

Courtship or Mate Selection Etiquette

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1 Introduction

This article delves into the rich symbolism and profound insights of courtship practices, drawing parallels between ancient biblical narratives and modern Christian customs. Using the story of Ruth and Boaz as a foundational example, we explore the divine orchestration of relationships and the role of faith and providence in guiding romantic encounters. Further, we contrast these age-old customs with contemporary experiences within a conservative Anabaptist community, illustrating how timeless principles of respect, kindness, and mutual regard continue to shape modern courtship. Through a blend of scriptural references and scientific insights into human emotions and relationships, this article offers a comprehensive understanding of the spiritual and emotional dimensions of forming deep, meaningful connections.

In the ancient land of Israel, Ruth worked in the fields of Boaz, a wealthy relative of her mother-in-law, Naomi. Ruth 2:3 states, "So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek." This encounter was divinely orchestrated, reflecting God's guidance.

Modern Example: In a conservative Anabaptist community, Anna volunteered to help with the church's communal garden. She often saw David, a dedicated member, working there. One day, she was assigned to his team, leading to their first real conversation. This initial meeting, much like the chance encounter between Ruth and Boaz, was orchestrated by divine providence, and the beginning of a potential bond. As Jesus said, "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20).

3 Part II: The Introduction

Boaz noticed Ruth and approached her, saying, "My daughter, listen to me. Stay here with the women who work for me." (Ruth 2:8). Ruth responded with gratitude, "Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?" (Ruth 2:10). This exchange is paralleled in modern science by the release of oxytocin and dopamine during acts of kindness, building trust and connection. Oxytocin, known as the "bonding hormone," helps create a sense of closeness, while dopamine, the "reward hormone," enhances feelings of pleasure and motivation. This aligns with Jesus's teaching, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34).

Modern Example: David noticed Anna's dedication and approached her, saying, "You've been doing a wonderful job here. Please continue working with our group." Anna replied, "Thank you for welcoming me. It's a blessing to be here." Acts of kindness trigger the release of oxytocin, fostering trust, and dopamine, creating a sense of joy and reward. This reflects the command to love and support each other as one body in Christ.

4 Part III: The Connection

Boaz invited Ruth to share a meal, saying, “Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar” (Ruth 2:14). Boaz’s protective nature and Ruth’s integrity laid the foundation for a deeper connection. Touch, such as brushing fingers during a meal, increases oxytocin levels, strengthening emotional bonds. Additionally, sharing a meal can boost serotonin, a neurotransmitter that contributes to feelings of well-being and happiness. This echoes the spiritual unity we find in Christ, as Paul writes, “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call” (Ephesians 4:4).

Modern Example: During a communal meal after church service, David invited Anna to sit with him and his family. As they shared the meal, their hands occasionally brushed while passing dishes, a small but significant touch that helped release oxytocin, deepening their connection. The act of sharing a meal also increased serotonin levels, promoting a sense of well-being and contentment. This reflects the spiritual nourishment we receive when we gather in fellowship.

5 Part IV: The Proposal

Naomi advised Ruth to seek Boaz’s protection through marriage. Ruth approached him at the threshing floor and said, “Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family” (Ruth 3:9). Boaz agreed, symbolizing protection and commitment. This act evokes a deep sense of security, reinforcing bonds formed through oxytocin and serotonin, both of which are linked to feelings of safety and trust. This mirrors Christ’s love and commitment to the Church, as He laid down His life for us.

Modern Example: Encouraged by her parents, Anna expressed her feelings to David, saying, “I feel at peace and valued when we are together. Would you consider courting with the intention of marriage?” David, appreciating her sincerity and bravery, agreed, symbolizing his commitment

and protection. This moment strengthened their bond, with oxytocin and serotonin reinforcing their sense of security and mutual trust. This reflects the unity and commitment we are called to in Christ, as He said, “Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate” (Matthew 19:6).

6 Part V: The Commitment

Boaz addressed legal matters to marry Ruth, declaring, “I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife” (Ruth 4:9-10). Their union, blessed by God, became the foundation for future generations, including King David. This story illustrates how integrity and divine guidance form true bonds, validated by modern science’s understanding of oxytocin, serotonin, and dopamine in forming lasting, meaningful relationships.

