**Relationship Topic** - Hedges - Long & Short Distance… hearwelldone.org

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| **Relationship Topic – Hedges – Long and Short Distance Relationships**  **Hedges** are **principles of faithfulness** in marriage and relationships  whether they are long distance, or you live in the same location.  We strongly encourage young people to only invest in an exclusive relationship with someone you feel God has joined you together with - that He may lead you to marry.   **Only by walking together** will you discover if this person is the one of God's choosing for you.  If He confirms otherwise, the relationship is over.  Investing further time and emotion in any exclusive relationship other than with someone you feel God may be calling you to marry is stealing from your spouse and theirs.  Courtship is **the process of discovering** if this is the person God has for you to marry.  God calls you together in **His timing** not yours because you are **better together, than you are apart**.  He starts this relationship in his perfect time so you can reflect to the world that God’s way of marriage works!   Unless you meet someone as a child, when God draws you together - God typically calls two people to walk together **from this day forward** for the rest of their lives (unless He confirms otherwise).  If you were apart (different locations) when God drew your hearts together, eventually in his perfect timing he will bring you to the same location.  Don’t rush it, let him lead.     But if God called you together when you were in the same location – He will very rarely lead you apart, unless your calling requires it (military, or educationally).  If so, God will confirm it in both of you, bringing you to unity.     Be careful, **if one of you** wants to be apart to pursue “life experiences,” or their own goals and dreams, be sure that God even wants you to walk together.  Someone who chooses **avoidable** separation is **very likely** **not** the person God has for you.  The one God has for you will **never** want to spend one day of life apart, unless God requires it.  They will always want to live life together from this moment forward.  They will always give up other dreams, desires and relationships - to put you as their number one priority, second only to God from the time God brings you together until death do you part.  So before you invest in a long distance relationship:  Is God requiring us to be geographically distant for a season? |

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| If God has **called you together**, He wants to **grow you together** in Him.  If God is requiring separate locations and bringing you to unity, **God’s plan is** to build your relationship EVEN STRONGER during this season.  With God all things are possible.   **The only reason long distance relationships fail** – is **lack of priority**.  LOVE has two Parts - The **“In Love” Feeling**, and the **Conscious Choice to Love**.   The "In Love Feeling" is sparked by sight.  You see your beloved walking down the hall and your heart leaps.  But what if they are far away?  This greatest danger of “out of sight, out of mind” is not God’s plan for you.   In HIS PLAN the distance can actually draw you closer and stronger than if you were together!  CHOOSE to LOVE.              How To Grow Your Love - Long Distance Ways to Grow Together - even when you're apart.  Note: These principles apply equally - if you live in the same location.  #1  Daily Call (See The 3-Day-Challenge) Make this a never-miss commitment.  Do **PiVAT** before dinner - to get God's plan for you for tomorrow. If you do it every day before you eat dinner, you'll never miss this time with God.  Then have your “**Daily Call”** with the love of your life. You can do this before dinner as soon as you finish PiVAT for tomorrow, or you can have your **Daily Call** together the first thing in the morning.  Just get up 15 minutes earlier!   Spend your PRISM Time with God - first thing.  Start with **P**raise the Word, and maybe **I**nsight from the Word - in your Proverbs chapter for today).  Then call each other for your **Daily Call!** Who would you rather start your day with than the one God is drawing your heart to?    **The one God has called you to love** deserves at least that prime time slot.  Share God's plan for your day - so you share life together:  (What you need most from God, His number 1 priority for your day, when He told you to do it, and your Testimony of what he did and revealed yesterday.  Without this – you will be unable to love one another deeply as God has called you to.)   **Praying** at the end of each Daily Call – will grow your love for each other, your ability to walk in the Spirit and your ability to minister to others.  And your marriage friendship and love for each other will **grow deep**!  **Your Daily Call** helps you **share life.** Without it – you live separate lives.  Let God bring a unity where He commands a blessing!  Become each other's best friend.  If you make bedrock commitment to a Daily Call – a 15 min phone call before work sharing PiVAT and PRISM with a friend - your relationship will grow deeper **by the day**.   If you don’t - **mere acquaintances will take the place of** the one God has called you to love.  This should never be! |

