



It's never been a better time to be a single Catholic guy.

Why? Because there are thousands of lovely, faithful young Catholic women waiting for you to step up to the plate and court them!

Yet many Catholic guys are unsure about themselves, uncertain, dithering, wavering, vicissitudening. Stop it! In Christ, with the power of the Holy Spirit, you can change this and face your fears, be courageous, bold, and manly. It's not about being a boor, or having enormous muscles (though it wouldn't hurt to go work out), or swaggering around like you're Tom Cruise after a Scientology retreat. It's about being yourself and living up to who God made you to be.

Consider this blog post your wake up call. My wife and I are writing a book that touches on these issues, but I want to give you the heads-up now so you don't have to wait. Here are some tips on pursuing a woman you are interested in getting to know more.

First, you as the man need to pursue her. Don't be ambivalent or ambiguous. Get the wishy-washy words out of your vocabulary. "Well I was thinking that maybe sometime—if you're free of course and don't have anything better to do—you'd like to meet somewhere, you know, just for fun and stuff..." No! Even if you are self-conscious, don't act that way. The worst thing a woman can say to you is "no." Does that rejection hurt? Sure it does. But if she's not interested in you, beating around the bush and hemming and hawing won't change that. And if you do come across as confident (but not boorish), you could increase your chance of a favorable response. Simply find a good time to ask her if she'd like to have coffee with you. There'll be more on this subject of boldly pursuing the lady in a future chapter.

While you're single, you may as well learn some manly skills, too. I grew up playing sports and only occasionally worked on the car with my dad or fixed something in the house. As such, I learned almost nothing about these valuable skills. I wished I had now! Now's the time for you to learn home and car repair, carpentry, pipe smoking, beer making—whatever, just pick some things and learn how to do them. You won't regret it later, and these abilities are attractive to women.

Manners, dress, and conversation. Regarding manners, learn some. I remember my humiliation when a young woman told me after dinner that she wasn't used to a guy who blew his nose at the table. Ouch. No one told me that was a bad thing to do. Katie almost sent me home packing because of my atrocious wardrobe choices. No joke. More on that story later, but the point here is that, if you have no sense of style or care about how you dress, find a good buddy who knows how to look sharp and get some pointers from him. I had two great Catholic friends who dressed well and kept themselves looking clean-cut with their haircuts and personal style. I was a moron and didn't learn from them. I cut my own hair to save money—don't ask

how it looked, especially in the back—wore cologne sporadically, and bought the cheapest clothes I could find. If the button-up shirt didn't say "wrinkle free," I wasn't buying it, because I couldn't be bothered to iron anything. Now I wished that I had done just a bit more in this area to put my best foot forward.

Your conversation and manners can be exponentially increased from simply reading Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and then watching the five hour BBC miniseries adaptation. The first time I watched it, I thought it was the stupidest thing I had ever seen. Now I realize Austen's genius and have read all her books. The books date back a few hundred years to a time when the culture was still Christian and the men were educated and trained in respectful, virtuous ways. Their vocabulary and precision in speech is worth emulating. If nothing else, you will impress any Catholic woman worth pursuing by the mere mention of the book or movie!

Along these same lines, if you have the gumption, learn to dance! Not the gyrating, techno-music club-hopping kind of "dance," but real dancing: the waltz, the foxtrot, contra-dancing, and so on. These increase your confidence, your hand-eye coordination, and make a big impact on a woman. Most guys can't dance like this, so you are a leg-up on them (pun intended) if you add this to your repertoire. For our wedding, Katie and I took dance lessons and had a choreographed dance routine set to a Frank Sinatra classic. Nice! One of our friends exclaimed as the dance ended: "That was the best wedding dance ever!" Well, in truth I was a little stiff but I twirled and dipped Katie enough that people were impressed.

Guys, I leave you with this: you have strengths and special skills that others don't have. Capitalize on them. Sure, try to shore up your weak areas, but know that you will excel in those ways where you have been given talent and interest. So strive to emphasize those and accentuate them, while minimizing the other areas. We are all a work in progress, and though I portray myself as having learned all these things before marriage, the truth is I'm still a novice at many of them, as my wife can tell you. (In fact, I never learned how to dress well, but I made Katie happy by giving her *carte blanche* to buy my clothes for me and advise me on what I should wear to important gatherings. She's happy to do it, and I'm happy not to have to think about it—a win-win situation if there ever were one!)

So many beautiful, faithful, intelligent Catholic women are waiting for a Catholic man of substance to come along, introduce themselves, and without ambiguity invite them to courtship. Be one of the blessed guys who steps up and answers the call of God to ask them out.