



*Dating*  
*For*  
*The Christian Teen*

Good, Bad  
or In Between?

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# INTRODUCTION

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Perhaps no other subject has the attention of Christian teenagers as that of dating. More worry, struggle, embarrassment, and rejection. has come from improper views and efforts regarding dating than we care to admit. Yet, if this thing of dating is good for teens, then much happiness, excitement, and blessing should also be associated with it as well.

This booklet is meant to be a source of help to parents and young people about good, sensible, and Biblical guidelines for dating.

Dating is a normal activity to be enjoyed by Christian teenagers. But, as with anything, following proper guidelines is essential to that enjoyment. The Bible offers help and wisdom towards the proper enjoyment of this exciting time in the life of parents and young people. Everyone wanting to get the most out of the teen dating years, whether it be parents or teens, should be willing to follow whatever guidelines God gives in His Word.

The ideas presented in this booklet are not original. They have been gleaned from many years of working with Christian young people as well as my own children. The writer of Proverbs tells us, *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise”* - Proverbs 13:20. I have, therefore, borrowed from others as I walked with them in their ministries, messages, and writings. Together we can learn and do more to develop good dating guidelines than if we try to do it alone. These guidelines will help if applied with a genuine desire to do what is right and with a heart that seeks to please the Lord. Every Christian teen should endeavor to: *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”* - I Cor. 10:32.

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# Chapter One

## What Is Dating?

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Just exactly what is dating? Many suggestions, ideas, and definitions can be offered to answer that question. Considered from a Biblical point of view, dating is unique. Though it is not mentioned by name as “dating”, the Bible does speak much of Christian fellowship. This would also include time spent together between young men and young ladies. So it seems that dating is fellowship, specifically Christian fellowship.

### **What It Is Not & What It Is**

While it is true that dating for the Christian teenager is Christian fellowship, it is far more. As a matter of fact, it is perhaps easier to understand what dating IS if you think of what it IS NOT.

- Dating among Christian teens is NOT evil or sinful, it IS a good thing.
- It is NOT an unnatural thing, it IS perfectly normal to want to date and to do so under proper guidelines.
- It is NOT a goal, it IS a means to a goal.
- Dating is NOT the ultimate relationship thing in life, it IS one of many steps involved in reaching the ultimate relationship, that of finding the mate God wants for your life.
- It is NOT an opportunity for sex, it IS an opportunity for fellowship with the opposite sex.
- Dating is NOT just something to do on the weekend, it IS something to do to help enjoy Christian fellowship with others.

- It is NOT seeing how far you can go with a person, it IS showing you respect a person enough not to take advantage of them.
- Dating is NOT an opportunity to get away from the view of parents and authorities, it IS an opportunity to prove yourself responsible whenever you are not being watched.
- It is NOT a time to cheat character, it IS a time to exhibit character.
- Dating is NOT a chance to take Dad's car, nor your own, out for a wild spin and be a show-off. It IS a chance to prove you can be trusted with an automobile.
- Dating is NOT playing "Mister Big Stuff", it IS being who you are - a Christian teenager who loves the Lord and your friends.
- Dating is NOT a relationship, it IS fellowship that may or may not lead to a relationship.

## **What's Involved**

Dating, you see, is indeed a unique thing. It is special in so many ways. Perhaps no other activity involves so much. Dating involves every aspect and part of a Christian teenager. It involves the body, soul, and spirit of a young person. In I Thessalonians 5:23 we are told, *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* The Apostle Paul knew that the whole person was involved in daily life. He knew that it was important to pray for God’s sanctifying power to be present that the body, soul, and spirit be preserved blameless until Jesus comes again. Now dating is an activity that involves all three “parts” of a person and it is essential that every “part” be bathed in prayer to prevent falling into sin. Let’s look at each “part” and how they are involved in dating.

## **The Body, The Soul, and the Spirit**

### **The Body**

The body is involved least of all. The world puts most, if not all, of its emphasis here. The Christian young person should not. The body of a young man or a young lady is to be protected by purity, modesty, decency, etc. when dating. The body of a Christian teen is just as normal and susceptible to sin as the body of a lost teen. Care should always be taken to provide absolutely no opportunity for the lust of the flesh to get a hold on a Christian teenager. To some this seems obvious, to others it seems extreme and ridiculous. But to anyone that is realistic and honest, it is

necessary to be aware of this danger. The body must go where you go. If you go on a date, your body is going with you. You do not date in spirit, you date in person, in body. You take your body with you on a date. Before you take your body on a date, make sure it is clean and pure when you start your date and when you return from your date. The body is not the main thing, but it is one thing to be wise about. Remember the inspired words of wisdom that Paul gave to young Timothy, *“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”* - II Tim. 2:22. And again in I Tim. 5:23, *“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.”*

## **The Soul**

The soul of a Christian teenager is also involved in dating. Your soul is the seat of your emotions. It is that part of you where your emotions, feelings, and desires sit. They are there in your soul. Your affections and your active will are located in your soul. This is the part of you that feels joy and sorrow, thrill and disappointment. The soul helps you know and relate to others when they are happy or sad. You are able to “feel” what others feel because of your soul.

When dating, your soul must be guarded. Keep your mind and emotions on the right thing. The influences that make you feel a certain way should be noted. Be aware of what affects you and your soul. Far too many people allow their souls, and thus their emotions, mind, will, and desires, to be influenced in the wrong way. This often results in “falling in love” too soon. Getting too serious over a dating boyfriend/girlfriend is a consequence of too much feeling not being controlled. If you and your mind and emotions are not kept in check, feelings get hurt easily. Self-pity can set in quickly. Be careful to guard your emotions when dating.



## The Spirit

The Christian teen's spirit is important too. This is that "part" of you that is "God-conscious". This is the part of you that can communicate and commune with the Lord. It is the place in you to which God speaks and moves. This is where God will speak to you. This is what God will use to guide you in His will. In a very real sense, this also includes your attitude. Proverbs 18:14, "*The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?*" - this verse indicates the importance of the spirit (attitude) in life. It is the spirit of a man that really identifies the man. If I know your spirit (attitude), I know you. You will be what you are in attitude and spirit. The real you comes out from your spirit through your soul and body. Stay in touch with the Lord in a daily walk, daily devotions, and daily prayer to keep your spirit in proper shape for God. Compare Proverbs 20:27, "*The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*" and I Cor. 2:11, "*For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*"

Dating, then, is what you make of it in body, soul, and spirit. It is a precious and important part of the later teenage years. Nothing can take its place. The Lord can make your dating years some of the best times in your life. Let Him lead, guide, and direct you in body, soul, and spirit to be all He wants you to be. This is what dating is all about for the Christian teenager.