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| #2  PRISM, Prayer & Text   Start each day in **PRISM** – (5 Things You Can Do In God’s Word Every Day). It will mature you in Christ, and God will reveal **how to love** each other better.  (This doesn’t have to take an hour, extend it thru the day)  **Pray for each other during the day**!  See Relationship Topics – Prayer, How To Pray For Someone You Love, Scriptural Prayers for Someone You Love, PiVAT Prayer List. Ask God to help you list the specific things they need, from college transition, daily classes, job transition, to emotional and spiritual and physical needs.   **Daily Text** – As soon as you are done with your PRISM this morning send a prayer text. God will fill each day’s prayer text with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, a Word of knowledge, a word of encouragement.  You will know they are thinking of you, praying for you.  This time commitment **will demonstrate love.**  If you love him, if you love her, you will choose to take the time.    #3  Bullet Prayer  **Every Time you Change Activities** (class to class, appointment to appointment etc.)  Take 15 Seconds to pray for each other!  These bullet prayers will constantly keep your love a priority – and will be used powerfully by God.  Ask the Holy Spirit to Help you.  He will pray through you what they need.  Your love will grow.    #4 Demonstrate Hedges  **Repeatedly verbalize your commitment**  Honey, I’m guarding my eyes today **they are for you only**.  “So and so asked for a date but I told him I was already taken,” “So and so was leaning over in front of me, but I turned the other way.”  This will build bonds of trust that are unshakeable; giving the devil zero foothold to destroy your marriage.  Demonstrating Hedges proves to your spouse or potential spouse to be - that they are absolutely the most important person in your life!   #5 Believe The Best  Other than your **Daily Call** - additional calls to talk longer with each other could be shortened due to commitments or interruptions, or "unavailable when expected."  **MAKE YOUR RELATIONSHIP YOUR PRIORITY** – so you eliminate every opportunity for jealousy or doubt to creep in.  But also, **refuse to take offense** if something conflicts.  Give the benefit of the doubt. |

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| Hedges  Hedges are a **brutal uncompromising faithfulness to protect your marriage** - going above and beyond what is necessary in order to leave no foothold for the devil to destroy God’s plan for you.   Hedges are something that applies if you are in a long distance relationship, or a short distance relationship; whether you're married already, or soon to be married, or considering marriage with someone at God's direction.    #1  Only Develop Friendships With The Same Sex - not the opposite sex.  Your ministry will never be with the opposite sex.  When you are married, you will not maintain contact with opposite-sex College or High School friends.  Your spouse will not appreciate it.  Actively developing personal relationships with the opposite sex, is dangerous and truly a waste of time.  Conversations with the opposite sex of a personal nature, (dreams, fears, joys, sorrows) open doors to deeper attachment.   **Do not go past** acquaintance conversation with anyone of the opposite sex.  Honor your marriage vows before and after you take them.  **What you do now,** you will do then.  Note:  **Avoid all physical touch & closeness** with the opposite sex.  Innocent hugs are not innocent – reserve your body only for your spouse, or spouse-to-be - not someone else’s.   #2  Guard Your Eyes  Other than the normal greeting, **avoid every extended eye contact** with someone of the opposite sex.  Eyes are the window to the soul.  Extending a glance no matter how briefly, is intimate and **communicates an invitation** for further connection.  **Squelch any attempt to flirt with you - with complete disinterest**.   You owe all meaningful glances to your spouse or spouse-to-be, alone.  What you do now, you’ll do then.   Many restaurants used to train the “**waitress rule**.”  If a female waitress approaches a table of a couple, she makes first eye contact and 90% of ongoing eye contact with the female, glancing at the male only to acknowledge him, but focusing her attention on the girl.  Otherwise the young lady might get the feeling that she is hitting on her husband, or boyfriend.  That girl will make sure they never come back to that restaurant.  This is not good for business.  Waiters the same way, focus on the man, merely acknowledge the female, or not only might you lose customers, you might get your lights punched out.   Guard your eyes, save meaningful glances for your spouse (or spouse-to-be) alone. |

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| #3  Set Before Your Eyes No Unclean Thing  Videos, YouTube clips, news articles, movies, commercials, every sensual or sexually charged content.  **Do Not Look At It**.  Do not re-send it.  **Refuse to even click the link!**  Those who entertain the lusts of the world cannot receive God’s blessing, they are out of position.  Someone once said, “God cannot bless un-blessable behavior."  Viewing these worldly enticements is not being faithful to your spouse, but it is even more, not being faithful to God.  Let your spouse (or spouse-to-be) know **that you refused to** watch or look at something, or click something today – because you are faithful to God and to them.  Let them know that **they are your one and only** desire.    #4  Keep Your Eyes Straight Ahead  **Job 1:1** - In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job.  This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil."    Later, Job reveals a secret to his faithfulness...  **Job 31:1** - I have made a **covenant with my eyes** not to look lustfully at a woman.”  This was Job’s practice.   **Proverbs 4:25** - Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you.  Godly men and women, intentionally **do not take notice** of the physical attractiveness of the opposite sex (other than their spouse, or spouse to be).   They are **brutally faithful in keeping their eyes straight ahead**.   This is exactly the opposite of the world which indulges in “eye candy.”  **Refusing to look** **at**, or catch the eye of anyone other than your spouse is **God’s Way of guarding your heart, and your marriage**.  Without 100% commitment to purity of the eyes, the devil **will** get a foothold.  Every marital affair in all of human history began with a first glance; allowing yourself to notice the attractiveness of, or engaging in personal conversation with someone other than your spouse, or spouse-to-be.  **Do Not Do It**!   Keep your Eyes Straight Ahead – **Refuse to ‘notice’** the attractiveness of the opposite sex.  This is the Fear of The Lord.  Love God, hate evil.  Love your wife, Love your Husband enough - to save your eyes for them only. |

