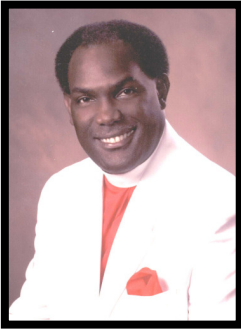


## Ask Bishop Dennison



**Q.** *My friend is a 45 year-old, divorced, Christian woman with no children. She took her divorce really hard and was depressed for quite a while afterwards. A while back, she met a man over the telephone at work. She was excited and I was happy for her. She and the guy have been talking on the phone for over a year, but have only seen one another once. Now, she is telling me that she is planning to marry him and move to another state in September. I really think that she is moving too fast because of the limited amount of time that they have spent together. Even more, I believe that her new fiancé may be some kind of con-artist. I have done some background checking on him (without her knowledge) and have found that some of the things that he has told her regarding his employment, retirement, and property ownership are not true. My friend has cut off everyone (friends and family) that has questioned or criticized her new fast-track relationship. I know that the bible tells married people to leave and cleave, but I am very concerned about her leaving everyone that loves her and cleaving to this man. I want to talk with her about my feelings, but I don't want to drive her away or offend her. Please help.*

**A.** I am not sure that your friend will initially appreciate your doing a background check on her friend and of course you were not authorized to do so. However, it is my belief that you did this with pure motives. It shows your love and concern for the best interest of your friend. Now that this information can be proven to be factual, you should (because of your motive), discuss it with your friend and trust that she will receive it as something positive, not negative. Here are some tips to avoid fast-track relationships.

1. By all means, do a thorough background check on the individual.
2. Spend quality time together. This goes beyond lengthy telephone conversations and internet chats.
3. Avoid cutting off your family and genuine friends.
4. Seek wise counsel from your pastor or spiritual leader.
5. Do not enter a new relationship immediately after a divorce or separation.
6. Avoid hasty decisions in relationships, especially in reference to marriage.

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