## Chapter Two

# Who Should I Date?

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There are many factors which should be considered when dating. Perhaps the single most important factor to be considered is - “Who should I date?”. Young people involved in dating should always think first and foremost about who it is they will be dating. The associations and influences that are present when dating can make or break the life and testimony of a Christian teen, not to mention the life and testimony of their parents.

Differences exist between teens and parents in their outlook on the dating prospects in a church, school, or community. The crowd from which a teen may select a date may not be the crowd that the parents approve of. What the teen is looking for in a date may not be what the parents are looking for. This presents the problem of: - *Who can I date? Who will Mom and Dad approve for me to date? What will my preacher say? Who do I like? What do I look for in a person to date? Where do I start in making this decision?*

### **What Does The Bible Say?**

The place to start is the Word of God. The Scriptures plainly state, *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”* - II Cor. 6:14. This verse clearly states that Christians are not to be unequally yoked (joined) together with unbelievers. This does not simply mean marriage, but

also business boyfriend/girlfriend ships, church associations, and dating relationships. Christians should only date other Christians. There can be no true fellowship, no good communion between teens when one of them knows the Lord and the other does not. There is no common spiritual ground for fellowship. This “fellowship” is the main thing about dating. If you do not understand the “fellowship” of a date and its importance, then you are not ready to date. You want an opportunity for fellowship. God wants you to have that opportunity. But He has guidelines for that fellowship. With an unequal yoke, lost and saved together, there is no real fellowship between teenagers on a date. Now they can go out together. They can eat together. They can walk together in the park. They can ride together in a car. But they cannot have “fellowship” nor “communion”. So says the Word of God!

## **Not All Qualify To Date**

So we see that Christian teenagers should only date other Christian teenagers. But this does not mean that everyone claiming to be a Christian qualifies as a dating boyfriend/girlfriend . Some will lie to get a date. Others are pretentious and not real believers. Some are saved but backslidden and worldly. Every Christian teen, even those who are truly saved, are not necessarily the right ones to date. If a teenager is not saved, AND pure, AND clean, AND living right with a good testimony, do not date them. If you are not sure about these things in the life of a person you wish to date, do not date them. There are Christian young people who meet these qualifications. If they are not in your youth group, church, or area, wait on the Lord to add them to your group. Pray for the right one to date. Ask God to give you the right type of Christian young person to date. He will provide all you need, even in this area of life.

Christian teenagers should date only other Christian teenagers who are living for Christ. I am not referring to “perfect” teens, but I do mean real, genuine, and godly young people. These are the ones to date. If they do not seem to be living for the Lord, do not date them, no matter how much they claim to be saved. If they are not faithful to the house of God, do not date them. If they give the impression of having no interest in the things of God, do not date them. Some will advance the idea that it is acceptable to date a “Christian” teenager as long as they promise to do better. They may not be living right at the time, but have committed themselves to do so. Don’t be stupid. Show some real wisdom here. If they are not *already* living “right”, do not date them. If they do not *already* have a “good testimony”, then do not date them. We live in a society, socially and culturally, that is full of “talk” about commitment, but is greatly lacking in the “walk” of commitment. Do not be lured into a bad dating experience by the smooth talk of a potential “friend”. Make sure they are real. Take the time to check someone out before dating them. Just because he or she may look “good” does not mean God wants you to date them. Follow His leadership and date those that He would approve of you dating.

## Other Factors

Christian teenagers should date only other Christian teenagers who are living right and have a good testimony. But let's go a step further. Should other factors be included when choosing "who" to date?

### Authorities

- \*Parents
- \*Pastor
- \*Adults

The answer to that question is definitely - YES!! Christian teens should date those with whom they share similar religious beliefs and convictions. These beliefs and convictions may include standards and guidelines concerning music, modesty, friendships, influences, churches, Bible versions, etc. Now, while this may seem extreme, think about it for a moment. If a teen girl dates another Christian teen who seems to be living right but they do not share similar convictions on influences and music, for example, will there not be a tendency to shift to one or the other's beliefs after awhile. Maybe one teen has a conviction about modest dress. As a young girl, perhaps she believes she should not wear men's apparel in order to preserve her modest appearance. If she dates a young man who does not share similar convictions, he may try to influence her to change her convictions. Likewise, a young man who has a conviction against listening to the wrong music takes a girl out for a date who has no apparent conviction at all about music. A danger is presented that she may try to influence the young man to listen to the wrong music.

Different religious convictions present an enormous problem between young people who have opposing convictions about larger matters of faith. Areas such as which Bible is the Word of God, which church is the right one to attend, which mode of baptism is Scriptural must be considered. In many settings today Christian young people

attend schools where these differences of belief and convictions are present. Many different denominational groups are represented in one school setting. As a result, these differences can present a problem in a dating relationship. Remember, therefore, to consider the beliefs and convictions of a Christian teenager before dating them.

Another area to think about regarding “who” to date is the area of authority. Christian teens should date only those Christian teens who are respected by the authorities in their lives. There are people in your life that you deeply respect. It may be your parents, your pastor, your teachers, or another adult authority in your life. Do not date someone that your authorities do not approve of. At times all of your authorities may not agree. Go with the majority of your godly, respected, and wise authorities. They may be wrong at times. They are not perfect. But they, as a whole, will not be wrong as often as you will be by yourself.

Another important factor that cannot be overlooked in choosing who to date is the age factor. Dating those much older or much younger than you can develop some serious problems. It is recommended that you date others of about the same age as you are. Now it never fails that someone will speak up in opposition to this suggestion. Their reasoning goes something like this, “Well, Uncle Fred and Aunt Melba are ten years apart in age and they turned out all right” or “Mom and Dad started dating when they were twenty and fifteen years old respectively and they’ve been married thirty years.” Just because things *seem* to have worked out for one or two relationships here and there does not guarantee it will work out for you. These cases are the exceptions, not the rule. Uncle Fred and Aunt Melba may still be together, but they may have had untold problems that never have surfaced around you. Mom and Dad may be happy, but you can be sure that the age factor did make

certain problems for them at times. Now I am not trying to sound coarse or unkind, but just because Uncle Fred and Aunt Melba did something stupid does not mean you should do the same. The question is not, “*Has anyone else done this?*”, but “*What does the Lord want me to do?*”.

A suggested guide for dating ages would be to date those who are within a year or two of your age. In some unusual circumstances, three years of difference in age is a good limit. Another word of note may be necessary here. The difference between a nineteen year old boy and a sixteen year old girl is not quite the same as the difference between a twenty-four year old young man and a twenty-one year old young lady. You see, actually, it is the **maturity** factor we are talking about more than the age factor. Great age differences offer problems as a result of different maturity levels.

