

What people are saying about ...

# DON'T DATE A BOOBOO DUDE

“Relationship in the modern day is tough to maneuver, but Ainsley Britain brings sound wisdom and lots of laughs and good friendship to young women who are looking for guidance in relationship with God, others, and themselves.”

**Annie F. Downs**, *New York Times*  
bestselling author of *That Sounds Fun*

“I am so incredibly grateful that someone is listening and giving wisdom to the women of our generation who are dating. Above all we need to hear: you are valuable, you are loved, you absolutely do not have to settle. I pray this book helps you hear that message and break from shame in your dating life.”

**Jess Connolly**, bestselling author of *You Are the Girl for the Job* and *Breaking Free from Body Shame*

“Reading this book came with an unexpected flood of emotions. It made me laugh. It made me cry. It made me reflect on my past and look forward to my future. But most of all it made me overwhelmingly proud of my sister in Christ. Ainsley is my go-to

big sis when it comes to devotionals, prayers, and spiritual guidance. I'm excited for you to read this book, so she can be for you what she is for me—a life changer.”

**Lauren Alaina**, multi-platinum-selling singer/songwriter

“Ainsley is the truth-telling big sister we all need as we navigate the dating world. I wish I'd had her in my corner when I was in the thick of it! In this book, Ainsley helps you set boundaries and raise your standards. She shows you what kind of relationship you deserve and helps you start believing it for yourself. Yes and amen to that!”

**Stephanie May Wilson**, author and host of the *Girls Night Podcast*

“This is the manifesto I wish I had when navigating the dating scene and, more importantly, the dating bible I wish I could have given all the little sisters in my life. Brutally honest and refreshingly real, Ainsley beautifully covers topics like identity, self-worth, and setting practical standards for the men we allow into our lives. What I love most is that she outlines red flags we have all experienced and helps highlight the instances we should proceed with caution. On the flip side, she reminds us that there are good men out there and illustrates the green lights that tell us we can move forward with confidence.”

**Kelsey Chapman**, author of *What They Taught Me*

“The first time I met Ainsley, we bonded over a shared desire to see the teenage girls we lead thrive. Part of thriving in the dating years is helping them learn to recognize signs of abuse, manipulation, and people who just aren’t good for them. That’s why I love Ainsley’s heart for sharing her own story and helping other young women develop the skills required to honor the image of God in everyone—including themselves.”

**Crystal Chiang**, author of *Starting Now: A Guide to Becoming Who You Want to Be in College* and *The Art of Group Talk for Teenage Girls*

**DON'T**

RAISE YOUR STANDARDS

**DATE A**

REALIZE YOUR WORTH

**BOOBOO**

AND REMOVE SHAME FROM THE DATING GAME

**DUDE**

AINSLEY BRITAIN

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**DUDE**

DAVID  COOK

*transforming lives together*

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*Dedicated to my real-life younger sisters, Grace  
and Eva, as well as every adopted younger  
sister, which is every girl who reads this. 😊*

*You are so loved and worth so much  
more than you can even imagine.*

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My friends, chicken nugget mentees, family, and Instagram followers who let me pick their brains about these topics—thank you! Jaymi, I can’t thank you enough for all of your hard work as well.

I’m so thankful for Stephanie and Susan, along with the David C Cook team, for graciously walking me through my first published book and talking about these important topics!



# Introduction

Where I'm from, the gumbo is hot and the people are kind. My husband, Justin, and I have lived in "Music City," "The Big Apple," "H-Town," and currently are back in South Louisiana, where I was raised on crawfish boils and LSU football. The reason it's important for me to note these places is because each one is different, and I have learned so many lessons from so many people in each one. I can't tell you how thankful I am to have met each person and what they taught me, but my favorite person I get to hang out with now is *you*.

If I were sitting across the table from you at a coffee shop, I'd have an oat milk latte in hand and my listening ears on. I've loved meeting for coffee dates and coauthoring texts for friends and mentees for as long as I can remember. As the host of *Wild Confidence* podcast, an Enneagram coach, and a former high school minister, I love hearing people's stories and passions while sharing lessons I've learned along my way. In all my work, I enjoy helping young adults embrace their confidence, date healthy, and discover their identity in Christ. This doesn't all happen over lattes, though. Girls and I have cried into mint chocolate chip ice cream cones, celebrated with

surprise parties, and danced at musical festivals. Jesus took His ministry directly to the people, and similarly, my goal is to put it into action outside of the church walls.

