**Intentional Relationships: Handling Flirtation**

**QUESTION:**

*At my church, there's this guy that I like. It's been two years now, and I really don't know what to do. Everyone around us says that he treats me differently than all the other girls, and it seems that way to me as well. I know that he knows that I like him, and he has for quite a while. I've never spoken to him about it personally, but I have had friends that have bluntly asked him whether he likes me or not. His answer is always the same "I'm not looking to be in a relationship right now." While I completely understand this, as I don't feel like I'm at a point where I need to be dating either, I'm still very confused. I've been in that situation myself, and I just kindly told the person that I didn't like them so I wouldn't be leading them on. I feel like if he had no intentions of ever dating me, he would do the same so I wouldn't have to keep going on and on like this. I don't know what to do with my feelings. He continuously flirts with me; I don't know if he sees me like a little sister or what. I just need some advice on what I should do because I also spend quite a few days a week hanging out with him and some other friends, and it's starting to be too much for me to handle.*

**A:** Thanks for your openness about this situation. The bottom line is that you need to confront him. It sounds like you are on the edge of a “friendationship.” Somewhere between a friendship and a relationship. It sounds like he is attracted to you by his actions but continues not to be responsible for them. It’s not fair or Christ-like to flirt with someone without being honest about your feelings. Remember, the Lord will go with you as you do this.

“*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go*.” Joshua 1:9

Can you be attracted to someone and know you aren’t ready to date them? Sure! But you still need to be mature and responsible for how you come across. I understand how you feel as I have been there in my own life. It’s tormenting. I have had friends say things like, “you are so good together,” “he looks at you and stares,” or “you make a great couple.” I agreed with their statements, but unfortunately, when I did approach my man, he said he didn’t feel the same. So what was my next step?

Because he was unwilling to set the boundaries, I had to do it to guard my heart. I asked him to stop flirting with me. While I loved the attention, it was misleading and hurtful. I did let him know I had feelings for him but would keep my boundaries, as it was not healthy on either end. So while no dating relationship developed between us, the truthful conversation we had helped us grow up.

“*Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone*.” Colossians 4:6

Try to get that alone time to share what you think and feel. Make sure he knows his behavior is misleading not only by what you are experiencing but also by others. If he does say he has feelings for you but is not ready to date, then talk about what that means and how to proceed. Perhaps spending some one-on-one time to start would help you decide the next step. Just because you date doesn’t mean you are getting married. It can simply be a place to see what God has in store as you both trust in Him. Another option is to go into an Intentional Friendship™, where you aren’t quite dating yet, but you are spending consistent time together to figure that out. You give each other permission to ask that hard questions, allowing God to provide you with the next step. So if you do decide you are not going to date, you are clear on where you are and your expectations.  
  
“*Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways*.” Proverbs 4:26

To learn more about “friendationship,” Intentional Friendship™, and dating, order your copy of Intentional Relationships for Singles 12-week Bible study. This study covers topics on why our relationships fail, identity, gender differences, boundaries, conflict, blind spots, friendship (in all our relationships—family, work, church, neighbors, friends) but also intentional friendship, including red, yellow, and green flags, intentional dating and engagement.