We have seen that it is a good rule of thumb to consider several things when deciding “who” to date. Look at these guidelines once again as they are listed below:

- *Christian Teens should date other Christian Teens*
- *Christian Teens should date those with a good testimony*
- *Christian Teens should date those with similar religious beliefs and convictions*
- *Christian Teens should date those who are respected by the authorities in their life*
- *Christian Teens should date those close to their same age or level of maturity (within 2 - 3 years)*

“... it is the Maturity factor... more than the age factor.”

# "Dating Qualities"

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Here are some suggestions on the qualities to look for in young men and young ladies:

## **Look For These In A Young Man:**

- 1. Spirituality**
- 2. Character**
- 3. Manliness**
- 4. Loyalty (Pastors, Superiors, Friends)**
- 5. Respectfulness (Toward parents & authority)**
- 6. Stability (Jobs, finances, moods)**
- 7. Leadership**
- 8. Convictions**
- 9. Goals**
- 10. Physical Fitness**
- 11. Unselfishness**
- 12. Attentiveness (To others & in church, etc.)**
- 13. Consideration & Kindness**
- 14. Discernment & Sound Judgment**
- 15. Self - Control**
- 16. Diligence & Hard Work**
- 17. Sincerity & Realness**
- 18. Understanding & Acceptance**



## **Look For These In A Young Lady:**

- 1. Spirituality**
- 2. Character**
- 3. Femininity**
- 4. Submission**
- 5. Thriftiness**
- 6. Motherliness**
- 7. Physical Fitness**
- 8. Discretion**
- 9. Meekness**
- 10. Neatness**
- 11. Quietness**
- 12. Respectfulness**
- 13. Virtue**
- 14. Consideration & Kindness**
- 15. Diligence & Hard Work**
- 16. Understanding & Acceptance**
- 17. Sincerity & Realness**
- 18. Attentiveness (Good listener)**

## Chapter Three

# When Should I Date?

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The question of when to date is a difficult one. There are many reasons for this difficulty. These reasons are not necessarily obvious, but they are quite important. A look at them is necessary to the understanding of knowing when to date.

### **Are You Ready?**

When should you date? Whenever you are ready to date. Remember this is determined by many factors. We cannot discuss every factor in your life. But, know this for sure, the decision as to when you should date is NOT up to you. Do not expect to be the master of your fate when it comes to dating time. You do not decide this. Your parents are the ones to make this decision. If they know the Lord and listen to God's Word, God's man, and God's Holy Spirit, they will know how to advise you about dating. Trust them and their judgment, they love and care for you more than you can imagine.

God has given your parents to you because you need them. You need their guidance in this matter of dating. They have been down many of the same roads you are thinking about traveling. They know where the potholes and pitfalls are located. Listen to them about your dating life, especially this particular area of when to date. They know you better than you know you. They will know when you are ready. Wait for the right time, it will be worth the wait. While you're waiting, think about the reasons behind waiting for

the right time to date.

## **Are You Mature Enough?**

Dating age is one reason for difficulty in this area. No set dating age can be the perfect age for everyone. This is due in part to the differing levels of maturity among teenagers. One teen may be ready to date at seventeen, another may not be ready until the age of nineteen. Age itself is not the main factor as much as maturity. Discerning when a teenager is mature enough to date is not always easy. Be sure of this, as a teenager, you will probably think you're ready a long time before you actually are ready. Listen to the authorities God has put in your life. They will have a better idea of when you are ready than you will. Do not let your pride get in the way at this point. Trust that the Lord has put into your circle of influence the right people. These are those who are necessary to the best in life for you.

Another reason for the difficulty in deciding when to date is the very authorities in your life themselves. You see, parents themselves, do not always agree on when you should date. For example, take a teenage girl, Mom may think fifteen is a wonderful time for her lovely and beautiful daughter to be sought after for a date with "Joe Handsome." However, Daddy knows that his little girl is too good for the punk, and always will be. He plans for his little girl to date sometime near her thirty-fifth birthday. The pastor, as another authority, makes it clear that he doesn't think a child is ready for a date until after college. This lack of agreement adds to the difficulty in deciding when to date. Teens cannot push these authorities out of the picture even if they don't seem to make perfect sense all the time. They do have your best interests at heart. They really do want what is best for you. They honestly do know what's better for you than you do.

## How's Your Attitude?

Your own attitude towards dating affects this decision too. If you have an attitude of arrogance, pride, and rebellion, do not expect to be considered ready for dating. If you do not have a good understanding of what dating is and who you should be dating, then you are not ready to date. It does not matter how old you are or how many of your friends are dating. You may be thirty years old and have an attitude of "I'll do what I want to do" or "I'll date whom I please"; if so, you are not ready to date. You may say, "My brother or sister dated when they were sixteen, so I should be allowed to do the same." You are not the same as your brother or sister. They may have been ready at an age that is too young for you. If they dated at sixteen, you may need to wait until you are eighteen. "That's not fair" - Hey, wake up teenager, **"Life ain't fair"**. Get used to it. I am not being unkind, just realistic. It has always amazed me that the teen who gripes the loudest about not being treated like big brother and that does not like walking in big brother's shadow is the first one to want a comparison made when it is time to do something that's fun. How inconsistent, but oh, how normal and real.

When will you be ready to date? Whenever you realize the importance of maturity, age, authorities, and attitude. Only then will you be ready for dating. When you understand to some degree what dating is and who you should or should not date, you will be ready for dating. A submissive heart to the Lord and His Word will bring the right understanding of these issues to your mind.

## Single Date or Double Date?

Having considered the age, maturity, authority, and attitude

issues briefly, let's move on to being very practical with our guidelines for dating. In my opinion, and I trust I speak with a degree of wisdom from experience and from other godly men, dating should not begin before the age of fifteen and then only if the maturity level is right. Many teens are nowhere near ready for dating at fifteen due to a lack of maturity. This is not a hard and fast rule for all. It is just a wise suggestion as to when to wait before beginning a dating life.

This beginning of dating should only be "double dating". This is suggested for fifteen to seventeen year olds with their parents or some other responsible adults approved by the parents. "Single dating" should not be before age eighteen and then only under proper conditions with a chaperone. Single dating does not mean, nor does it imply, that a young man and a young lady should be alone in a car or house without a chaperone. Single dating is to be carefully guarded. Much danger exists for teens in this area. If a teenager objects to a chaperone, it is an indication that they are not ready to single date. The chaperone should certainly be someone with a level of Christian maturity beyond that of the teens being chaperoned.