I felt the call to ministry and working with high school and college students from a young age. I actually remember sitting in a chapel when I was fifteen, and my ears got hot and my heart started racing. I heard the Lord say, “You’ll be working with teens and young adults,” which was super weird in the moment, but I get it now. I never forgot it, and every time I had my heart broken in a dating relationship or through a hardship in life, I thought, *It’s okay, I’m going through this to learn and share what the Lord wants to teach me for the next girl.*

Friend, in the pages to come, I want to share with you those lessons—especially the ones related to the dating world. There’s nothing you can tell me about your dating life that I haven’t experienced firsthand or walked through with a friend. I’ve seen it all, and I’m here to tell you: there is hope. There is a God who loves you so much! He is waiting with open arms for you to run to Him and to fully understand who He knows you are. We’ll get to the details of that, but first you need to know there’s hope.

In our time together, think of me like a big sister who wants only the best for you. I want to spill all my secrets and tell you things the Lord did in my life that changed everything for me. I hope my experiences will resonate with you. I’ll unpack some dating red flags so you’re able to see them more clearly in your own experiences and those of your friends. I’ll give you resources, tools, and advice that I wish I had been given when I was in various dating relationships,

one of which turned abusive. Then, we will pray together and reflect on the things we just discussed.

Grab some more girls and let's all do this together! As most people do, I pray you'll learn from my mistakes so you don't make the same ones. I pray that by the time you close this book, you will walk in a renewed self-worth in Christ and move forward in your God-given purpose with a wild confidence!

My prayer for you is the following:

Lord, be with my sister as she turns these pages and sees what miracles You have done in my life and in the lives of those around me. I pray that she finds radical healing and a supernatural strength to fight for her identity in You. Thank You for who You have called her to be and that You have an incredible purpose for her life. Please help her rediscover her worth through biblical truths and Your promises about her that are already hers to hold. Remind her that she is not alone in this fight for a healthy dating life, an understanding of her true worth, and the reclaiming of her identity.

---

I'm writing this book  
on a mission that girls  
everywhere will embrace  
a wild confidence in their  
identity in Christ and fulfill  
the calling that God has  
placed on their lives. It's  
time to raise the bar, link  
arms, and fix our crowns.

---



# Disclaimer

Hey, friend, I can't wait to take the journey ahead with you, but first, we have to talk. I believe that healthy dating has gotten lost in translation somewhere. I want to make sure you date well with your identity firmly planted in the Lord. In the pages ahead, we discuss some hard topics, including relationship violence and sexual assault. There aren't super-graphic descriptions, but even the idea of these things can sometimes be triggering, and you should always be wise when it comes to what you're taking in. I've changed details in some stories, such as timelines and names, to protect the identities of the people involved. Please prayerfully consider if you're ready to read about all the ins and outs of dating, including some extreme scenarios.

We're going to have fun together, grow in our faith, and become more aware of what could go wrong when we don't understand our worth in Christ, but along the way we will talk about hard things, so I wanted to give you a heads-up. I think there's some important lessons in here, so maybe grab a friend and read together. That way you have a person to talk to if any triggers surface. I'll alert you at the beginning of the chapter that has content that might be triggering depending on your background.

If you or someone you know has been hurt in a relationship, or you start to recognize you're in the midst of something dangerous and need help, here are some resources to bookmark:

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-4673

Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Crisis Support Hotline: 1-877-995-5247

I want you to know that I'm on your team, I believe you, and I love you dearly.

In His Strength,  
Ainsley B.