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| #5  Eliminate Time With Friends Who Hunt  Any friends who are ‘on the hunt’ sabotage and destroy your faithfulness to your spouse (or future spouse) and your faithfulness to God.  **Do not spend time with them**.  You may not be able to hang with the guys anymore because they constantly are gawking at women.  They always want your opinion, “Would you hit that?”  These are the things that consume the mind of the wicked, the worldly, but should never even enter the mind of a man of God.    For girls, “What do you think of that guy?  Do you think he’s cute?  Entertaining possibilities even for your friends, noticing the attractiveness of other males **will sow seeds of discontent into your mind and spirit**.  The grass is not greener on the other side of the fence – it’s dead.  The devil is deceptive, he enslaves many. Those friends will constantly flirt with the boys, and the boys will come, but they will hit on you.  **No man or woman of God immerses themselves in this environment – you cannot be unaffected**; you are stealing from your spouse or future spouse the faithfulness of mind and heart that belongs to them alone.   You cannot spend time with friends who are **focused on** the opposite sex… **you will become like them**.  God cannot bless a ”wayward” wife, or a husband who” strays from his home.”  It will hinder your prayers, it will steal the intimacy God has for your marriage.  **Your choices are building lifelong habits**, **either of faithfulness and purity** (which God will bless more than you can imagine), **or of unfaithfulness and betrayal** – unchecked - they will eventually lead you to forsake the vow to the wife or husband of your youth.  **Refuse to spend any time with hunters**  whether you're married yet or not.  For your marriage, you will either choose a **blessing**, or a **curse**.  The choice is yours.           #6  Are Your Feet In The Right Place?  If your feet are in the right place, your hands never get dirty.  Avoid engaging groups of the opposite sex.  Do you want the attention of the opposite sex?  That's not what a faithful husband or wife desires. It is dishonoring to God and to your spouse or spouse-to-be.  The best way to avoid individuals, opposite sex groups and inappropriate engagements with the opposite sex is **move your feet.**  Joseph avoided even being in the same room with Potiphar’s wife.  When trapped – he ran!   Good counsel. |

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| #7  Share Hedges Success - Look For Opportunities  "Hedges" is not a “Philosophy that you concur with.”**Hedges are a Daily Demonstration of Faithfulness**.  Share **every conscious choice you make** to be faithful to him, or her – at every occurrence, every opportunity for compromise.  Let them know **what you did** to honor hedges.   Whether you're in a long distance relationship, or already married, or courting someone, pursuing God together to discover if this is the one God has for you to marry... let them know that **they are the only one your heart, mind and body desires**.  It will build unshakable trust in each other and great joy, rather than perpetual concern of unfaithfulness – the devil’s trick to erode and destroy a marriage.   What you do now, you will do then.    #8  Never Engage In Conversation With The Opposite Sex Of A Personal Or Intimate Nature  If you are in a relationship - these kinds of conversations are for them alone.  This means sharing any personal feelings (dreams, fears, joys, sorrows), daily struggles, hopes, future plans, etc.  **Opening a window for another person to meet your emotional needs is stealing from your spouse, or spouse-to-be**, it is not forsaking all others.  It doesn’t matter that you haven’t walked down the aisle yet, it is not practicing faithfulness.  These conversations belong to the love of your life alone.  What you do now, you will do then.  If you are married, this is the least you owe to your spouse.  To forsake all others - means reserving personal intimate conversations for them only - not every girl that thinks you're cute and charming, or every guy that is trying to make you feel beautiful, who is really trying to move in on you.    #9  Never Be Alone In A Room, Car, Restaurant, or Enclosed Area With Anyone Of The Opposite Sex.  This not only signals your faithfulness to your spouse, or spouse to be -  it eliminates opportunity for inappropriate conversations or contact, and avoids ANY appearance of evil.  Many will say this is over-reacting.  But would you appreciate if your husband or wife (or potential spouse) set the bar this high?  Absolutely!  They are saying, “I love you enough to protect our marriage - even before we get married. Even if our relationship is long distance, or in the same location. What you do now, you will do then. |

