

**Lesson 87**

**TEXT** 1 Corinthians 3:15-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:3-5

**SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES** Deuteronomy 7:2,3; Matthew 19:3-12

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to explain that interpersonal relationships with members of the opposite sex can only be blessed by God as they stay within the guidelines of God’s Word.

**KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER** Can two walk together, except they be agreed? — Amos 3:3

**KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH** But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints. — Ephesians 5:3

**ANSWER TITLE:** **Dear Diary**  
**SEARCH TITLE:** **Relationships**

**REFERENCE INFORMATION**

**1 Corinthians:** This letter was written by Paul to the church in Corinth. It is believed to have been written in the spring of A.D. 57, near the end of a three-year ministry in Ephesus. The bearer of this letter may have been Timothy (1 Corinthians 16:10) or one of the three mentioned in 1 Corinthians 16:17. The city of Corinth was located on the Mediterranean, and enjoyed a trade monopoly that made it a wealthy trading center. It was destroyed in the second century B.C., and was rebuilt under Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. In Paul’s day it was a melting pot of Romans, Greeks, and Jews from various parts of the Mediterranean world. This changing population, and abundant luxuries, created moral conditions that were corrupt even by pagan standards.

**2 Corinthians:** Paul wrote this letter a few months after

the first one. It was written from Macedonia in the fall of A.D. 57. Tension and strife in the Corinth church were the probable causes for this letter.

**Yoke:** A well-known means of coupling oxen with a wooden bar or frame fitted or laid across the necks of two work animals. The yoke was fastened by thongs which passed around their necks. A “yoke of oxen” means two animals fastened together with a yoke.

**Concord:** Harmony, agreement (2 Corinthians 6:15).

**Belial:** Worthlessness, recklessness, lawlessness. The term, as used in 2 Corinthians 6:15, is generally understood as an appellative of Satan, the personification of all that was bad.

**YOUR OPENER**

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# Relationships

**TEXT:** 1 Corinthians 3:15-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:3-5

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**KEY VERSE:** But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints. — Ephesians 5:3

## RESPONSES

1. Help your students realize that this involves spending time together. Discuss what the result would be if they find that they are not in agreement.

2. Your students should conclude that “yoked” may not mean only marriage or engagement but also any close relationship. Help the students realize that it is vital to consider the spirituality of close friends. You should conclude with the fact that we are often known by the company we keep. Ask your students if their close friends are affecting their reputation as a Christian or are they ruining the possibility of having a good reputation.

3. Allow time for students to discuss their suggestions. Does that person act in a manner pleasing to God? Does he/she honor God in dress, in speech, in action, in service? Lead your students to conclude that they should base their decision on whether or not the person is a fruit-bearing Christian.

4. Help the group realize that if they are Christians, their first responsibility is to behave in a manner that would honor Christ. Their relationships with others must then be based on the fact that Christ is first. They must be willing to give up the development of a friendship which would hamper their spiritual growth.

Relationships with those of the opposite sex can only be blessed by God if the parties involved stay within the guidelines of God’s Word. The outcome of such a relationship may be marriage. In the beginning God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone,” and He created Eve to be the companion of Adam. If it is ultimately a marriage blessed by God that we wish, the steps we take to get that mate must also be blessed by God and in accordance with His will. With this in mind, it would be well to lay out a formula that would lead us from a place of unattachment to a union God can bless.

1. What is implied by the words “walk together” in Amos 3:3?

2. What is the meaning or implication of the word *yoked* in 2 Corinthians 6:14? In what way is this verse in harmony with the Scripture in Amos?

3. What should be the criterion used for making a decision as to whom we will date?

4. In Ephesians 4:1, Paul exhorts us to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” Tell briefly what you think that means.

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## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

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5. To guard against getting out of God's will in a dating relationship, what is the man's responsibility? What is the woman's?

6. What happens to the relationship of a dating couple when they each draw closer to the Lord?

7. In the context of a dating couple, what might it mean to "defile the temple of God"? See 1 Corinthians 3:16,17.

8. In light of the above Scripture, what allowance is given for the current trend toward having a sexual relationship outside of marriage?

