

Dating

It is so important that young people date the right people.

I. The Problem of Premature Dating

*Tensions between parents and children.

* Dating process can be dangerous if right choices are not made.

* Many not prepared for new choices and stresses dating presents.

*Kids face intense pressure from others around them to "go out" with someone; dating can become a badge of acceptance, an evidence of a young person's worth or attractiveness.

A few assert their independence by going where they choose and with whom they choose. Many . . . just date because it's expected.'

II. The Causes of Premature Dating

A. Decisions in Dating

1-. When to Start Dating.

Some parents think their children should be a certain age before dating.

2- Maturity Factor

However, chronological age is seldom a reliable indicator of a young person's readiness to date. The crucial factor is whether he or she is **spiritually and emotionally mature enough** to handle the many decisions and dangers of dating. Some people may be mature enough at fifteen or sixteen; others should probably wait longer.

Some of the key indicators of a teen's readiness for dating are:

- Is he or she often influenced by peer pressure?
- Is he or she most attracted to people his or her own age?
- Does he or she intend to date for friendship instead of romance?
- Has the teen committed himself or herself to sexual purity and determined not to compromise that commitment?
- Does the young person have his or her parents'

permission to date?

- Is the teen's self-image based on whether or not he or she is dating?
- Is he or she able to resist immediate gratification in other areas? Does he or she display a preference to strive for future satisfaction and fulfillment (over immediate gratification) in other areas?

3- The Age Factor.

While a difference of five years in age may make little difference to a twenty-five-year-old dating a thirty-year-old, for example, it can cause severe problems for a fourteen-year-old dating a nineteen-year-old.

The reason for this is that the **teen years are a time of major physical, emotional, and spiritual changes;** some changes may happen so fast that a teen is not prepared to handle them.

The central issue is not chronological age as much as spiritual and emotional maturity.

4- Interracial Dating.

The Bible does not forbid interracial marriage but there are social implications that cannot be overlooked and to fail to consider.

The Bible does not condemn racial marriages but one is wise to consider possible social problems that may come, depending on the area in which you may live.

5- "Missionary" Dating.

It is right to date someone thinking you may act as a missionary and win them to the Lord?

The Word of God answers that question.

2 Corinthians 6:14

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Paul's warning does not apply only to dating; it refers to any "yoking" of Christian and non-Christian. It applies also to _____, and to _____ such as dating and marriage.

There is not one single eternal value or interest they have in common on the truly important areas.

This doesn't mean that a Christian is not to be around non-Christians. On the other hand, the Christian young person who becomes involved romantically with a non-Christian is crossing a line of _____ that God's Word has drawn.

B. Dangers in Dating

1. There is the danger of isolating yourself from your friends.
- 2- The danger of forgetting other important relationships in your life like brothers, sisters, and parents.
- 3- There is also the danger of dating for the wrong reasons
 - a. dating to impress your friends, . . .
 - b. dating to get back at someone
 - c. dating to cause jealousy.In such a case, you are merely using your date, and you don't really care about him as a person.

Dating can become a power game.
Love is being used to gain power and prestige.

- d. You become so date conscious that within the church youth group, you only talk with those you feel are potential dates, and you leave the rest alone.
- e. There is also the danger of feeling trapped once you start dating a person.
- f. There is the danger of getting hurt and hurting someone else.
- g. There are also the dangers of mistaking emotional and physical attraction for real love
The danger of letting sexual desires get out of control is always possible.

C. Design in Dating

They should think through three things: his or her purpose, standards, and plans for dating.

1- Purpose.

- a. One purpose of dating is socialization —
Dating is a means of learning more about oneself and a way to become skilled at sensing the needs and feelings of another person.
- b. Mate selection
Obviously, the person you marry will be someone you've dated. The typical progression is from casual dates to friendship dates to steady dating to engagement and marriage.

Sexual exploration and experimentation are not healthy purposes for dating; however, socialization and even mate selection—are sound purposes for dating.