There are no perfect answers, no perfect ages, no perfect solutions to the question of when to date. Patience, prayer, and godly wisdom are needed to make the right decision in this matter. IF you have doubts about it, seek some advice and counsel from your pastor. He will be more than glad to help you in this important area of your teenage life.

## Chapter Four

# Where Should I Date?

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Christian teens often express the feeling of having nowhere to go and nothing to do. This is especially true about dating. With so much sin and trouble in the world, what can Christian teenagers do about where to go on a date. To consider this issue, let's look at both the negative and the positive side of things.

### **The Negatives & the Positives**

#### **The Negative Side**

First, the negative side. There are plenty of places where a Christian teenager has no business going on a date. Rock concerts, country music concerts, dance parties, school dances, "the prom", lover's lane, the local lounge, and the movie house or drive-in theater - these are not for you as a Christian teenager. These are the types of places that should be off limits for you as a Christian teen. You have no business being there by yourself, much less with a date along. I cannot give an exhaustive list. I might leave something out by mistake. But, be sure that you think long and hard about where to go on date.

Be mindful of one more thing, no matter where you go. Never go alone on a date to a secluded place. Do not be alone in your home with just your date. Sitting alone with your date in some parked car is not the place to be on date. The opportunity for the temptation of your flesh will arise

in this private type of atmosphere. Avoid secretive situations and private rendezvous. They are conducive to sin between members of the opposite sex. Be careful where NOT to go on a date.

### **The Positive Side**

Just where can a Christian teenager go on a date. Well, for starters, **go to church**. If your date does not wish to go to church with you, if they object to this kind of activity, then you do not need to date that person. Church services provide a wonderful opportunity for Christian fellowship. Since this is the main thing involved in dating, it makes sense to date in an atmosphere like that of church services.

**Youth activities** are another excellent place to go on a date. Being around other Christian teens is great for a dating outing. Fun and fellowship will be the order of the day. You will have a great time with the other Christian teens as well.

**“Never go alone  
on a date to a  
secluded place.”**

**Church banquets**, Christmas and Valentine, etc., are great for dating places too. These offer fellowship, fun, supervision, and food. All of which is a part of a good dating experience. To object to these types of activities is to say that you do not like them yourself. These activities enhance a dating outing, they do not hinder nor detract from it.

**Your home or your date’s home** is a good place for a date too. Now, I do not mean being alone in the home, but with your parents or those of your date. This may seem very dull on the surface, but can be an enjoyable time if handled correctly. It is a chance to prove to your date’s parents that you are a person of good, Christian character.

Making a good impression on them cannot be over-emphasized. There is security, comfort, encouragement, and a good atmosphere in the home too. Try it, you may like it.



## Chapter Five

# Why Should I Date?

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Any discussion of dating for the Christian teen would be inadequate if it did not address the issue of WHY to date. The very essence of Christianity involves why we do things. It does not matter how much money you give in the church offering - it matters *why* you gave what you did. It does not matter how beautiful you sang a “special” in church - it matters *why* you sang. The motive behind everything we do as Christians is what is important. *Why* do we give and go and do. This is the main thing.

### **The Right & The Wrong Reasons**

#### **The Right Reasons**

Proper dating for the Christian teen involves dating for the right reason and motive. You are learning, growing, and developing. As you do, God will bring people into your life. One of these people will be your future mate. The “love of your life” will be brought before you somehow - some way. If you do not date, and that for the right reasons, you may well miss that special one for you.

Why, then, should you date? You need to reflect on this issue. You should date for the right reasons. Date because it provides some of the following important influences in your life:

- ✓ Time with other Christians
- ✓ Fellowship with the opposite sex

- ✓ Opportunity to grow and mature
- ✓ Chance to have good, clean fun
- ✓ Environment for developing conversational skills
- ✓ Avenues of learning about others
- ✓ Privilege of developing relationships
- ✓ Episodes for learning how to treat the opposite sex
- ✓ Occasion to get beyond yourself
- ✓ Break from being alone (“*It is not good that the man should alone*” - Gen. 2:18)
- ✓ Events of a lifetime to be remembered and shared

Date because of things similar to those mentioned above. This will make your dating experience a pleasant and enjoyable time. A time you will remember for the rest of your life. A time you can readily share with your children and grand-children. You may think of other good reasons. Date for the right reasons. This will be pleasing to the Lord and to your parents.

### **The Wrong Reasons**

Now, do not date for the wrong reasons, but for good, sensible reasons. Are there wrong reasons to date? YES!! Some of the wrong reasons to date are listed below:

- ✓ If you are dating to be seen - that is wrong.
- ✓ If you are dating just because others are and you want to be like them - that is wrong.
- ✓ If you are dating to get involved in sexual activity - that is wrong.
- ✓ If you are dating to please others who have put peer pressure on you - that is wrong.
- ✓ If you are dating because you can't stand being around your parents - that is wrong.
- ✓ If you are dating because you do not want to look like a “nerd” - that is wrong.

God is pleased when we do things that are right for the right reason. This includes dating. Pray for His guidance to have the proper motive and outlook on this thing of dating.

## Chapter Six

# How Should I Date?

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This question becomes more and more important day by day as society changes. Ideas of dating, courtship, sexuality, and standards are changing in this world. This is not good, but it is a fact that ideas

about male and female relationships have changed over the past twenty years. Old fashioned ideas of decency and morality are gone. A new era has arrived in which everything and anything is considered acceptable, even on a date. Many people's concept of HOW to act on a date is determined by what they have seen on television or perhaps in some movie. Others have been influenced by the words and experiences of other adults, many of whom did not date properly themselves. It seems asinine that these very people would even attempt to tell the youth of today to follow their example. The modern method of dating with the emphasis so often on the physical is destroying our youth. The untold numbers of unwanted pregnancies and unwed mothers are a testament to this fact. Many a child has been aborted, no doubt, because of a relationship that went awry due to improper dating. We need to get back to some old fashioned dating principles.

**What's wrong  
with being  
OLD-  
FASHIONED?**

What is wrong with being old fashioned if it worked? What is wrong with having guidelines to follow if they help keep you out of trouble? What is wrong with doing things the old fashioned way if it provides healthy, pure, clean, and godly suggestions? The old ways, the old paths, are the

best. Proven by time and experience, many ways that seem old fashioned today are just good common sense.

