

So you're dating.

Start the Lesson by reading the CCYM Recommended Scripture.

1 Timothy 4:12

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

PART 1 - It Feels Like Love — But Is It?

Sometimes it feels impossible to find someone who's right for you — and who thinks *you're* right for him or her! So when it happens, you're usually so psyched that you don't even mind when your little brother finishes all the ice cream or your English teacher chooses the one day when you didn't do your reading to give you a pop quiz.

It's totally normal to look at the world through rose-colored glasses in the early stages of a relationship. But for some people, those rose-colored glasses turn into blinders that keep them from seeing that a relationship isn't as healthy as it should be.

Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever been in love or has a friend that said they were in love?
- Describe in three or less words – what it felt like to be 'in love' or what their friend said it felt like to be 'in love'.

Part 2 - What Makes a Healthy Relationship?

Hopefully, you and your significant other are treating each other well. Not sure if that's the case? Take a step back from the dizzying sensation of being swept off your feet and think about whether your relationship has these seven qualities:

Mutual respect.

- Does he or she get how cool you are and why? (Watch out if the answer to the first part is yes but only because you're acting like someone you're not!) The key is that your BF or GF is into you for who you are — for your great sense of humor, your love of reality TV, etc.

Group Question: Why would it be important for you to be yourself and not try to be someone else?

- Does your partner listen when you say you're not comfortable doing something and then back off right away? Respect in a relationship means that each person values who the other is and understands — and would never challenge — the other person's boundaries.

Group Question: How would you respond to your BF or GF asking you to go somewhere (or doing something) you are not comfortable with? Practice answering this question. (I am not comfortable...instead of you are terrible for asking me to...)

Trust.

- You're talking with a guy from French class and your boyfriend walks by. Does he completely lose his cool or keep walking because he knows you'd never cheat on him?
- It's OK to get a little jealous sometimes — jealousy is a natural emotion. But how a person reacts when feeling jealous is what matters. There's no way you can have a healthy relationship if you don't trust each other.

Group Question: It is natural to feel a little weird when you see your BF or GF talking to someone else. What is the best way to tell them how you feel?

Honesty.

- This one goes hand-in-hand with trust because it's tough to trust someone when one of you isn't being honest.

Group Questions: Have you ever caught your GF (or BF) in a major lie? Like she told you that she had to work on Friday night but it turned out she was at the movies with her friends? The next time she says she has to work, how do you think you will feel?

Support.

- It's not just in bad times that your partner should support you. Some people are great when your whole world is falling apart but can't take being there when things are going right (and vice versa).
- In a healthy relationship, your significant other is there with a shoulder to cry on when you find out your parents are getting divorced **and** to celebrate with you when you get the lead in a play.

Fairness/equality.

- You need to have give-and-take in your relationship, too.
- Things get bad really fast when a relationship turns into a power struggle, with one person fighting to get his or her way all the time.
- It's not like you have to keep a running count and make sure things are exactly even, of course. But you'll know if it isn't a pretty fair balance.

Group Questions: Should you take turns choosing what movie you will see or where you are going?

As a couple, should you hang out with your partner's friends as often as you hang out with yours? Why would this be important?

Separate identities.

- In a healthy relationship, everyone needs to make compromises. But that doesn't mean you should feel like you're losing out on being yourself.
- When you started going out, you both had your own lives (families, friends, interests, hobbies, etc.) and that shouldn't change.
- Neither of you should have to pretend to like something you don't, or give up seeing your friends, or drop out of activities you love.
- You also should feel free to keep developing new talents or interests, making new friends, and moving forward.

Group Question: You were made by God to be a unique individual with passion and interests. Should you give up ALL your interests to be with your BF or GF? Why?

Good communication.

- You've probably heard lots of stuff about how men and women don't seem to speak the same language. We all know how many different meanings the little phrase "no, nothing's wrong" can have, depending on who's saying it!
- But what's important is to ask if you're not sure what he or she means, and speak honestly and openly so that the miscommunication is avoided in the first place.
- Never keep a feeling bottled up because you're afraid it's not what your BF or GF wants to hear or because you worry about sounding silly.
- And if you need some time to think something through before you're ready to talk about it, the right person will give you some space to do that if you ask for it.

Group Questions: Have you ever had a difficult problem and a friend or family member spent time with you discussing it and you solved the problem? How did you feel about that friend or family member?

Why would it be important to communicate to others how you feel?

End the Lesson by reading the CCYM Recommended Scripture.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

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. Love never fails.

VIDEO Youth Talk about Love: <http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/teens-talk-love-vd.html?WT.ac=t-ra>