2. Standards

You can form your standards by asking yourself the following questions:

- Should I confine my dating activity to double dates?
- Should I frequent only public places?
- What forms of touching and interaction are acceptable?
- What types of activities will I avoid or refuse?

Dating standards should certainly include a clear determination of where to draw the line in the following chart of the progression of physical expression and involvement:

Necking Holding hands

Hugging

Casual kissing (peck kissing)

Prolonged kissing

Petting French kissing (including last stages of necking—ears, neck, etc.)

Breasts covered

Breasts bared

Heavy Petting Genitals covered

Genitals bared

Oral sex

Genital to Genital

Intercourse

The wisest place to draw the line in the above progression is after casual kissing.

3. Plans

The final step in framing a sound, helpful design for Christian dating is planning.

An attractive option is group dating.

In group dating guys and gals get together to do different activities without pairing up. The group decides where to go and what to do, and everyone goes along. Everyone pays [his or her] own way.

Many teenagers like group dating because it removes the sexual pressure of dating just one person.

Another consideration is to plan for a climate in which two people can become friends.

Activities provide plenty to talk about and allow the participants to discover each other's likes, dislikes, and previous life experiences.

Other good dating activities to plan might include:

- table games/jigsaw puzzles
- simple sports like ping pong, croquet, or miniature golf
- sailing, surfing, or other water sports
- a walk through the neighborhood, shopping area, etc.
- people-watching at a mall
- making dinner together
- roller skating /ice skating
- tackling a project together (homecoming float, posters for youth group car wash, etc.)
- going hiking in a local or state park
- making home videos together
- building and flying a kite
- taking a walk in the rain
- planning a party for your friends
- showing off each other's family photo albums
- buying a bus pass and riding all over town
- attending an auction^o

One more key to planning the dating experience is to map out possible responses to situations that may arise, such as:

- How much money will I need to spend? Will I have enough?
- How will I respond if my date wants to get physical?
- If my date takes me somewhere I don't want to go, what will I do?
- Under what circumstances will I put a stop to the date? To the relationship?
- How will I react if others around me begin to act inappropriately (drinking alcohol or smoking pot, for example)?
- How will I evaluate whether the date was a success?

Teens should make sure Mom and Dad know

- (1) who the teen is with,
- (2) where he or she is, and
- (3) where he or she is going.

IV. The Response to the Problem of Premature Dating

Look in your text book to find details in dealing with the matter of dating and observe Scripture references.

Choosing The Right Marriage Partner

I. The Problem of Choosing the Right Marriage Partner

The two most important decisions of a man or woman's life are whether or not to follow Christ and whom to marry.

The question of "the right one" comes particularly strongly to those **who do not believe in divorce**—who want to marry once, for life.

Many young people look at the divorces and unhappy marriages that exist all around them and wonder whether they can expect any better. They observe seemingly mismatched couples and worry about making the wrong choice.

They witness abusive relationships and fear becoming victims of a poor choice.

Many are motivated by a determination not to repeat their parents' "mistakes."

II. The Causes of Problems in Choosing the Right Marriage Partner

Many youth do make mistakes in dating and marriage, and some of their mistakes are tragic. Very often, however, such mistakes are not the result of not finding the right person but result from other causes.

A. Not Being the Right Person

Teens and young adults routinely make the mistake of looking for and praying for the right person to come along while giving little or no attention to being the right person.

It is here that so many young people falter. Instead of praying and working to become a young man or woman who is ready to make a lifetime commitment before God, many frantically look for a mate in every date—and so set themselves up for disappointment.

B. Looking for the Wrong Person

Similarly, some young men and women look for "the right one" without realizing they're actually looking for the wrong one. They paint pictures in their minds of what "the right one" will be like.

The list often starts with stunning physical beauty, self-confident charm, and impeccable manners, and may also include spiritual and social characteristics.

This is not to say that a young person should not look for certain qualities in a potential mate but simply that such qualifications should reflect realistic, godly goals.

