

Contents

Part 1: Understanding my feelings	1
Part 2: Important qualities for a young man to cultivate	11
Part 3: Important qualities for a young woman to cultivate	27
Part 4: Finding God's will	45

Part 1

Understanding my feelings

There be three things which are too wonderful for me,
yea, four which I know not:
The way of an eagle in the air;
the way of a serpent upon a rock;
the way of a ship in the midst of the sea;
and the way of a man with a maid.

Proverbs 30:18, 19

The interaction of a young man and a young woman stirs in us a sense of wonder or amazement, according to the above proverb. As with a ship sailing on the sea, forces are at work, unseen, but certainly felt. God has set up laws and principles that we must honor. When sailors understand the forces of the sea and honor the laws and principles of sailing, they can avoid shipwreck, even in storms. Likewise, in developing a relationship with a young person of the opposite sex, if we understand the forces operating in us, and if we honor God's laws and principles, we can avoid many of the heartaches caused by improper relationships.

Moving into the teen years, young men and young women begin having feelings for each other that they have not had before. This is part of normal physical and emotional development. The strength and health of these feelings depend a lot on what kinds of experiences and interactions young people

Looking at Myself Before Loving Someone Else

have, and also, on the choices they make.

Physical changes include growth, sexual development, and voice changes. Spiritual changes result in the young man and young woman becoming aware of their sinful nature and receiving Christ into their hearts. Resisting the call of God leaves us spiritually unequipped to meet the challenges of life. Yielding to immoral thoughts and actions can lead to bondage from which some people never recover. The normal sexual urges and romantic feelings that a growing person encounters can become domineering masters when unchecked by the indwelling Spirit of God.

In this section we'll explore the normal feelings of attraction between young men and young women. Guided by the principles of God's Word, you can understand these feelings, keep them in proper perspective, and more wisely consider the matter of a life companion.

Let's begin with exploring the roots of these feelings of attraction between the sexes.

Man was designed to feel incomplete without a woman in his life. When Adam saw Eve for the first time, he saw her as "just what he needed to complete his life." God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). God designed the woman to be a "help meet" for Adam—that is, to be a support for him, exactly suited to his needs. Adam looked at Eve and immediately recognized God's purpose in creating her. He then predicted, "Therefore [for this reason] shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

Enlarging on man's need for a woman, we can say man needs:

- a. Someone for whom he can demonstrate his manhood (leaving his own home).

Understanding my feelings

- b. Someone who will trust him and depend upon him.
- c. Someone who will look up to him and believe in him.
- d. Someone who will open herself to him and receive his love.
- e. Someone who will stand by him faithfully.

The coming of sin seriously affected the man-woman relationship. What looks good on the outside is not always what one finds on the inside. This is, no doubt, one reason God commanded Adam and Eve to wear clothes. Both men and women need to respond to qualities deeper than their physical attractions. Even so, people often focus on visible attractiveness and ignore the real person who resides within.

A woman tends to attract men by her physical appearance—her face, her figure, her hair. When a man sees a woman who looks good to him, he has a hard time believing she might be a bad apple inside. A man, on the other hand, tends to attract women by his physical strength. When a woman meets a strong, handsome man who treats her with special interest, she has a hard time believing his interest may be perverse or that his strength would ever be used for anything other than to protect and provide for her.

For you to do

1. Write the first clause of Proverbs 20:29. _____

2. Read Judges 14:1-3. Write the phrase that describes Samson's reason for wanting this woman for his wife. _____

Looking at Myself Before Loving Someone Else

3. A physically beautiful woman with a bad character is a deceptive combination (but too common in our world). What is this combination compared to in Proverbs 11:22?

4. What in a woman will really please a man according to Proverbs 31:10, 11? _____

5. According to Ecclesiastes 7:28, how rare is a faithful man?

The woman was designed with a deep desire for a man in her life. To Eve, God said, "And thy desire shall be to thy husband" (Genesis 3:16). In other words, "You will long to have a husband." A woman has a God-given yearning for a man. She may have parents she loves and appreciates. She may have girlfriends. She may have close girlfriends. But in her heart she wants a man.

Many times this longing is unclear and subconscious. Specifically, what a woman wants in a man includes:

- a. Someone with whom she can have a deep, meaningful relationship.
- b. Someone who will love her exclusively.
- c. Someone who will be strong and on whom she can depend.
- d. Someone who will provide for her.
- e. Someone who will protect her.

By God's design, both the man and the woman are equally human. Both can function as individuals. And yet, God's

design is for the man and the woman to live in a close relationship of mutual love and commitment to each other, to be two halves of a full circle.

For you to do

1. Read Genesis 1:26-31. According to v. 27, God made both male and female "in his own _____."
2. What responsibilities did God give to mankind? _____

3. When God was done with His work on the sixth day, how did He describe it? _____
4. In Genesis 2:24, what word describes the relationship of a man to his parents when he wants to marry a wife?

5. What word describes his new relationship to his wife?

6. Read Song of Solomon 8:6, 7 and fill in the blanks:
 - a. Set me as a seal upon thine _____ .
 - b. Love is strong as _____ .
 - c. _____ is as cruel as the grave.
 - d. Many waters cannot quench _____ .
 - e. Neither can the floods _____ it.