## Part One

# What Is a BooBoo Dude?

### BooBoo Dude

/bōō/ /bōō/ /dōōd/

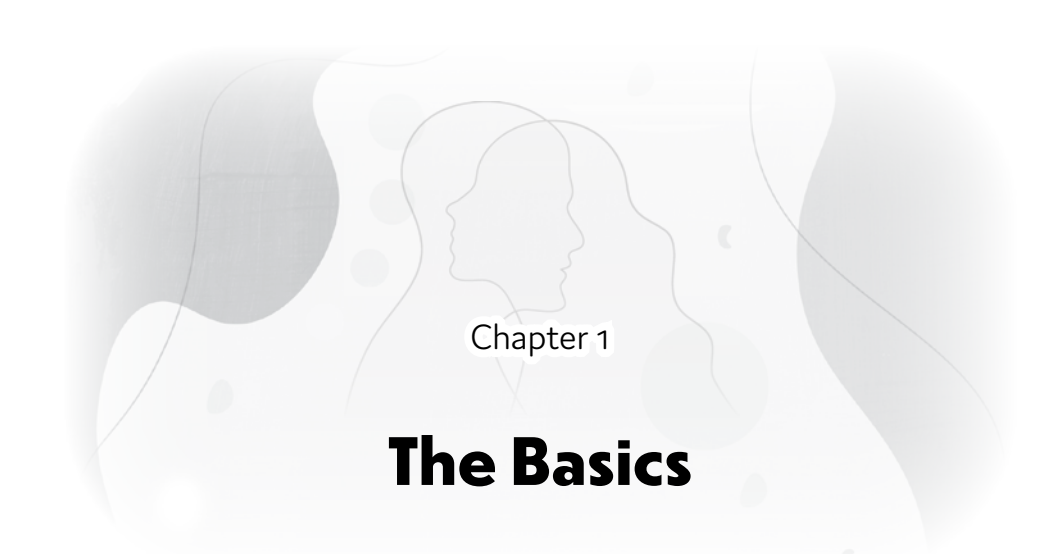
*noun*

noun: BooBoo **Dude**; plural noun: BooBoo **Dudes**

A guy who is not treating you how you deserve to be treated. “I think it’s time to break up with him. He’s acting like a BooBoo Dude.”

Synonyms: jerk, loser, etc.





## Chapter 1

# The Basics

So, what is a BooBoo Dude?

These are the guys who don't deserve your time or attention, yet you worry if they'll text back. The guys who don't treat you well, but it's nice to be noticed by them. The guys who conveniently forget their wallet or maybe use blatant manipulation to try to keep you on the back burner while they do who-knows-what with who-knows-whom. A BooBoo Dude treats a ride-or-die chick like a side chick, and you deserve so much more. **WHY. ARE. WE. LETTING. THIS. CONTINUE?**

Are you scared of being alone? Do you not feel worthy of respect? Does shame keep you from seeking real love? Does loneliness lower your standards? I get it. I've been there. I know the feeling. Imagine I'm sitting across from you in a coffee shop, holding your hand. I see you and I want to know your heart. I want to know why you're hurting and to share some ways I've found healing. I want to help you up every time you stumble.

Whatever is holding you back from stepping into the treatment you deserve, let's work on getting it out of here. Let's unveil each lie,

each hurt, and each scar so we can replace them with God's truth about who you are in Him, so we can be done with BooBoo Dudes! It's time to step into who God says you are so you're able to move forward in joy, purpose, and confidence!

When I tell you that I've been there, I mean it. I've gone over to a guy's house only for him to sit and play video games the whole time I was there. I wish I could tell you that I left, but I didn't. I was so desperate to spend time with him that I stayed. I've been stood up on New Year's Day after driving three hours to hang out with a guy, starting off the new year with a big punch in the gut. I've also looked in the mirror and seen hand-sized welts on my awrms from a guy after he told me I had stepped on the brakes too hard and mistreated his car. We'll get to these stories—and many more—in upcoming chapters, but the point here is that I get it. I understand what it means to turn a blind eye to red flags because at least someone is giving you attention. Friend, you are worth so much more than attention. I can't wait to walk with you through the journey of getting rid of BooBoo Dudes and seeing yourself as the treasure you truly are.



I dated a guy, who I'll call Jack, for about a year in college. You'll be hearing more about him throughout the book because I learned so much from this relationship, not all positive, but I want to share it with you. We were good friends before dating, so this transition into uncharted territory of a real relationship started off so exciting and fun. I'm not sure when things started to change for him, but by

the time we had been together for three months, and I was deeply invested, a shift in the way he treated me occurred. It took me a while to realize I was dating a BooBoo Dude, but looking back, the signs were there.