Modern Example: David and Anna formalized their relationship by getting engaged, with the blessing of their families and church community. They announced their commitment during a church service, celebrating their bond. This reflects the covenant of marriage and the spiritual unity we have in Christ, as Paul writes, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25).

7 Inherited Intelligence and Emotional Stability

The Bible speaks to the importance of choosing a spouse wisely. Proverbs 31:10 says, “A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.” In line with this, modern science highlights the significance of certain traits in mate selection. Intelligence, for example, is maternally inherited. Choosing a partner with strong cognitive abilities can influence the intellectual potential of future generations.

Head size and hip size are often indicators of both cognitive abilities and reproductive health. A woman with wider hips and a larger head may suggest a higher potential for bearing intelligent offspring. Additionally, women with sewing skills and strong communication abilities often indicate a higher level of intelligence and resourcefulness, traits highly valued in

a spouse. Proverbs 31:13 mentions, "She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands," highlighting the value of skill and diligence.

Furthermore, women with a little extra body fat have an increased chance of conceiving a male heir, while thinner women tend to have a higher likelihood of conceiving a female heir. This is supported by the Proverbs 31 woman, who is described as strong and capable in her household duties, indicating both physical and mental strength.

In addition to these traits, emotional maturity is crucial in mate selection. Emotional health is inherited from the father, making it important for women to seek partners who demonstrate emotional stability and maturity. As Ephesians 5:28-29 says, "In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church."

Praying and Meditating for Emotional Stability

Young men, it is essential to understand that women naturally seek emotionally stable men. Emotional maturity and stability are attractive traits because they ensure a secure and supportive environment for raising a family, and the emotional affect of the offspring. Here are practical steps to develop and maintain emotional stability:

1. **Prayer and Meditation:** Regular prayer and meditation are powerful tools for managing emotions. As Philippians 4:6-7 advises, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Start your day with a quiet time of prayer, asking God for guidance and strength.
2. **Reflection on Scripture:** Reflecting on Bible verses can provide comfort and wisdom. Meditate on passages that speak about patience, kindness, and self-control. For example, Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruits of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is

love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

3. **Journaling:** Keep a journal to write down your thoughts and feelings. This practice can help you process emotions and reflect on your spiritual journey. It is a form of self-care that aligns with 1 Peter 5:7, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."
4. **Community Support:** Engage with your church community. Sharing your experiences and seeking advice from trusted mentors can provide support and encouragement. Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."
5. **Healthy Lifestyle:** Maintain a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise, a balanced diet, and adequate rest. Physical well-being significantly impacts emotional health. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 reminds us, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."

Modern Example:

Imagine John, a young man in the Anabaptist community, aspiring to find a life partner. He commits to daily prayer and meditation, seeking God's guidance in all aspects of his life. Through prayer, he finds peace and strength to manage his emotions. John also engages in regular Bible study, reflecting on verses about love and self-control. He keeps a journal, where he writes down his thoughts and prayers, helping him process his feelings and grow spiritually.

John participates actively in his church community, seeking advice and support from elders and mentors. He also maintains a healthy lifestyle, understanding that physical well-being supports emotional health. As he grows in emotional stability, John becomes more attractive to women in his community, who are naturally drawn to his maturity and reliability.

By following these steps, young men can develop the emotional stability that is attractive to potential spouses and essential for

a healthy, God-centered relationship. Remember, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24), embodying one mind, one spirit, and one flesh in Christ.

Conclusion

In both ancient and modern examples, the principles of kindness, respect, and integrity in relationships are timeless. The science of oxytocin, serotonin, and dopamine highlights how physical touch, acts of kindness, and shared experiences strengthen bonds and create lasting connections. These insights validate the wisdom found in Biblical teachings, showing how God's design for human relationships is both profound and purposeful.

As it is written in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight

in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." These words remind us that love, grounded in God's truth, is the foundation of all meaningful relationships.

Jesus Christ Himself emphasized the importance of love and unity. He said, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12). As we strive to form relationships based on love and mutual respect, we embody the teachings of Christ and reflect His love in our lives. Remember, "And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (Colossians 3:14).

May this guide serve as a reminder of the beauty of courtship as designed by God, supported by the wisdom of both scripture and science. As you embark on this journey, trust in God's guidance, embrace kindness, and let your relationships be a testament to His love. Remember, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24), embodying one mind, one spirit, and one flesh in Christ (Matt 19:6).