

Outside of Marriage: Opposite Gender Interaction

II Samuel 6:20 “Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!”

21 “And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD.”

22 “And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.”

23 “Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.”

This argument between King David and his wife Michal obviously did not start or end well. However, the main thing I want you to see is Michal's original complaint. Michal handled her complaint wrongly, but she did have a legitimate concern over her husband's actions around the opposite gender.

How a spouse interacts with the opposite gender is a big issue that doesn't often get addressed with married couples. Most keep their hurts inside until their complaints blow up into an argument like David and Michal. However, you must make this issue a priority and discuss it with each other calmly. Otherwise there will be grave consequences in your marriage, like we see in verse 23.

Here are some rules to help:

- Never flirt with anyone other than your spouse. Such an intimate interaction is only reserved for the love of your life.

Of charity/love, I Corinthians 13:5 states, “Doth not behave itself unseemly,”

Unseemly is acting in a way that is unbecoming. Unseemly actions normally cause a reaction in others of disgust, cringing, grimacing, or uncomfortableness. **A spouse toying, playing, nudging, and flirting with someone they are not married to is unseemly and unbecoming.**

- However, don't go to the other extreme where your only interaction with the opposite gender is frowns, grunts, and ignoring. :) Learn to shake their hand briefly, smile, and carry on a pleasant conversation.

Romans 12:10 “Be kindly affectioned one to another (**not based on gender**) with brotherly love;”

A spouse's interaction with the opposite gender should always be a kind, loving,

reserved, friendly, sibling affection and interaction.

- As much as possible, keep conversations brief with the opposite gender unless your spouse is around. And even then, allow the majority of the conversation to be between the same gender. **Too often when conversing with others, some women spend most of their time talking directly and looking directly at the husband and vice versa; the men with the wife.** This is not healthy and can lead to a questionable testimony. No matter your reasoning, women need to mostly address wives and men need to mainly address husbands.
- Keep the same rules no matter the age group or extended family member. People often base their rules of interaction on age attraction so if the person is not pretty or too old or too young everything's okay. This is not good. Sin is not limited to age. A young tween may be infatuated with you. Adults have gone to prison for pedophilia and other wrongful interactions with kids. And the aged or extended family members are not exempt considering that one believer in the Corinthian church was living in sin with his "father's wife" (I Cor. 5:1)! Age should not be an exception. Keep the rules simple and scriptural. Limit your fun, playful interaction with the opposite gender.

God has the perfect advice for how to treat the various age groups in your life:

I Timothy 5:1 "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;"

2 "The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, **with all purity.**"

From my father-in-law, I learned a good practice many years ago for addressing the opposite gender. **Address the opposite gender respectfully with Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ma'am, and Sir.** Such terminology shows respect while distancing yourself from getting too comfortable.

- There may be other suggestions you have for each other in your marriage. So, talk your views over lovingly and patiently until **both** of you are completely comfortable with each other's interaction with the opposite gender.

No matter what: make sure your interaction with the opposite gender is completely above board and never questionable.