**Week 4-Guarding Our Hearts/Bringing Honor to Christ in Male Female Relationships**

Beyond-Indonesian Cluster DMM Catalyst Teams Recommendations

As guests of the Republic of Indonesia, striving to build relationships of integrity with Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian people, we are obligated to understand and then adjust to the expectations of relationships of these local cultures. Just as Indonesians expect us to avoid the use of our left hand in most social contexts, they would prefer we follow various other standards, which guide relationships among people in this society. Of course, a lot of grace is available to visitors and outsiders like us, but as much as possible we need to understand, respect, and follow the system that describes and regulates appropriate social relationships, as long as these are also honoring to God.

As people who have grown up in a “free” and “liberal” Western society where such “rules” are not only very flexible but also easily disregarded, these expectations can seem restrictive and very limiting. We might wonder why we must give up so much of our personal “freedom” and the ways we want to do things. There are so many adjustments that we make in living in this culture. This is indeed one of the more difficult areas of needed adjustment. It is also an area that requires great humility and an attitude of submission.

Additionally, as followers of Jesus we are urged to live a lifestyle that is honoring to the gospel and above reproach in all areas. Because of this we offer the following set of guidelines for social relationships, particularly those between males and females.

The presence of many Western tourists in this country and the popularity of Western media and entertainment have given Indonesian people the impression that **all** Western people are very loose morally. They assume that boundaries between men and women are non-existent. When we build closer relationships with Indonesians many of these wrong and negative stereotypes of Westerners are slowly de-bunked, but this happens only if we follow a conservative set of guidelines in our relationships.

As with all “guidelines”, we wish to remain open to exceptions, but overall, we have striven to adopt a conservative cultural perspective on relationships between men and women in Indonesia.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

* All team members should strive to live a pure life and one that avoids the appearance of evil.
* Every team member is expected to be in a consistent accountability relationship with a mentor, Strategy Team leader, or other person throughout his/her time in Indonesia. We encourage you to pray about and initiate such a relationship early on during your time in Indonesia.
* All team members need to be informed as to what is appropriate regarding relationships between males and females in various contexts. Cluster Leaders are responsible for passing on this information, as well as the Strategy Team Leader to their respective teammates.

**IN THE HOME**

* Team members should never be alone in a house with an adult member of the opposite sex (other than their spouse). If alone, members of the opposite sex should be greeted at the gate or front door but not allowed into the house. If conversation must take place, this should take place at the gate or on the front porch. Such a visit and conversation should be brief.
* It is best if neighbors can view the comings and goings of guests of the opposite sex. Sneaking around or into the home will be viewed very suspiciously.
* Men are strongly encouraged to take extra precautions regarding domestic helpers. If possible, employ one who is much older or in the case of two younger domestic helpers, avoid being alone with them.
* If there must be meetings with a group of people of the opposite sex in a home, the reasons for such a meeting should be clear and obvious to neighbors (associated with official business, teaching, e.g.). There should be obvious reasons in the neighbors’ minds for this visit. You may find it helpful to talk first with your neighbors and explain your public reason for being in Indonesia. This explanation should help them understand why you might occasionally have visitors of the opposite sex in your home. You might also have an opportunity to explain to them your desire to guard your reputation and purity.
* If a man or woman must meet with a group of members of the opposite sex, the tone of the meeting should be official and business-like, with no physical contact (e.g. laying on of hands for prayer). If it must be inside the home, keep curtains and doors wide open. Guests should remain in the guest room only. It is unwise to delve into personal, emotional, and intimate subjects with members of the opposite sex if you are alone (e.g. marriage communication, sexuality, and counsel for personal on-going sin issues). In cases of on-going close ministry relationships with a member of the opposite sex, try to ensure that you initiate a close relationship with the spouse of your ministry partner. There should never be an occasion to meet with a member of the opposite sex without your spouse nearby. Many good intended Kingdom laborers have chosen to make themselves vulnerable in these areas and have reaped the consequences. If there must be a meeting with another of the opposite sex, it is best it take place in a the home of another teammate or another neutral and safe location (e.g. organization office, church, or a ministry friend’s home when they are present also)

* Remember that Spiritual Warfare is real and the Enemy of our souls is prowling about enticing our hearts to choose disobedience in these areas. Make yourself accountable in what your eyes see and view as well. This is important for men AND women.
* Massage parlors are opportunities to solicit sex in these cultures. Remember, anything is available for a price, opposite sex as well as same-sex. **Do not go alone** to a massage parlor. For men and women, both could and have been known to have fallen in these areas. Choose a higher end respectable spa, which could help to fend off massage for sex opportunities.

**TRAVEL**

* Team members should not travel alone with an adult of the opposite sex (other than their spouse or a taxi or Grab/Uber driver).
* Riding on motorcycles with members of the opposite sex is also discouraged.
* When using public transportation, avoid eye contact with the opposite sex.
* Team members of the opposite sex should not travel out of town together unaccompanied for ministry or recreational purposes. This includes day trips.

**OTHER ISSUES**

* Body language: Avoid lingering eye contact with members of the opposite sex. Nonverbal language is potentially powerful. Indonesians read nonverbal language very well but not always accurately. We might unwittingly express something we do not intend.
* Embracing: In Indonesia this is only done politely between family members and close friends greeting each other in very public settings.
* Kissing: Occurs more and more with younger Indonesian population. This is still not considered appropriate for vast majority of Indonesians to kiss in public.
* Holding hands: Rarely done in public by upstanding members of the community. This is changing as well.
* Physical contact in general: This should never occur in front of Indonesians (this includes your helper and best friends). Occasional handholding is the most you might observe from upstanding Indonesians.

(Note: There might, however, for purposes of modeling a Biblical pattern of marriage, be times when the demonstration of a tender touch with your spouse is a good thing. This would show appropriate expressions of tenderness between married couples rather than following the strictest Islamic public standards.)

* Dress in public should be modest, neat, and tidy. The more modest and tidy your clothing the more respect you will get from those you meet in public. Women should avoid wearing shorts, very short skirts, and sleeveless blouses in public. Necklines should also be modest. Excessive use of jewelry and make-up is often associated with loose morals. We recommend women wear long sleeves when meeting with men in a formal context.
* For business meetings and formal occasions, men should wear socks, closed toe shoes, and button-down shirts. If you are invited to/or are to attend an Indonesian Church culture meeting/gathering, it is frowned upon to not wear tidy clothes as well as closed toed shoes.
* Be ready to say “no!” Maintain strong personal boundaries. If you at all feel uncomfortable with an invitation, suggestion, conversation, plan or any other situation with the opposite sex, be prepared to say “no!”, state your boundary, and exit the situation swiftly and firmly. This relates to those who are in the culture who are in bondage to same-sex sins as well.
* FYI: When a man and/or woman (single or not) are seen together in public, it will probably be assumed by Indonesians that they are either married or romantically involved.

**ENTERTAINMENT**

Please be aware that certain forms of entertainment are looked down on by more conservative elements of this country. This includes movies, films, dancing, and drinking alcohol. Certain places and activities also carry negative implications/reputation for some members of conservative local religious groups: hotels (prostitution), internet cafes (pornography), shopping malls (prostitution), video DVD movies (pornography), and even certain public parks and street corners (prostitution). In view of this we need to check our local contexts with our mentors as to which of the above applies and how we should respond.

* We ask that though we consider one to be free Scripturally to drink alcohol according to the healthy parameters therein, please refrain from exercising this in your immediate context of service and people group.
* Depending on the area of the country and whether you are in a city or small village, women of highest repute (married and single) are required to be in home by sunset. However, in other areas it may be culturally acceptable for a woman to be out until around 9 pm. In light of this, each member is encouraged to consult with her Cluster Leader or Strategy Team mentor as to appropriate times to return home. In this culture, a woman out alone after 9 pm will be highly suspect. Men need to be aware of this need to be above reproach in this area as well.