One scenario unfolded like this: “Are you going to wear that in public?” Jack demanded. I had stepped into my living room in a white strapless sundress and sandals that I was very much planning to wear in public that day. “Yeah, is it ugly?” I asked. “It’s inappropriate. Guys will be staring at you everywhere we go,” he replied. (Friends, I went to a Christian school growing up. I knew how to tell if something was inappropriate or too revealing. If you know, you know. When getting dressed, you would do “the test” by putting your hands at your sides to see if anything was too short.) I instinctively put my hands at my sides and said, “Really? It passes the test though.” “Forget the test; go change. I prefer you in jeans and a plain v-neck t-shirt,” he insisted. “Geez, what’s your problem?” I asked. His voice raised and grew in intensity. “That dress is my problem! You’re just asking for another guy’s attention, like mine isn’t enough!”

Fear crept over me; my body felt tense and withdrawn. I walked back to my room and whispered under my breath, “I actually just wanted to wear a cute dress my grandmother got me.” I closed the door and locked it as I changed, just a little nervous as to what was brewing on the other side. After a moment, I heard his voice through the crack in the door. “I’m sorry, baby. I just love you in jeans and a t-shirt. I think that’s when you look the most beautiful, and I want you to feel beautiful. I love you so much.”

Confusion settled in. *How can he love me but still yell at me?* I wondered. *Why does he get to tell me what I'm allowed to feel beautiful in?* (More on this in the next couple of chapters.) I shook off these thoughts and decided that he was just stressed. I wanted to be low maintenance and not disturb what peace might remain in him. I walked back out in the outfit he had requested and asked, "How's this?" "Wow, that is just my favorite outfit on you. You're so beautiful." He replied. I sheepishly thanked him, and we left for lunch at our favorite spot.

I wish this was the only red flag I ignored, but there were many. I think I dismissed them because I wanted us to work out so badly. I was willing to turn a blind eye and allow unhealthy behaviors just to stay together. I've heard countless stories of girls either ignoring red flags or seeing them but not having the confidence and strength to walk away. Either way, BooBoo Dudes and their behavior can make dating feel hopeless and exhausting!

When it comes to recognizing BooBoo Dudes, let's go over some situations that may feel familiar from your life or a friend's. I recently asked some of my single friends what frustrates them about dating. They said the following:

- Little or poor communication
- A lack of consistency and clarity in expectations
- Dishonesty about what they want in a relationship
- Guys who quickly friend-zone girls
- Understanding the balance between surrendering to Jesus and pursuing my own desires

What are some frustrations you have? Write them in the lines below:

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I would absolutely agree that all the above are super frustrating. The lack of or poor communication really sends me over the edge. Let's break this down a little. When a guy is interested in you, he should be excited to talk and hang out. Of course, girls should manage their expectations and not assume he is obligated to text or call all day every day, but this "Yeah, we can hang if you want to" kind of response is so BooBoo. If you get that kind of reply, it's a red flag. I know, I know, we're about to hop into some red flags that you'll roll your eyes at or shrug and say, "But every guy does that!" To which I will respond, "I dated long enough to know that's not true."

There are some general warning signs to watch for when it comes to how guys communicate. The terms might change, but the actions are typically the same, no matter what they're called.

First up, let's talk about *ghosting*. Ghosting is when someone suddenly stops all communication out of nowhere. You could be talking or texting and they just stop responding. Personally, I think it's the worst.

Then you have *Casper*, the friendly ghost. The name is inspired by a movie I grew up with (and now suddenly have the urge to watch

because I definitely had a crush on Devon Sawa back then). They're a Casper when they don't want to be rude, though they want to ghost, so they try to hint at not being interested but never come right out and say it, which usually leads the other person on. They need to just have a conversation to end the relationship.

*Orbiting* is up next, and as I typed that word, I actually rolled my eyes. Orbiting is when they cut off communication with someone but still interact with them on social media by liking their Instagram posts or sliding up on their story.

Then we have *breadcrumbing*. This one might be the most manipulative move of them all. Breadcrumbing is when they leave a few likes here and there, or maybe toss a DM or two your way and a text every now and then, trying to keep interest without commitment in case they're bored or want someone on the back burner.

Last but not least is the *Circle Back Guy*, who drives me insane. He is the one who hurts you or breaks it off and then waits until you've forgotten exactly what went wrong, only to come back and repeat the cycle every six months to a year. I personally have the memory of a goldfish, and one guy did this to me for almost three entire years before I eventually wrote down what would happen so I would remember. (Yes, embarrassing on my part, but I know I'm not the only one.) They hurt you, but not bad enough to remember, you know? But they're still being BooBoo.

