

# dating relationships

## introduction

Today's devotional is about dating relationships and how they grow. Have someone read Ephesians 4:25-32.

## message

As you heard the Bible being read, you heard several commands about relationships.

- Put off falsehood.
- Speak truthfully.
- Don't give the devil a foothold.
- Don't stay angry at someone overnight.
- Don't steal.
- Don't speak negatively, but rather encourage.
- Get rid of bitterness.
- Be kind and compassionate.

Can we do all these things? Sure. We can work on each area as circumstances present themselves in our lives. You see, relationships take time. It is only out of relationships that we can have trust. It is only out of trust that we can begin to know someone. To help explain how relationships develop, let's look at several levels of relationships.

1. The first level is a casual friendship where you might have occasional contact with a person.
2. The second level is a shared friendship where you share common interests with someone. In this level, you feel comfortable asking direct questions about a person's life. You might hear yourself saying, "We're getting to know each other better." Most junior high and high school relationships reach this level and sometimes go no further.
3. The third level is mutual friendship. You like him/her. He/she likes you. You do things together. Your families know each other. You establish trust, not only with one another, but also among your parents. This level is significant because this is when the talk of engagement surfaces. It is a special and sacred time that you should not just give to anyone.
4. The fourth level is intimate friendship. This is a commitment to someone else where you are sharing your entire self with each other. This level is the marriage level, a commitment for a lifetime.

Remember that relationships take time. If you don't rush things, you will find yourself making wise decisions about your future. A lot of young people try to reach stages three and four too quickly; most of these relationships do not last.

## salvation appeal

The most important relationship in life is the relationship that you can have with Jesus Christ. Do you have a relationship with Him?

## challenge

A father once told his daughter that she should not date anyone consistently unless she considered that person to be a candidate for a future husband. What do you think? The father wondered why waste time with relationships that will never go anywhere? You can though, have a lot of shared friendships (level two). How are your relationships with the opposite sex? Are they shared friendships? Or are the relationships getting out of control? Take time to choose prayerfully the kind of relationships you want to have. Then, follow through with your decision. It could affect you the rest of your life.

