



“Man cannot live without love.” JPII

Today the youth are faced with many questions, we live in a world that is very fast-paced and often frightening in its intensity. This means that we, as Catholic youth, have to open our hearts to what God is trying to tell us, and seek the wisdom of those who have already traveled through the situations we now have to deal with. The questions and answers that we will present in the next few issues of the Michael Journal are to help you to understand the teachings of the Catholic Church on relationships. God bless!

Q. Where can I find a good guy? All the boys at school are interested in only one thing.

A. All women deserve a man who has one thing on his mind – doing God’s will. Wait for a guy whose intention is to love you purely and lead you to God. Do not settle for less. You may be thinking, “Yeah, right. Where am I going to find a guy like that? I’ll be in a nursing home by the time he shows up.”

Put the matter in God’s hands. Take this time to give yourself unreservedly to the Lord to build up His kingdom. Let Him worry about building up yours. Too often people are so concerned with finding Mr. or Miss Right that they miss the opportunity to serve God in their singleness. Your job is to give your singleness to Christ. Keep your eyes on Him instead of on potential future spouses.

I firmly believe that the strongest marriages are those in which both the man and the woman, prior to marriage, embraced the gift of singleness. Often, we never accept this gift because we are waiting for the gift of marriage, or exhausting ourselves maintaining passing relationships. Paul said, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content” (*Phil. 4:11*). If a person does not learn to be content now, then when she is married, she may wish she were still single. After all, marriage does not change you internally; you are still the same person.

Besides, if a woman is happy and content in her present situation, she is more attractive. In fact, the ideal wife spoken of in the Bible “laughs at the time to come” (*Prov. 31:25*). She anticipates the future with joy, trusting in the goodness of God. Before we can be happily married, we need to learn the art of being happily single. That way, our happiness is not dependent upon outside events, but upon an inner joy. In the words of Therese of Lisieux, “The happier they are to be as He wills, the more perfect they are.”¹ I once asked a Missionary of Charity if she was happy in the city where she had been assigned, thousands of miles from home. She replied, “Anywhere. Wherever Jesus wants me to be, that is where I’m happy.” In the same way, learn to find your joy by trusting in God. After marriage, you might never again have the time to serve God without restrictions.

The best husband and father will be a guy who is single-hearted for God. So be two of a kind. If you want a man of God, become a godly woman. After all, men of virtue look for women of virtue. Imagine all of the characteristics that you look for in a spouse – that he be faithful, holy, respectful, loving, innocent, and so on – and ask yourself, “Judging by the way I live, do I deserve a guy like this?” Everyone makes mistakes but everyone is capable of choosing to live a virtuous life.

As you grow in virtue, this will have a tremendous impact on men. Many women become discouraged because of the kind of guys they meet at school. But the character of the men that a woman attracts largely rests in her hands. One woman said, “He will be as much of a gentleman as she requires.”² The fact that the male desires to please females is a basic one, and a woman who sets high standards will attract young men willing to meet them. If a young man wishes to enjoy a girl’s presence, he will not be

afraid to be a gentleman. If a woman says that this is unrealistic, she will continue to be frustrated and settle for less. If only young women realized their power to help boys become men!

Set the standard high. Look for a guy who takes the initiative to set wholesome guidelines for the relationship. Imagine if all the young women in a high school or college decided to do this. Sure, many of them might not have dates the next weekend, but it would send a clear message to the boys that girls are serious about being loved. Guys would soon be inspired to become worthy of a woman.

In the meantime, pray for your future spouse and for discernment in your vocation. I once read about a fifteen-year-old girl who felt she should pray for her future husband one random December night. When she met him some time later, she found out that he was in a battle as she prayed, and nearly all of his fellow soldiers were killed, while his life was spared.³ God hears our prayers.

So be at peace, and know that your heart’s desires are God’s concern. The God who shaped the universe is infinitely concerned with the small things. One day in Calcutta, a man who had a sick daughter came to Mother Teresa. She did not have the specific medicine that the child needed, since it had to be brought in from outside India. As they were speaking, a man came with a basket of medicine and right on top was the exact one the child needed. Mother said, “If it had been inside, I would not have seen it. If he had come before, I would not have seen it. But just at that time, out of the millions and millions of children in the world, God in His tenderness was concerned with this little child of the slums of Calcutta enough to send, just at that time, that amount of medicine to save that child.”⁴ So, know that your future is in good hands.

1. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul* (Rockford, Illinois: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1997), 2.

2. Elliot, *Passion and Purity*, 145

3. Dannah Gresh, *And the Bride Wore White* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 70.

4. Anthony Stern, M.D., ed., *Everything Starts from Prayer* (Ashland, Oregon: White Cloud Press, 1998), 130.

Q. How do you know if a guy loves you or wants to use you?

A. Step one is to only commit to a guy if you’ve had a long friendship with him, your family likes him, and you can see yourself marrying him. Also, practice the principles of courtship. (*We will publish these principles in the next issue of MICHAEL*).

Secondly, do NOT pay attention to his words. His actions are what matters. I’ve seen relationships where the guy cheated on the girl, and as soon as he got caught, his first words were, “Baby, it’s not what you think. I love you.” Thankfully, the girl wasn’t convinced, and she dumped him.

I think that girls easily get swept away by a guy’s flattering words because the media tends to make women feel constantly imperfect. Therefore, the “I love you baby, you’re so beautiful, you’re the only one for me,” language really sweeps away some girls.

But this is where a girl must have wisdom. No matter what he says, don’t give him sexual stuff. If a guy pressures you to give him your body, then he doesn’t love you. Period.



Although this will weed out a lot of immature guys, only time will reveal a man’s intentions. One man said, “If I sensed there was a moral dilemma in her mind, I would play any role necessary to reach the point where sex became inevitable.”¹ There are many good guys out there but there are also plenty of predators who will tell a girl whatever she wants to hear. Therefore, a girl needs to proceed slowly, develop the skill of listening to her heart, and have the courage to follow it. Otherwise, a young woman may be left feeling as this fifteen-year-old did: “I felt strange, and in a sense, used. It was like we were both caring for the same person – him. I felt left out of it.”²

1. McDowell, *Why Wait?*, 110.

2. Joyce L. Vedral, *Boysfriends: Getting Them, Keeping Them, Living Without Them* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990). As quoted by www.lovematters.com/teentalk.htm

Q. Is there such a thing as being too young to marry?

A. Back in the time of Jesus, girls would marry at the onset of puberty. Back in the 1940’s people would marry in their teens, and plenty of them are still together.

But nowadays, I think there’s a lot of wisdom in waiting quite a bit longer. Dr. Laura (a popular radio personality and counselor) says that she has found that the healthiest marriages seem to come from couples whose ages add up to at least 50. In other words, he is 26 and she is 24, etc. This seems to be backed up by research, as you can see in the divorce stats.

If I look back to when I was 19, I was in love with a great Catholic girl who I was just starting to see. We would go on to date for two more years, and even look at wedding rings together. Now, she’s married to a friend of mine, and I’m happily married to someone she never knew. A year after we broke up, I met and started courting a young woman. After a year and a half, she and I started talking to her parents about our hopes for marriage. Her folks agreed that we had a good relationship, but they wanted her to finish all her college goals (2 more years) before marriage was in the picture. I was frustrated, but now have come to see their wisdom. Now, she is also married to a friend of mine!

At the time of these relationships, I really didn’t want to wait another day (or year) to jump into marriage. But I firmly believe that love is patient, and time is on our side. If it is real love, and it is God’s will for two people to be together, then taking more preparation time for marriage will only strengthen the union. We tend to be pretty impatient and a bit afraid that we’ll miss out on love. But I think if we follow the advice of parents, and take the matter often to prayer, God will guide us.

I should also add that research shows that the place in the brain where reasoning and judgment take place is not fully developed until a person reaches his or her early twenties.¹ When it comes to choosing a spouse, you want your full brain capacity to be at work! Besides, just take a look at how your tastes have changed in who you liked over the past five years. The same change is likely to occur over the next five years as you continue to grow, mature, and discover your identity. Take your time.

1. Jay N. Giedd, “Structural Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Adolescent Brain,” *Adolescent Brain Development: Vulnerabilities and Opportunities* 1021 (June 2004): 77–85; Medical Institute for Sexual Health, “Maturation of the Teen Brain,” *Integrated Sexual Health Today* (Spring 2005): 2–9.

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