It should go without saying that if he's cheating, he's definitely BooBoo, but one note I'd like to add: if you feel like you need to reach out to another girl to tell her to leave your guy alone, reevaluate and

consider yourself as being the one who leaves him alone. It doesn't typically end in a positive way, and you never know what could happen with the messages you send.

I'm exhausted thinking about how many times I've either endured these or done them myself, so I can empathize if you're actually experiencing them now. If you're exhausted by them too, it's time to take a step back from the person doing these things to focus on your own growth ... or to consider if you might be the one exhibiting some of these behaviors.

Now, I have a feeling that someone, maybe my friend Ayo, is reading this and thinking, *Ainsley, sometimes it's not just guys who don't want to commit. Maybe I don't want to leave the talking phase ...* Well, sister, I have to encourage you to ask yourself, *Why not?* Because it's truly not fair to put someone else's heart through your question mark if they're all in. I'm not saying you have to be all in if someone likes you, but if your heart isn't ready, then don't make someone else suffer.

In case you think I've gone off the deep end and hate all men, trust me, I don't. I married one, after all. If there's one thing that needs to be clarified at this moment, it's this: girls can be BooBoo too! (I haven't quite figured out what to call the girl version of a BooBoo Dude. My favorite term so far is a Bugga Boo, but Beyoncé already has that covered, so I'm still brainstorming.) It's important to note that this book isn't shaming men. I just happen to be a woman who has experienced these things by men, so that's my perspective. However, I've also done some of these actions to guys, and I admit that's just as booboo!

I'll never forget a time in high school when one of my guy friends, James, asked me to meet him at our favorite fast-food place and said it was urgent. James is a gentle giant, and he sounded so upset; I couldn't imagine what was wrong. When I arrived, his head was down and hidden by his hoodie so I couldn't see his face. I saw teardrops on the table, and when he looked up at me, red lines ran across his face from where his angry girlfriend had scratched him, causing *him* to be the one in danger. She certainly opened my eyes to how BooBoo girls can be, and I'm thankful he ended it with her for his own safety!

Sometimes a person can do something more minor that's boo-boo, like always picking you up ten minutes late or inviting you over to watch Netflix to see what it might lead to. Or they can do something intentionally harmful, like extending an invitation calculated to lead to something physical, even if you aren't comfortable with it, and refusing to stop. See, the severity of someone being booboo can vary widely, which is why it's important we explore the whole range.

In bringing up these examples, I hope they might help you realize your friend, if not you, could be with a BooBoo Dude. The best thing you can do is help her see it and let her know you're there for her. (Much more on this topic to come!) It can be hard to have this initial conversation if she hasn't admitted it yet, so you may need a lighter way to broach the topic before you can share your concerns. How do you have that conversation without losing your friend? I imagine one version may go something like this:



Sarah: So, I hung out with Ryan last night.

Lainey: Oh, really? How was it?

Sarah: It was fun until his ex-girlfriend called twenty-seven times.

Lainey: Wait, what? Did he say why she was calling?

Sarah: Not really; he just kept saying she was crazy, but I feel like he had to have done something to make her freak out like that.

Lainey: Yeah, he seems a little boooooo.

Sarah: I think so too. I think I'm going to end it. I don't want to get mixed up in whatever is going on there.

Lainey: Good call.

Who knows where this could've led if Sarah had stayed with Ryan. Maybe she would've ended up being the one calling so much, not knowing if he was with another girl or not.

Here's a more serious example of a conversation that might happen:

Gabbi: Well, Chase and I got in another fight last night.

Selena: Oh no, what about now?

Gabbi: He said he didn't want me to have any guy friends, but you know he is friends with girls so it's not fair. While we were fighting, I tried to

walk away, but he grabbed my arm and it really hurt.\*

Selena: Okay, we know that's BooBoo. How can I help?

Gabbi: I don't know. I'm just confused.

Selena: I'm so sorry. I'm here for you and will support you no matter what—if you just want to talk it out or if you're ready to walk away.

\*Important note: Relationship violence will be addressed in later chapters, but if you need immediate help, please visit [TheHotline.org](http://TheHotline.org). It's an incredible resource when it comes to identifying behaviors that are healthy, unhealthy, and abusive.