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| #10  Do Not Intentionally Approach Or Engage A Group Of The Opposite Sex.  Intentionally Avoid Them.  If they are a group of women, they are likely “guy-watching.”  If they are a group of guys, they are checking out women.  **Putting yourself as an object of their attention** is not being faithful to your future spouse.  Even your friendliness or kindness will be misunderstood as availability, or interest in further connection.   **If you need the attention or affirmation of the opposite sex** you are **stealing from your spouse** what belongs to them alone – **the privilege of affirming in you – your attractiveness and sexual desirability.**  This not only applies to you and your spouse, or spouse to be, but also whoever you are pursuing exclusive relationship with - that God may lead to marriage.  This privilege belongs only to your spouse or spouse-to-be - not gawking boys, or swooning girls.     #11  Never Go To Lunch With Someone Of The Opposite Sex Without A Third Person Even then only for unavoidable business need, never for social interaction.   That’s ridiculous! How can you avoid that? **Easy, ask someone to join you**.  Individual lunch meetings with the opposite sex focuses your entire attention on someone other than your spouse or spouse to be. That is not forsaking all others. 99% of the time, it is **avoidable** – if that is your commitment.  If it isn’t, you will always have ‘unavoidable occasion’ to have lunch with someone of the opposite sex.  Attraction for women, is often more relationship based rather than sight based. For that reason, women, why put yourself in that position? You can become attracted to another man. It’s not being faithful to your husband or husband to be. Honor them, refuse to be alone with the opposite sex.  For men, why allow for the possibility of another woman to begin to feel deeper affection or interest in you – through time alone with them. Not only is this not being faithful to your wife, you are defrauding the other woman by presenting something you are not going to fulfill. This is not Godly. Why would you ever focus your attention on someone other than your wife or wife to be. No affair started intentionally, it just happens.  For men and women - you can’t help who you are attracted to – so you better eliminate the possibility for attraction to ignite. This is being faithful to your husband, and being faithful to your wife. The prudent see danger and avoid it. But fools keep going and suffer. Set this standard, or you will find it is too late. This is how the devil has destroyed many marriages. Do not give the devil a foothold. Save lunch dates for your spouse alone. |

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| #12  Use The Language Of Commitment  "No thanks, I’m in a relationship"  Or use even stronger unequivocal **language of lifelong commitment**.   "I’m glad you texted me… but (whatever they suggested) I reserve only for… Johnny or Susie – the name of your spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend - and I pray God sends you someday someone as faithful to you as I am to (Johnny).”   #13 Infuse Their Name  Every recurring acquaintance (male or female) **should know** **you’re in a relationship.  It should be obvious**.  April mentions my name frequently.  An attractive former boss, referred to “my Sweetie” or “my Honey” constantly - sending an unmistakable message in the predominantly male work environment that she was not available and not interested.  This one small habit alone, could protect you from the devil’s plans for your divorce.    #14 Standing Together Sometimes you can even be together in the same location in a social setting, and you will get **subtle approaches** from someone of the opposite sex – probing your commitment to the person you are with - in hopes that you will entertain unfaithfulness in glance, thought, word, or physical contact.   **Use your Body Language to Shut Them Down**.   Turn your body toward your spouse, look at them, put your arm around her, put your hand on his arm.  Send unequivocal non-verbal signals.  Make your non-verbal communication unmistakeable:  “**My heart, eyes, mind, body and life are exclusively** for my spouse(or spouse-to-be) not anyone else.  **Nor will I ever be anything but faithful to my spouse alone**.”  If you do this before you are married, you will also do it after.  If you do not do it now, neither will you then.   #15 Finally, If You Ever Choose To Intentionally Engage The Opposite Sex...  (by proximity, glance, physical touch, or word),  The **least you owe** each other is to call first, and tell the truth: “I don't really love you; I lied.  I’m not going to marry you, or I know I took a vow, but I prefer the sexual interest and advances of others - over being faithful to you."  Dear man or woman of God. Whether God has you in a long or short distance relationship – whether you are married, or considering marriage – even if you don’t know for sure who the person is that God has created specifically for you and you for them… **Practice Hedges! Honor your spouse or your future spouse** – be faithful to them today! You will never regret it. |

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