How should you date? Listed below are some suggestions to help you:

## How?

- ✓ With gentlemanly courtesy or ladylike behavior.
- ✓ With Fear:
  - \* **Of God**
  - \* **Of Parents**
  - \* **Of Self**
  
- ✓ With :
  - \* **Propriety** (good behavior; modesty)
  - \* **Decency** (virtue; honesty)
  - \* **Respect** (admiration; honor)
  - \* **Kindness / etc.**

## Dating Manners

*"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." - I Cor. 10:31*

Everything a Christian does should be to the glory of God. This includes his/her behavior on a date. Here are some guidelines for good manners on a date:

### Before The Date:

#### • Asking for a date

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- ✓ Young man's responsibility
- ✓ Have details worked out ahead of time
- ✓ Don't fear being rejected nor insulted if you are
- ✓ Keep a positive attitude
- ✓ ASK, don't tell
  - Ask VERBALLY
  - Ask PERSONALLY
  - Ask POLITELY with CLASS.

#### • Accepting a date

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- ✓ Left to the girl
- ✓ Know in advance the type of young man you will date
- ✓ Have your standards in mind and also your parents'
- ✓ Accept VERBALLY and PERSONALLY with PROPRIETY and not with over-excitedness.

#### • Refusing a date

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- ✓ Refuse VERBALLY, POLITELY, and HONESTLY
- ✓ Show consideration for the person's feelings you have refused.

## **During The Date:**

\* **Introductions** - Introduce yourself properly to her parents and/or friends / Introduce her properly to your parents and/or friends / Address persons in authority first, then address your date.

\* **Behavior:**

## **Gentlemen**

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- ✓ Stand when your date enters the room
- ✓ Open doors for your date
- ✓ Help her with her coat, etc.
- ✓ Walk on the outside of sidewalk
- ✓ Carry heavy packages for her
- ✓ Pay the bills yourself
- ✓ Protect her from harm and lewd people
- ✓ Order for her at restaurant
- ✓ Eat with proper manners & etiquette
- ✓ Give her the best seat
- ✓ Pull chair out for her
- ✓ Hold songbook for her
- ✓ Talk about her interests
- ✓ Dress appropriately
- ✓ Call if you are going to be late

## **Ladies**

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- ✓ Give him a chance to do gentlemanly things
- ✓ Allow him to open doors
- ✓ Do not be loud and boisterous
- ✓ Talk about his interests and be a good listener
- ✓ Be a lady at all times
- ✓ Dress appropriately
- ✓ Be appreciative - say "Thank you"

# Both Ladies & Gentlemen

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- ✓ Look for humor
- ✓ Enjoy simple things not expensive things
- ✓ Witness appropriately
- ✓ Have "variety" - Do something different each date
- ✓ Give your date your full attention
- ✓ Talk about their interests
- ✓ Compliment them appropriately
- ✓ Talk of decent things - Phil.4:8
- ✓ Do not make fun of them or their family & friends
- ✓ Do not act rude
- ✓ Show the same respect for them that you expect
- ✓ Be yourself

## After The Date:

- ✓ End the date with a kind word of thanks and appreciation.
- ✓ Be certain you and your date are home on time.
- ✓ The gentleman should walk the young lady to her door or to her parents.
- ✓ The gentleman could simply say, "Thank you for a nice evening. Good night, see you tomorrow.", then walk away.
- ✓ The gentleman could possibly end the date with a brief word of prayer.
- ✓ The lady should end the date with a kind word and then go inside or walk away with her parents.
- ✓ Do not try to end dates with worldly style. Kissing and hugging are not appropriate behavior to end dates.



## Warning Signs Of Abusive Relationships

The following is a list of warning signs for potentially abusive relationships. They are presented as guidelines and indicators, not as judgments on the value of the another person.

### **Question relationships with those who:**

- Abuse alcohol or other drugs.
- Have a history of trouble with the law, get into fights, or break and destroy property.
- Don't work or go to school.
- Blame you for how they treat you, or for anything bad that happens.
- Abuse siblings, other family members, children or pets.
- Put down people, including your family and friends, or call them names.
- Are always angry at someone or something.
- Try to isolate you and control whom you see or where you go.
- Nag you or attempt to force you to be sexual when you intend to wait until marriage.
- Cheat on you or have lots of boyfriend/girlfriends.
- Are physically rough with you (push, shove, pull, yank, squeeze, restrain).
- Take your money or take advantage of you in other ways.
- Accuse you of flirting or "coming on" to others or accuse you of cheating on them.
- Don't listen to you or show interest in your opinions or feelings. . .things always have to be done their way.

- Ignore you, give you the silent treatment, or hang up on you.
- Lie to you, don't show up for appointments, maybe even disappear for days.
- Make vulgar comments about others in your presence
- Blame all arguments and problems on you.
- Tell you how to dress or act.
- Threaten to kill themselves if you break up with them, or tell you that they cannot live without you.
- Experience extreme mood swings. . .tell you you're the greatest one minute and rip you apart the next.
- Tell you to shut up or tell you you're dumb, stupid, fat, or call you some other name (directly or indirectly).
- Compare you to former boyfriend/girlfriends.

**Some other indicators that might hint that an abusive relationship is beginning:**

- You feel afraid to break up with them.
- You feel tied down, feel like you have to check-in.
- You feel afraid to make decisions or bring up certain subjects so that the other person won't get mad.
- You tell yourself that if you just try harder and love your boyfriend/girlfriend enough that everything will be just fine.
- You find yourself crying a lot, being depressed or unhappy.
- You find yourself worrying and obsessing about how to please your boyfriend/girlfriend and keep them happy.
- You find the physical or emotional abuse getting worse over time.

*Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Project*

## **Sexting: A Growing Problem For Teens**

### **What is Sexting?**

Sexting is defined as “*sending sexually suggestive messages or photos via text messaging on mobile phones.*” According to a 2008 survey of teenagers aged 13–19 commissioned by the National Campaign to Prevent



Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and CosmoGirl.com, 37% of girls and 40% of boys have engaged in some form of sexting, with 22% of girls and 18% of boys admitting that they have sent nude or seminude pictures of themselves using their cell phones.

Very simply, sexting is a play on the term “texting” and is applied to the action of sending semi-nude or nude photos to others on a cell phone, or posting these types of pictures online.

### **Why do Kids Do It?**

Teens surveyed say they do it to flirt, as a joke, or because of pressure from their peers. Even Christian teens do not see the harmful consequences from sexting. Beyond the moral consequences, there also can be legal consequences—redistributing nude photos of a minor is considered child pornography with all of the associated legal ramifications. Sexting has even led to suicide, when a teen girl couldn’t handle having explicit pictures of herself distributed among her classmates.