9. Dangerous stress is added to a relationship if self-love or self-interest enters in, and one presses for an immediate marriage. If we are within God's will in the development of a relationship, occasionally God may signal, "Wait." What might be some of the indicators that point to the fact that postponing a marriage would be wise?

10. What is the key requirement for the development of any relationship as given in Matthew 6:33?

5. Discussion should be guided to bring out that the man should provide the spiritual leadership, and that the woman is responsible for being a spiritual example and challenge to him.

6. Your students' discussion of this question should bring out that if it is not the Lord's will for this relationship to continue, the Lord can reveal this as they draw closer to Him. If it is the Lord's will, a deepening fellowship will be created between the two as they develop their spiritual responsibilities and opportunities.

7. Using the dictionary definition of *defile*, "to violate the chastity of, to corrupt or pollute," your students will see that a dating couple have a responsibility to maintain purity of their physical bodies. Use 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 as a supporting Scripture.

8. None. There is no allowance made for such an arrangement. Refer to the text in Ephesians 5:3-5 as a support for this statement.

9. After allowing time for your students to contribute their ideas, focus in on the thought that one of the first signs might be a feeling that "we can't wait." Refer to Genesis 29:20. Some other indicators might be: financial instability, parental disapproval, too young, no defined goals or purposes, lack of spiritual stability.

10. The key requirement is to seek God's righteousness first. He will then add to their lives that which is best for them. This will include answers to the questions of whether they should marry and whom they should marry.

## YOUR WRAP-UP

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## SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Explain the key verse.

In what way does the key verse relate to the ANSWER story characters, Gina and Keith?

What would you do in Gina's situation?

How do you think the story would have ended if the girl had not taken her stand for Christ?

What do you think it means to be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers"? Name one example you can think of. Name a few problems that could arise by being unequally yoked together.

Should you develop a relationship with someone who does not like the same people, amusements, sports, and God as you do? Why or why not?

What is respect? How/why do you get respect?

Why is it important to take a stand against sin or for God right from the start and not be wishy-washy?

## THINGS TO DO

Show your students a small pebble. The pebble is innocent enough, but if you put it into your shoe and walk on it, you have a problem. Just so, it is OK to like a person who is not a Christian (if you are one), but what if you fall in love and marry a person of a different belief? Then your small problem becomes a very big problem. Give each of your students a pebble to help remind him he does not want to be unequally yoked together.

To help illustrate 2 Corinthians 6:14, show your students several pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, with only two pieces that fit together. Tell your class that to be joined together means to fit perfectly just as those two puzzle pieces do. If the two puzzle pieces won't fit together, that means they aren't supposed to be together. In the same sense,

a Christian is not meant to marry a non-Christian. Marriage may be a long way off for your students, but they can start today praying that God will help them make the right choice so they won't be "unequally yoked together."

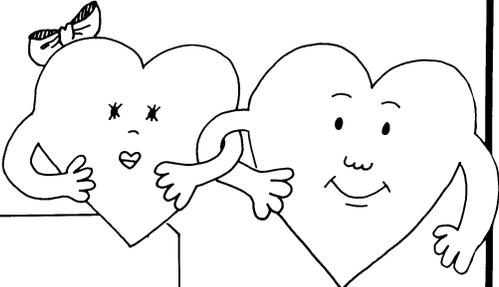
Make a chalkboard list of what you would look for in a person to create a lasting relationship.

Take a jar of oil and water to class to illustrate how sinners and Christians naturally will separate.

## Answers for ANSWER

### Right Relationships

Unscramble the words to find God's answer to Kim's question. Try to complete the verse before you look it up in your Bible.



BE YE NOT  
EB EY TON

UNEQUALLY YOKED  
YLAULQEUN DOKEY

TOGETHER WITH  
ROTTEGHE WHIT

UNBELIEVERS:  
SUNBELIEVER

FOR WHAT FELLOWSHIP  
ROF HATW LLSIHOFEPW

HATH RIGHTEOUSNESS  
HAHT NETHISESSOURG

WITH UNRIGHTEOUSNESS?  
TIWH NETHUISESNSOURG

II Corinthians 6:14

Eddie asked me for a date. He's really a nice guy but he's not a Christian. What would Jesus say?

