

# Are We Right for Each Other?"

**These 10 questions can help you gauge the godly potential of your relationship.**

by Mary Veeneman and Aaron Henderson

The minister sat down and looked at us inquiringly. We gazed giddily back at him, hands clasped tightly under the table. We had been dating for three months. It wasn't too early for a little "pre-premarital counseling," was it? We were smitten, and we knew it.

When hopes are high and hormones are pulsing, it's easy for logic and sound decision making to get lost in all the excitement. We were brimming with questions. Are we right for each other? How can we think critically and objectively without our higher brain functions being in control? How do we know if this is a healthy relationship?

Answers weren't coming fast enough. But one thing was clear: Our dating had become serious, and we needed to ask the right questions to get the right answers.

What are the right questions? They're the ones with clear-cut answers that don't change, regardless of how "in love" you are. With the help of our parents, pastors, books and married friends, we discovered what questions to ask to gauge the godly potential of our relationship. We hope they will prove useful tools for you too.



## **1. Are you best friends or becoming best friends?**

Okay, great, you love this person. But would you enjoy being around each other if you were only friends? Couples that thrive are made up of great friends who make the decision daily to delight in and serve one another, knowing each other's faults as well as strengths. Spending the rest of your life with someone means you're going to be stuck with each other even when you are moody or stressed. You're going to have to choose to love one another even at those moments when you don't really like each other. After all, marriage isn't a long date—it's a lifelong friendship (Proverbs 17:17; Song of Solomon 5:16).

## **2. What do you talk about?**

Your dialogue reflects the state of your relationship. Aside from rhapsodizing about how great you are together and texting each other sweet nothings, what topics do you both find interesting? Are most of your conversations superficial, or do you often discuss the deeper aspects of life? Remember that after decades of togetherness, all you may have left to do is talk (Philippians 4:8; Ephesians 4:29).

## **3. Does the other person have a few good friends or at least one very close friend?**

As the saying goes, "Show me a man's friends, and I will show you the man." If the person can't maintain friendships, what makes you think he or she can maintain a relationship? If your love interest is a long-term loner, ask yourself why. There may be a sensible reason, such as frequent moves or other circumstances that prevent lasting friendships. However, getting to know the other person's friends is always a wise move (Proverbs 13:20; 22:11).

#### **4. How does this person treat others?**

How the person treats you isn't necessarily evidence of good character. Pay attention to how he or she treats family members and others. Do people want to be around him or her? How does the person treat his or her parents? These are all good indicators of how he or she will eventually treat you (Philippians 2:3-4; Romans 12:10).

#### **5. How do you deal with conflict?**

If you want to make yourself miserable, marry someone you're constantly fighting with. While arguments are inevitable, how the two of you deal with conflict can make or break an otherwise good relationship. You're going to need to find a constructive way of handling strife—one that works for you. If you want to learn how you deal with conflict, find some simple projects to work on together (like writing a magazine article!). You may be surprised at how soon the opportunity to deal constructively with conflict presents itself (Proverbs 19:11; James 1:19).

#### **6. Do you share the same values?**

Two people who don't share the same values will inevitably grow apart over time. Putting God first in your relationship ensures that you are working toward the same goals. Begin with the end in mind, and you are more likely to follow the same path to get there. Understanding and living by God's laws and His plan must be the foundation of a lasting partnership (Amos 3:3; 2 Corinthians 6:14-15).

#### **7. Is the person happy?**

If you weren't happy *before* you got together, you probably aren't going to be happy *while* you're together in the long run. Everyone is ecstatic at the beginning of a relationship, but people eventually return to their typical level of happiness or gloom after the hormones subside. Inaccurate or poor self-image problems are a big roadblock to healthy, happy relationships. Misery is contagious. If the person you're dating was unhappy before meeting you, don't expect him or her to be joy and sunshine after the chemical high wears off (Proverbs 15:13, 15).

#### **8. What do people whom you respect think of your relationship?**

This person is absolutely spectacular, right? Why don't you compare notes with people who aren't infatuated with him or her? Close friends know you, in some ways, better than you know yourself. An objective observer is able to see potential problems you may have overlooked or dismissed as trivial. These people aren't out to ruin your life. Take their opinions seriously (Proverbs 15:22; 12:15).

#### **9. Are you making good use of the time you spend together?**

You should be doing more than just absorbing oxygen together. Hollow distractions can easily supplant good communication. Healthy relationships are constantly maturing because time is being spent learning more about one another and encouraging each other. If a relationship isn't growing, it is regressing. Spending time wisely building each other up will keep things fresh and exciting (Romans 14:19; Hebrews 3:13).

#### **10. What fruits has your relationship yielded?**

In the end, you can evaluate a relationship by what it produces. What character traits have you gained because of your friendship with this person? What impact has your relationship had on others? A healthy relationship involves two people who both challenge and sharpen each other, positively affecting themselves as well as the people with whom they come into contact (Proverbs 27:17; Hebrews 10:24).

Whether that first twitterpated "counseling" session was a premature pipe dream or prudent forethought, it sent us down the right path. After nearly three years of questions, there's only one more to ask. We're pretty sure we're going to like the answer.

God tells us that if we commit everything that we do to Him, our plans will succeed (Proverbs 16:3). So, seek out wise counsel and God's will. Ask the right questions, and you, too, will find the right answers (Luke 11:9). *VT*

#### About the Author

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#### **Comments or Questions**

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