The dynamics at play when teens sext are varied. Many factors in any combination such as a need for attention, the desire to be recognized, peer-pressure, flirtation, new teen dating rituals, proof of commitment in a relationship, raging hormones, following the example of noted teen celebrities, adolescent risk-taking, and immaturity can be involved in a teen's decision to sext.

If parents and student leaders think their precious teens aren't sending naked pictures of themselves to their boyfriends and girlfriends, they need to think again. It's happening.

Students (teens age 12-17) are using their mobile phones as portable pornography devices.

There's a name for this: *sexting*. Sexting went mainstream in June 2011 when the national news outlets reported New York Representative Anthony D. Weiner sent suggestive photographs of himself to women he met over the Internet. Some of them returned the "favor," setting off a firestorm of controversy. Calls for his resignation from Congress came from both Democrats and Republicans.

While Weiner was adamant that he would not resign his seat, claiming he had broken no laws, pressure from his Democratic colleagues led to his June 16 resignation.

This was an adult who certainly should use better judgment, but teens need a good dose of judgment as well. They are old enough to know better, but sadly, studies show they aren't doing better.

A survey conducted by The Pew Internet and American Life Project in 2009 including only minors (age 12-17) said 4 percent of mobile phone-owning teens say they have sent

sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images or videos of themselves to someone else via text message, and 15 percent have received such messages.

One survey from the *National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy* said that 22 percent of girls and 18 percent of boys have sent nude or seminude pictures or videos of themselves via mobile phone. The survey also said that 37 percent of girls and 40 percent of boys said they had sent sexually suggestive messages to someone.

Mandy Crow, editor of EC, a student devotional magazine published by LifeWay, said church kids are not immune. "We talk with teens and student leaders often," she said. "We hear this everywhere. It's happening with church kids just like unchurched kids. "They seem to think it's flirty or funny," Crow said. "They just don't see the long-term consequences."

A panel of girls' ministry leaders talked about sexting during a large group session at the 2011 Girls' Ministry Forum. LifeWay's Girls Ministry Director Pam Gibbs acknowledged it's a conversation church leaders must be involved in.

"These young girls are sometimes naïve," Gibbs said. "Often, they are good kids and just want to be popular. They don't get it that this is something that can follow them for the rest of their lives." The panel agreed that sexting is happening with church kids. It often comes out of peer pressure or boyfriend/girlfriend insistence.

According to the *National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy* study (relating to those who admitted to having sent or posted sexually suggestive content):

71 percent of teenage girls and 67 percent of teenage guys who have sent or posted sexually suggestive content say they have sent or posted this content to a boyfriend or girlfriend.

21 percent of teenage girls and 39 percent of teenage boys say they have sent such content to someone they wanted to date or "hook up with" (euphemism for casual sexual encounter).

44 percent of both teenage girls and teenage boys say it is common for sexually suggestive text messages to be shared with people other than the intended recipient.

36 percent of teenage girls and 39 percent of teenage boys say it is common for nude or seminude photos to be shared with people other than the intended recipient.

MTV,\* a television network known for programming related to youth culture, aired "Sexting In America: When Privates Go Public."

Two young adults were profiled. At the time of the program, one was a 19-year-old girl who, at age 16, sent a nude photograph of herself to an ex-boyfriend who said he would get back together with her if she would send it. The boy instead sent the photo to everybody in his contact list and soon her photo was all over the school.

She said she not only felt betrayed but experienced "brutal and terrible harassment" from classmates that included vulgar name-calling.

A young man,\*\* 20 when the program was made, received naked pictures from his girlfriend when he was 17. They had a fight and he retaliated by calling up the picture on his

cell phone and hitting the "send all" on his contact list. The girl's picture went out to more than 70 people, including friends, teachers, parents and grandparents.

But by that time, he'd had his 18th birthday — still in high school but legally an adult.

He was arrested for distributing child pornography — she was still 17 — and put on five years' probation. In addition, he was required to register on the public sex offender list.

He said he was kicked out of college, can't find a job and can't live with his dad because his dad's house is near a school. He is required to attend a class for sex offenders, where, as he said, he's sitting in a room with "perverts and rapists."

Unless his attorney is successful in getting him taken off the list, he could remain on the sex offender list until he is in his 40s.

Depending on state laws, being on a sex offender list places limits on where a person can live and with whom they can associate. It also can limit the activities they can legally do.

These two young adults profiled on the MTV program didn't claim to be Christians or profess involvement in a church, but "good church kids" are not immune to the pressure of sexting.

Crow said it's important that student leaders and parents be proactive in dealing with sexting.

"Bottom line, it's child pornography," she said.

"Student leaders need to help parents know what to do and how to talk to their teenagers about sexting," she said. "Parents need to be empowered to speak out. The issue isn't going away."

While laws vary from state to state, the person creating and sending the image is possibly looking at charges of child pornography and sexual exploitation of a minor. Being convicted of those charges can carry up to 20 years in prison.

While almost two dozen states are considering changes to laws that would separate sexting from the same category as child pornography, that hasn't happened yet.

Crow said, "Helping students understand that once they hit 'send' they have lost all control of where that photo or video goes is a place to begin the conversation."

Starting the conversation on sexting

Mandy Crow, editor of LifeWay's EC magazine, and Pam Gibbs, girls ministry director, suggested parents and youth ministry leaders ask questions such as these to get the conversation started on sexting:

Do you know anyone who has posted or sent an inappropriate photo to a website or mobile phone?

How would you feel if your nude photo were sent to your parents or grandparents?

How would you feel if your nude photo were sent to your youth minister or pastor?



How would you feel if your picture were printed out and hung up all over your school?

Do you understand that once in cyberspace, a picture will never go away?

Do you honestly believe that anyone who would ask you to send an inappropriate photo of yourself on your mobile phone respects you enough to keep it private?

Do you understand that you must assume you are always in a place where mobile phones are present and at any time you may be photographed or videoed without your knowledge or permission?

Do you understand that you must have absolutely no expectation of privacy anywhere you go?

*Adapted from Polly House [www.Lifeway.com](http://www.Lifeway.com)*

## **Sexting Kills**

In a widely publicized case, 18-year-old Jessica Logan of Ohio sent a sext message (nude photo of herself) via her cell phone to her boyfriend. When they broke up the boyfriend sent the photo to other school students who knew Jesse. And some sent it on to others.

Soon these students started taunting Jesse. They called her a slut and a whore every time they saw her. She sank into depression, and became afraid to go to school.


The experience of being mercilessly bullied was so horrible for Jesse that she went on television to warn other teens never to get involved in sexting. Two months later, Jessica

hanged herself. Her mother found her hanging in her room with her cell phone lying in the middle of the floor.

Many, like Jessica Logan's photo, are circulated without the subject's knowledge to a wider and less-caring audience. Some naive teens think it is hilarious to see a girl they know in a nude photo, so they make fun of the girl and subject her to persistent taunts and harassment.

It is also against the law almost everywhere to send nude photos of anyone under the age of 18. So the girl who thought she would give her boyfriend a thrill by sexting him may find that she and all involved are guilty of distributing child pornography. They may go to jail for it.

Remember sexting kills. Jessica Logan's mother has a dead daughter to prove it.



## Relating To Dating

Dating really isn't mentioned at all in the Bible, so what is the correct way to do it when we aren't given any specific guidelines?

While most people have differing opinions about dating, it is one area of the Bible where there is not a lot of information. However, Christian teens can get some idea of God's expectations from certain Bible verses:

**Genesis 2:24** *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

**Proverbs 4:23** *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

**1 Corinthians 13:4-7** *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

These three passages give insight into Christian dating. We need to realize that God means for us to meet the person that we are meant to marry. According to Genesis, a man will leave home to marry one woman to become one flesh. You do not need to date a lot of people – just the right one.

Also, according to Proverbs 4:23, Christian teens need to guard (*keep*) their hearts. The word “love” is thrown around way too much, with little thought. While there are many

definitions of love, First Corinthians tells us how God defines love. Read 1 Cor. 13:1-13 for yourself.

When you date it should be taken seriously. You should know the person you are dating and know their beliefs. You should check your potential boyfriend against the values listed in 1 Corinthians. Ask yourself if the two of you are patient and kind to one another. Are you envious of one another? Do you boast about one another or to each other? Go through the characteristics to measure your relationship.

### **The History of Dating**

Almost certainly, dating seems normal to you as a way in which to meet someone you could potentially fall in love with and marry. We must be cautious, however, not to take our present-day experiences and make them the standard. We must always view the times in which we live through the lens of both history and Scripture.

The fact of the matter is, dating, as we know it in our present day, is a comparatively new thing. The history of dating is interesting. In the early 1900s “calling” and “courtship” was the main means of finding a mate. A young gentleman would call on a young lady by going to her parents’ home. Her parents vigilantly oversaw these occasions, and everything from clothing and food to how long the visit lasted was regulated. This sheltered women from any type of sexual assault that is common today by involving the parents on every level of the *courtship* procedure. It also limited the chance for a woman and a man to be alone and sin sexually.

However, society changed radically by the 1930s with the rise of the automobile. Cars gave young people liberty and mobility they never had before, resulting in increased

opportunities for men and women to go out alone and it increased temptations for sexual sin.

Things really changed by the 1960s with the onset of the *sexual revolution*. This resulted in the greatest change in the social dynamics of being single in the whole Western world, with orgies, casual sex, homosexuality, lesbianism, and bisexuality becoming increasingly socially acceptable.

The concept of dating became even more the norm around the 1970s and paved the way for removing any physical consequences of casual sex through the legalization of abortion in 1973 and making no-fault divorce legal in 1974. Add to that phenomenon, the birth control pill and other contraceptive measures, and we saw most of the cultural and practical reasons to limit sexual activity outside of marriage destroyed.

The end result of all this is that today we live in a society that is overly sexualized, sees nothing wrong with experimenting, and views regular, unmarried sex as not only normal but also healthy.

## **Culture and Dating**

Sex outside of marriage is now considered the norm, a huge change from just a century ago. Today, over 5 million couples live together outside of marriage. And this number does not take into account the amount of couples who don't live together but who still stay over at each other's places enough to be classified as "live-ins."

### ***Here are some shocking statistics:***

- An estimated one-fourth of unmarried women between 25 - 39 currently live with a partner.

- Over half of all first marriages are now preceded by living together prior to marriage.
- The most likely people to cohabit are those aged 20 to 24.
- This is problematic first because it is sin and against God's design for marriage and sex, which is to be enjoyed in the context of marriage.
- Studies almost always find that living together prior to marriage is associated with a higher divorce risk, with estimates ranging from 33 percent to 151 percent increased risk of divorce.
- Annual rates of depression among those living together prior to marriage are more than three times higher than married couples,
- Women in cohabitating relationships are twice as likely as married women to suffer abuse.
- Two studies found that women in cohabitating relationships are about nine times more likely to be killed by their partner than married women.
- Couples who live together prior to marriage report less marital happiness and more conflict when married.

***This is in contrast to those who marry as virgins:***

- Men who marry as virgins are 37 percent *less likely* to divorce.
- Women who marry as virgins are 24 percent *less likely* to divorce,
- Those who wait to have sex until marriage and remain faithful in marriage report *higher levels of life satisfaction* compared to adults who engage in premarital or adulterous sex.
- Those who wait to have sex and are faithful to their spouse also report notably *higher happiness scores*.

The bottom line of all this is that the Devil is still a liar. Though our society wants to make living together prior to marriage and casual sex seem normal and healthy, the statistics tell the opposite—it is destructive. God’s plan is still the best plan. God’s way is still the best way.

I am not speaking as some proud fool who does not know what he is saying. I was a virgin, as was my wife, and we kept ourselves pure for each other as we anticipated our wedding day. For those who are like us, let me encourage you to keep pursuing purity. It is worth it to your conscience, your testimony, and even your children. You will want to say to your kids that you stayed pure and so can they. It is only by the grace that you can do it but it is the right way to go because it is God’s way.

For those who have made mistakes or have chosen not to do it God’s way, there is still hope. God does forgive, and things can get better.

With that in mind, I share some thoughts on dating and pursuing a godly spouse.

### **Work at Being The Right Person Not In Finding The Right Person**

Far too many unmarried people have a list as long as your arm of what they want in a spouse. The truth is they don’t really know what they want. Their list is usually some sort of résumé that describes a perfect mate not taking into account they themselves have flaws. The best idea may be to not have a list for the person you want to marry but instead have a list for yourself! It seems very self-centered and self-seeking to make a list of what someone else should be without having a detailed list of what you need to be for them.

Single folks in the church need to focus on being the right person if they are to be dating and marrying. This means *knowing who you are in Christ* rather than who you are as just a single person within the framework of today's culture. This may mean fighting the tendency of two forms: Independence and Dependence.

### ***Independence***

Some young people/singles value their independence above everything else in life. The thought of committing to someone scares them to death. Rather than commit, they will stay single, not because they want to honor God this way, but because they do not want to give up their independence to someone else. This is often why some relationships fail.

### ***Dependence***

Other are clingy and needy people that can't be on your own at all. They adore other people's relationships and desire to have someone to be with—again, not to exalt the Lord, but instead to feel safe and to find who they are through some relationship. They are totally dependent above everything else.

It would be far better to find your identity in Christ, serving Him and His church well, and trusting him to provide the right person for you at the right time.

### **Get Married To The Right Person**

A number of people have a list so lengthy and so detailed for a possible spouse that they'll never find anybody who measures up to their standards. Be realistic in your expectations. Also, understand that sometimes God brings



someone very different into your life than expected. By dating and possibly marrying this person, both of you may become more of what God wants in your holiness and your happiness.

Lots of people have unrealistic expectations of what they want for dating purposes or marrying, which often results missing someone God has put right in front of you. Open your eyes to see who the perfect God may have in your life right now or face frustration on your part and miss out on a great potential mate.

One of the greatest love stories in the Bible is the story of Ruth and Boaz. Their story is perfect for young people today. They were older. He was a successful and godly businessman and community leader. He could have married any number of women. But he picked Ruth. Her family descended from a terrible background, she was a stranger from another country, and she was not a virgin but a widow, as well as a new believer, homeless (gleaning for food, which is the same today as going to the food bank or being considered a vagabond), and she came with a mother-in-law in tow who had changed her name to Mara-*“bitterness.”* This was probably not the list Boaz had made for his potential spouse. However, she was indeed remarkable and is included in the genealogical list of descendants given for the Lord Jesus Christ found in Matthew’s Gospel, Chapter 1.

That being said, you should not throw your standards out of the window. A possible spouse/dating friend should be a Christian. They should love the Lord, love His church, and be Biblically sound. Dating someone who isn’t a Christian attempts to build a relationship separate from a good foundation in Christ and leads to much trouble and heartache down the road.

A non-believer cannot truly understand who you are since they don't know the Lord. Also, since the Word of God is the highest authority in a Christian's life, a relationship with someone who doesn't trust the Bible leaves you in a position to have two value systems. These often contradict each other as the foundation for a relationship. Then, when hard times come, and they most certainly will, you no way of dealing with what comes between you.

But dating someone who is a Christian is just the beginning. In order to think of spending your life with someone in a godly relationship, you need to also share the same basic beliefs.

While you may have friends that you disagree with on some Biblical issues, it is not sensible to date someone with whom you disagree with on fundamental issues such as the inspiration of Scripture, the deity of Christ, the Trinity, gender roles in marriage, child rearing, and much more. This will only set you up for huge clashes when and if you are married and especially when you have children.

### **Do Things The Right Way**

Ladies should pay special attention here. The Bible teaches male leadership. This means that the man should lead as the head of the home. Because of this, any loving relationship should start with the man taking the initiative to kindly and respectfully ask for the opportunity to date you.

Men should also be aware that the Bible teaches us in 1 Timothy 5:1–2 to treat Christian women with sisterly love. This means that you courteously get to know a lady you're interested in without pressure and without sexual contact. Also, since men are called to lead, once you are married, you should be the one to gather up the courage to ask out a

woman you're interested in. Far too many Christian men are nervous and shy and need the courage to actually face rejection while searching for a wife. Finally, if she is not interested, you should respect that answer and trust that God will bring the right person into your life.

Also, when dating, remember that the ultimate goal of Christian dating is not to just have a boyfriend or girlfriend but to actually find a spouse. Have that in mind as you get to know each other, and if you're not ready to commit to a relationship with the end goal of marriage, it's better not to date and try to simply remain friends.

### **Make Your Move At The Right Time**

Often, there are many things you need to work on before you're ready to date or marry. Sometimes there are habitual sins that need to be addressed. You may also need to work on establishing yourself so as to provide for a family or to grow stronger in your walk with the Lord.

Recognize that being single for a season allows you freedom and benefits you won't have after you are married. Use the time now to wisely finish your schooling, take a trip to a mission field, serve in your local church, launch your career, or build a solid financial foundation free of debt. Until you are ready to date or marry, concentrate on those issues, and then pursue a relationship. Live your single years to the glory of God. Don't throw them away.

### **Spend Time With The Right Group Of People**

For the most part, spend time around folks in Bible-teaching/preaching local church. Labor in that church, humbly study and learn from those who have more life skill than you and who have developed an enduring relationship

with the Lord, and grow as a Christian under solid, competent teachers, friends, and leaders.

In addition, if you have a good upright family, honor your own folks. Permit them to speak to you about any relationship and let them get to know the person you are considering. This is all the more important for young ladies who have Christian parents who love them. Any man who wants to be with you should want to get to know your church friends and your family, live openly and honestly before them, and gain their blessing. Any man who takes a lady away from her own godly family and church family is dangerous and likely up to something.

### **Pursue This Path For The Right Reasons**

The “right” reasons always involve genuine LOVE. The Bible commands a husband and a wife to love each other (Eph. 5:25; Titus 2:3–4). There is nothing sadder than a marriage that is lacking love or not growing in love. If a man and woman don’t love one another and are not devoted to building love over a lifetime, they shouldn’t marry.

Furthermore, it’s not enough to date someone you think is only beautiful on the *outside*, and it’s also not sufficient to date someone you think is only beautiful on the *inside*. Rather, you should be attracted to the whole person, *inside and out*.

My wife and I love each other now more than ever and truly enjoy each other’s companionship. We work together and not against each another. We have supported each other through all the ups and downs. Our kids are now grown, and we are still together after 38 years of marriage. We are hopefully not just older but wiser, better friends because of it. The point is that life changes and so do we as people.

Marry someone suitable for every season of life and seek to be the right kind of person for them as well.

## Conclusion

It is hoped that these suggestions would be a source of help to parents and young people about good, sensible and Biblical guidelines for dating and relationships.

The Bible offers help and wisdom towards the proper enjoyment of this exciting time in the life of parents and young people. Everyone wanting to get the most out of these special years, whether it be parents or teens or singles, should be willing to follow whatever guidelines God offers in His Word.

The ideas presented were not original. They were gleaned from many years of working with Christian young people as well as my own children.

**“Whether therefore  
ye eat, or drink, or  
whatsoever ye do, do  
all to the glory of  
God”  
I Cor. 10:32.**

The writer of Proverbs tells us, *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise”* - Proverbs 13:20. Together we should learn and do more to develop good relationship guidelines than if we try to do it alone.

These guidelines will work if applied with a genuine desire to do what is right and with a heart that seeks to please the Lord. Every Christian, including those who wish to date, should endeavor to obey the Word of God and do all things to the glory of God...

***“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” - I Cor. 10:32.***