These are just a couple of examples of the ways conversation can happen. We all know things can be way more serious, but these examples give you a starting point if the opportunity presents itself with a friend. The bottom line: to get rid of BooBoo Dudes, it's imperative to raise your standards. Decide right now that you won't settle anymore. Believe you're worth more than the way you're being treated, and stand by your friends as they go through a similar process in their own time. Remind each other that your identity is meant to be found in Christ, not guys.

I've reflected many times on what I could've done differently if I had known the signs of an unhealthy or abusive relationship before I was in one. What could I have saved myself from or changed? Certainly I could've saved some time, heartache, and risk of injury.

So without further ado, let's find out if you (or a friend) are dating a BooBoo Dude!

He *might* be a BooBoo Dude if:

- He is disrespectful to you and your friends or family.
- He is dishonest about where he is, who he is with, or about things in general.
- He frequently tries to take control of you or the situation.
- He pressures you to do things you don't want to do.

He is *definitely* a BooBoo Dude if:

- He threatens you.
- He tries to isolate you from your friends and family.
- He tries to tell you what to wear, who to hang out with, or is generally controlling.
- He denies his unhealthy actions and acts like you're crazy for bringing them up.
- He says things like "I'm the only one who can love you as much as I do." Or vice versa "You're the only one who will love me for the real me."

Are you still unsure? It's okay, this is a lot to process. This quiz might help!

**1. When we are texting, he ...**

- a. Doesn't play games and communicates clearly.
- b. Rarely texts back in a timely manner.
- c. Is one of those Circle Back Guys that just keeps coming back to haunt me.

**2. When we hang out in person ...**

- a. He is attentive and makes me feel respected.
- b. I like the attention, but something feels a little off.
- c. I've caught him with a wandering eye multiple times.

**3. For our first date he ...**

- a. Paid for everything and texted me soon after.
- b. Paid, but I haven't heard from him since.
- c. Date? I don't even know what that is.

**4. Our current status is ...**

- a. We're exclusive.
- b. We're talking, but he doesn't like labels.
- c. ... idk.

**5. On social media he ...**

- a. Isn't afraid to compliment me in a comment.
- b. Is the first to watch my stories, the last to like my picture.
- c. Follows accounts that he knows make me uncomfortable.

**6. I've heard he has treated girls before me ...**

- a. With respect and clear communication.
- b. Well, I've heard some things.
- c. ... People have warned me ...

**7. He makes me feel ...**

- a. Heard and valued.
- b. Not great, but not that bad.
- c. Anxious and self-doubting.

**8. My friends and family think ...**

- a. He's a good guy with his head on straight.
- b. I could do better.
- c. He is hurting my relationship with them.

**9. When it comes to our future, I think ...**

- a. It could work! We seem to be in line with each other's goals and ambitions.
- b. Maybe, if we change some things.
- c. I have no idea what to think.

**10. His friends and family ...**

- a. Welcome me and are respectful of our relationship.
- b. I've met them once or twice, but he doesn't bring me around much to know them.
- c. Who? I don't know them.

## Quiz Results

### Mostly As:

No BooBoo for you! He seems like a great guy with his head on straight. Let him know that you appreciate how respectful he is to you and those around you.

### Mostly Bs:

He's showing some symptoms of a BooBoo Dude, but all hope is not lost. It seems like he needs to find himself a bit, so consider giving him some space and spend some time taking care of yourself so you keep your standards high. Assess what you find most attractive about him and if it's more outward than inward. Maybe it's time for a short break to work through things individually and then see where things stand.

### Mostly Cs:

Girl, he is a BooBoo Dude through and through! It seems like he has a lot of work to do, and you don't want to be dragged down in that process. Run. Also, do a little self-check. Are you into him just for his appearance or reputation? Remember that those things won't last, sis.

## Prayer

Father, thank You for Your protection and guidance for me through dating. Thank You for the sacrifice You made so my life can glorify You and You alone. Please reveal to me any red flags in my relationships that I should be aware of, and speak to my heart, giving me the strength to turn away from them when they're not meant to be. Pluck out the BooBoo Dudes from my life so my heart can remain pure and I can continue glorifying You to the best of my ability in every relationship.

## Reflection Questions

1. What's your dating experience been like? Are you comfortable dating, or is it still new to you?
2. Have you ever found yourself in a relationship where you couldn't see the red flags? What were they? How did you finally see them?
3. How can you see the red flags more clearly next time?
4. What can you ask the Lord to help you with to avoid dating BooBoo Dudes in the future?