnic ■ *write poems* ■ go for a scenic bike ride ■ ponder life ■ *blow* meals at a homeless shelter ■ **go bowling** ■ say 'hello' and video highlights from your day and give it to the other ■ *means to love a person so you can say it and mean it* ■ **BE** the moon ■ wander through an **art museum** ■ walk a trail in the woods ■ *leave handwritten notes in places where the other will find them* ■ create a photo album for the other ■ **SMILE** ■ go swing dancing ■ **MEET THE PARENTS** ■ *play games with younger siblings* ■ make up a **superhero** together ■ *make sacrifices for the other* ■ listen to talks on the Theology of the Body ■ **have important conversations in person or by letters rather than through electronics** ■ go horseback riding ■ learn how to ski or snowboard ■ don't be afraid to **sing** ■ learn a musical instrument ■ go to the library ■ paint something together ■ **go out for a play or live music** ■ watch airplanes take off at the airport ■ send a care package ■ **BE FULLY PRESENT TO EACH OTHER BY TURNING DISTRACTIONS OFF** ■ *notice what matters to the other* ■ *wash your cars on a hot day* ■ go ice skating at an outdoor rink ■ build a fire and roast marshmallows ■ *fly a kite* ■ tour the **tallest** building in the city ■ tour a farm ■ rent canoes or kayaks ■ go to the gym and work out ■ **play frisbee** ■ plan a service trip with a group of friends ■ **BE THERE WHEN A FRIEND IS NEEDED** ■ show emotions ■ **commit to a time of adoring the Lord together** ■ attend Church together ■ give and receive hugs ■ *give affectionate kisses on the face* ■ **be respectful** ■ go sightseeing ■ have your picture taken together in fun places ■ go to a **science** or **history** museum ■ watch life at a state park ■ *pay attention to little things* ■ teach each other about something that fascinates you ■ **come up with harmless practical jokes** ■ *laugh* ■ share goals with each other ■ *be faithful* ■ **Study Christ's teachings** ■ **WORK ON INTEGRATING YOUR HEAD AND HEART** ■ *look up into the branches of a huge tree on a windy day* ■



Laugh together ■ *talk about your likes & dislikes* ■ **LISTEN TO EACH OTHER** ■ *make a mix of favorite music* ■ share a malt ■ go to a sporting event ■ **watch old movies** ■ play cards ■ visit the zoo ■ **read a newspaper & talk about it** ■ skip rocks at a pond ■ *watch the sunset* ■ hot chocolate ■ **play in the snow** ■ *learn to dance the waltz* meal together ■ **take a walk** ■ wander around a college campus ■ **and look at maps** ■ tell the other what you like about them ■ **be**



hang out at a coffee shop ■ drink ■ go grocery shopping & cook a ■ *dream up travel destinations* ■ **honest** ■ study together ■ learn to in the interests of the other ■ **send**



read a book to each other ■ **LOOK EACH OTHER IN THE EYES** ■ hold hands ■ **be** ■ build sandcastles ■ **look at the stars** ■ *watch a river rush over the rocks* ■ **write letters** ■ bubbles ■ **HANG OUT WITH EACH OTHER'S FRIENDS** ■ visit your grandparents ■ help serve smile at everyone you walk by ■ **run in the rain** ■ throw a party together ■ record audio or explore foreign cuisines ■ bake cookies (and share them!) ■ *think and pray about what it* ■ **TRUSTWORTHY** ■ sit on a dock and put your feet in the water ■ *watch waves crash* ■ **admire**

be okay with relaxed silence ■ give a thoughtful gift ■ read about the Five Love (and apology!) Languages ■ study the Temperaments ■ **laugh at yourself** ■ **be merciful**: we are all quirky & messy ■ honor each other as **unrepeatable** persons worthy of LOVE ■ aim for true freedom ■ *commit to saying* Marriage vows before making a gift of your body to another ■ regularly seek God's mercy & strength in the **Sacraments** ■ **FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS: MAKE A TOTAL GIFT OF YOURSELF** ■ commit to saying 'yes' to God and make heaven your **ultimate aim**.



your
ideas:

Note: staring at screens of any sort doesn't really count toward getting to know each other!

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Do not take all this lightly... the fun times, deep talks and even innocent kisses create a bond with the other person—do you mean it?

your
ideas: