* What Should Dating Boundaries Look Like?
* **Kris Swiatocho, Cliff Young**

***EDITOR'S NOTE:***[***He Said-She Said***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/) *is a biweekly advice column for singles featuring a question from a Crosswalk.com reader with responses from a male and female point of view. If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to* ***hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com*** *(selected questions will be posted anonymously).*

**QUESTION:**

*My boyfriend was in a relationship with another girl before me. I was there when the relationship blossomed and saw them interact almost to the point of engagement. She was in church and so I witnessed a lot of things; for example: handholding, hugging, kisses on the cheek etc. They had a bad break up and I was a witness to all of that because I was his friend at the time and helped him through some of his struggle.*

*Two years later our friendship grew into something more. And we started dating. We had some issues with her in the beginning but not anymore. She's matured and so have we but now I'm worried or insecure. Lately I've noticed he's been getting closer to her, almost trying to be her friend again. And I'm not ok with that. Every time I bring up the issue he becomes angry and defensive and it makes me worry.*

*He says he loves me but he doesn't want to talk about the subject. I personally feel we need to talk about what his motives are with his ex-girlfriend because we're in a serious relationship and we have talked about* [***marriage***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/)*. I don't want him to have a close-knit friendship with her because every time I see them together it reminds me of how they used to date and unwanted memories arise. He feels comfortable with her because she seems like she has gotten over their relationship but she continues to treat me indifferently and that is also a reason I don't want him to get close to her.*

**SEE ALSO:** [**What to Do When Feelings Fizzle Out**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/what-to-do-when-feelings-fizzle-out.html)

*They're both in the worship ministry and that's when I see most of the "flirting" happen (at least that's what it seems to me.) Obviously I don't want him to not even look at her, just to keep a healthy distance and I don't know how to confront him with my feelings without making it seem like I'm jealous.*

**HE SAID:**

Every relationship is different because every person is different. Each has their own separate threshold and limit on what they can physically allow and handle with their significant other. Friendships of the opposite sex often seem to be the source of contention.

From what you‘ve shared, I see there are several issues you are dealing with, some with him and some with yourself.

**SEE ALSO:** [**What Does It Mean to Guard Your Heart?**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/what-does-it-mean-to-guard-your-heart.html)

*Trust in your relationship*– you need to know where you stand.

We all do. Each person should not only communicate their feelings, but exhibit them as well. Too often we become complacent in our relationship and fail to reinforce how we may feel.  In other words, we take our relationship for granted.

*Trust in your boyfriend*– you need to know where he stands.

Does he still have feelings for his ex?  Is he truly in love with you and sees a future with you?  Are his interactions with his ex-girlfriend just harmless communication?

**SEE ALSO:** [**Should the Guy Always Take the Lead in the Relationship?**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/should-the-guy-always-take-the-lead-in-the-relationship.html)

*Boundaries*– you both need to have acceptable guidelines.

Your boyfriend needs to hear and know how you feel when you see him with his ex-girlfriend.  He may tell you there is nothing there, but if he cares about you first and foremost, he needs to *alter his behavior* with his ex in order to give you the confidence that he is staying faithful.

It sounds like it may be time for a “we need to talk” talk, although I wouldn’t use those exact words. However, even before you ask for that I would suggest you talk to someone (counselor, pastor, etc.) to see if you have some past unresolved hurts or betrayal, which may be enhancing your distrust.  We all need some *solicited unbiased sounding board* to take stock of where we are mentally and emotionally.

In the end, it’s going to be your choice whether you stay with him or not if he doesn’t change his behavior.  No one can decide that but you.

**SHE SAID:**

Thanks for your question and concerns. I do think this situation is a huge red flag in your relationship. I am not sure his feelings are over regarding his old girlfriend. I, too like you would feel insecure and concerned. It also bothers me that he is not willing to discuss it. As if your feelings mean nothing.

Perhaps you are a bit insecure and any woman in his life (the past or future) could be an issue (and that is something you need to think and pray about). Because you saw his past relationship from start to finish, you know his patterns. You know he was as serious with her as he is with you. So seeing him spend time talking (or what you are interpreting as flirting) could be that they are still attracted to each other or simply a comfortable feeling of friendship due to their past relationship. Either way, because you go to the same church and are in the same circles, it’s likely going to continue.

So here is what you should do:

**1.** **Pray** and ask God to reveal in you if this is jealously, insecurity, etc. Don’t let the enemy make nothing into something. The quickest way to get rid of a mate is to be jealous.

**2.** **Accept** the fact that he will see this woman and even serve on some committees or end up at an event, group mission trip with her, etc. You have to trust your boyfriend completely. If he has committed himself to you, then that has to be enough. If not, every woman he remotely even looks at could become a problem.

**3.** Again, **ask** your boyfriend to sit and talk with you again, sharing your frustration, anxiety, etc. Tell him why it bothers you? Tell him it seems he is flirting and how you know the difference. Get him to be honest with you in regards to his feelings for her. That you need to know now versus later. Ask him, out of love and respect, to not engage in conversation beyond what is necessary in church. Go through 1st Corinthians 13 and talk about what this means to you both. Remember, you can’t change his past, you can only change your present/future. How this is sorted out will give you a better idea of future conflicts and if he will communicate with you.

**4.** What he has with you he didn’t have with her. You need to **focus** on what’s important. He has chosen you. Did he choose you due to the Lord’s leading? If so, then value that this is God’s relationship, trusting the Lord for the next step. If God brought you together, he will keep you together.

***HE is …******Cliff Young****, a Crosswalk.com contributing writer and a veteran single of many decades. He has traveled the world in search of fresh experiences, serving opportunities, and the perfect woman (for him) and has found that his investments in God, career and youth ministry have paid off in priceless dividends.*

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***DISCLAIMER****: We are not trained psychologists or licensed professionals. We're just average folk who understand what it's like to live the solo life in the twenty-first century. We believe that the* [***Bible***](http://www.biblestudytools.com/) *is our go-to guide for answers to all of life's questions, and it's where we'll go for guidance when responding to your questions. Also, it's important to note that we write our answers separately.*

***GOT A QUESTION?*** *If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com (selected questions will be posted anonymously). While we are unable to answer every inquiry, we do hope that this column will be an encouragement to you. Click here to visit the He Said-She Said* [***archives***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/)*.*