**SPECIAL NOTES FOR SINGLES:**

Singles are personnel who are to be respected as mature adults. Their roles in ministry are the same as married people, with some unique safeguards. The following guidelines are made to protect and enable them to minister with the highest integrity.

**HOUSING**

* A single missionary may not live with another missionary couple except for a brief transition. Both need privacy, and in a Muslim context, the husband may be thought to have two wives if the single is obviously a girl.
* If a single person boards with an Indonesian family, it should not be with one that has a child of the opposite sex close in age to the single.
* Singles are encouraged to live near or with a Western or Indonesian friend of the same sex, both for protection and appearances.
* Singles should never be alone in a house with a member of the opposite sex. Again, brief meetings might occur at the front gate and only rarely on front porch.
* Extra precautions should be taken at night when a group, which includes members of the opposite sex, is in the home; for example, leaving curtains open, doors open, etc.

**TRAVEL**

* Singles of the opposite sex should not go out of town together unaccompanied.
* Single women should have personal transportation if evening travel is frequent, necessary, and difficult to arrange. If singles are out in the evening frequently, a single woman might want to explain to neighbors or community leaders why one is doing so (teaching schedule, time with your mentor, etc). Single women should avoid traveling alone on public transportation at night except in taxis.

**DATING**

* During the first year when every new member experiences many emotional, physical and spiritual challenges, dating significantly raises the level of stress. Beginning a cross-cultural or same-culture dating relationship is not recommended (will consider case by case exceptions) during this period.
* Prior to beginning a dating relationship, issues should be discussed with the Cluster Leader or Strategy Team leader (where one is established). It is advised for the forming couple to include informing home churches of both individuals once a serious dating relationship is underway.
* If and when a dating relationship begins, close accountability is required.

a.) This accountability should take into consideration both the cultural and emotional challenges faced by singles during this time.

b.) Prayer should bathe the dating relationship.

c.) This is an incredible opportunity to bring glory to the Lord in how singles conduct this relationship between Indonesian believing and nonbelieving friends.

* Travel in the same vehicle while dating a member of the opposite sex should be strictly limited and not regular. Travel together alone in the same vehicle at night should not happen.
* When a man picks up a woman at her house, he should not enter the house but wait patiently outside the door. When a man drops a woman off at home, the man should walk the woman to the door of the house but not enter. The exception is, of course, if her family is at home and a lot of people are obviously in the house.
* Avoid being in places where you are alone for extended periods of time (beach, forest, mountain peak).
* Try to do a lot of your dating in groups or with other couples. We encourage double dating with other couples from the target culture and/or from the foreign Kingdom partners in your target people group.
* Time together in dating should take place mostly during the day time if possible. Avoid frequent evening time together.
* Evening dates should be concluded at 9:00 pm at the latest. On Saturday evening, it is sometimes acceptable to extend to 10:00 pm, but this would only be an exception and not a normal practice. In some areas dating at nighttime is not possible because of cultural restrictions.
* Dating couples are encouraged to find balance in the amount of time they spend together developing their relationship. Please keep the following four factors in mind:

• Cultivate personal intimacy with the Lord

• Ministry responsibilities

• Maintain a healthy witness to the Indonesian community

• Be a wise steward of your time

* Depending on how serious your dating is, you may find it better not to say things to neighbors and friends.  Dating is considered very serious in Indonesia, and a discontinued relationship always reflects poorly upon the woman.  Even if she is the one to break it off, not many people will believe that.
* Dating people will likely feel very negative about "restrictions" upon their relationship.  Please remember that if this relationship is of the Lord, He will help you to work through the challenges of such "restrictions". He will bless you in His way according to His timing. In the meantime, you will be a blessing to those around you rather than bringing unwanted (and unspoken) criticism.  It will be very hard to believe that you need to be that careful. The fact remains that people WILL jump to all kinds of conclusions in this UPG context.