

## How Far Is too Far?

Over the last few years a number of our teenagers have asked me questions about romance. What does the Bible teach about romantic holding hands, hugging, and kissing between people who are not married? Is it okay to have a rated PG relationship with someone? What about a PG-13 relationship? Rated R?

In 1 Corinthians 7:1 Paul says, "...it is good for a man not to touch a woman."

In context Paul is instructing the church about how married people and unmarried people should physically conduct themselves. Prior to this he tells married men not to visit prostitutes. Then he tells unmarried people not to "touch." Then he tells married people to "stop depriving one another." Let's look closer at what he says to unmarried people.

First, when he says, "it is good," the word translated *good* is used to denote what is *morally good* (DBAG, καλός, 2.d.β). In other words, "it is *morally good* for a man not to touch a woman." Put another way, it is morally bad for a man to touch a woman. When Paul says *good* he is making a moral judgment.

Second, when he says, "for a man," the Greek word [ἀνθρώπῳ] is the Advantage use of the Dative case. In other words, "It is morally good for a man's *advantage* not to touch a woman." Not only is it morally right, it is practically beneficial and advantageous.

Third, when Paul says, "not to touch," the word translated *touch* is used to denote *intimate* touching (DBAG, ἅπτω, 4). It is morally good for a man's advantage not to *intimately* touch a woman." This word is not simply a euphemism for sex, but for any type of intimate, romantic touching; anything you would not do with your sister.

Fourth, the word translated *touch* is also an Indirect Middle Infinitive, which means the subject acts in behalf of himself. "It is morally good for a man's advantage not to intimately touch a woman *for himself*. In view is self-gratification. Wait for marriage. Keep things rated G.