C. Having the Wrong Motives

Mistakes in dating and marriage are often the result of unwise and ungodly motives. Even Christian teens and young adults often seek a mate for the wrong reasons.

POOR REASONS FOR GETTING MARRIED:

1- Senior Panic. "Everyone else is getting married right after graduation (high school or college), and I'd better, too."

2- Old-Maid Syndrome.

Feeling like all the good ones have been taken or that the right one will never appear.

3- The Great Escape. Some marry because of a bad home life. . . .

4- On the Rebound. Often people marry soon after a painful breakup. They try to fill the emotional vacuum or take revenge. . . .

5-Pressure Play. When a couple's parents keep pushing them to marry, they often marry.

6- Meet My Needs. Many people marry primarily to have their own needs met, rather than to meet the needs of their spouse. These needs may center on self-esteem, sex, emotions, finances, or other needs.

7- Crisis Pregnancy. An untold number of couples marry each year because of crisis pregnancy. In some rare situations, this is best, but not in most cases.

III. The Biblical Perspective of Choosing the Right Marriage Partner

◆ Three Key Questions

Many young people agonize over choosing the "right" marriage partner, and of course, that is a very important decision. But careful and biblical attention to three questions can help.

Is There Only One Right Person?

If God has called you to be married, he does have just one person for you. I believe that you can be absolutely certain of finding him or her by walking in the light of God. And you will be able to say for certain, "This woman [or this man] is the only one for me."

Some would say God doesn't have one particular person picked out for you.

Some suggest that it might be more realistic to say "that one should marry a right person rather than the right person." God does give us the freedom to make wise choices within prescribed moral limits.

The Bible says a Christian can only marry another believer (2 Cor. 6:14] which in one sense is very limiting (it discounts much of the world), and in another sense is very broad (there are many Christians).

We can't ignore either God's sovereignty or our human responsibility.

How Do I Know I've Found the Right Person? God's will, it should be considered prayerfully and biblically.

If you pray, God's peace will guide you.

If you obey the Word, God's Spirit will help you.

You should **do nothing major that** isn't the will of God for you to do.

The question remains, however: Once a young person has sincerely sought God's guidance regarding the choice of a mate, how does he or she know if the right decision has been made?

You know the right one for sure on the day you stand in front of a preacher and say "I do." Until that day you probably won't know for sure. After that day the issue is settled, forever. . . .

It seems like a trick. You want to know the right one in order to make the choice simple. Instead, the choice becomes more demanding. **You make the choice on your own, and then when you've made it you hear the door locking behind you.**

Your choice has suddenly become God's choice.

We want to reduce marriage mainly to a question of finding the right combination of personalities, like finding the right key for a lock.

Compatibility is important, but it is not the most important criteria in a successful marriage. **God's main focus is not compatibility,** but a question which cuts to the heart of marriage: **Can you say "I do" and stick with it until death?** If you can, then you have found "the right one"—and you have also become "the right one."

Both partners should be sure that each understands and agrees to the intention to marry, and they should agree on an engagement period that is comfortable for both before the wedding.

How long should the engagement last?

Different couples have different needs, but two guidelines will help.

1- The engagement should last long enough to prepare.

Two big events need preparation—the _____ and life together after the ceremony.

Planning the wedding ceremony usually takes three to six months, depending on the size of the ceremony.

2-The engagement should be short enough to avoid problems. During engagement the sexual temptation heightens.

Good questions to ask before considering marriage:

1. Do you help each other grow closer to God?
2. Can you talk?
3. Can you play together?
4. Can you work together?
5. Do you have mutual friends?
6. Are you proud of each other?
7. Are you intellectually on the same level?
8. Do you have common interests?
9. Do you share the same values?
10. Do you feel comfortable about how you make decisions together?
11. Do you help each other emotionally?
12. Do you have absolute trust in each other?

Choosing the Right Marriage Partner

13. Are you more creative and energetic because of each other?
14. Can you accept and appreciate each other's family?

15. Do you have unresolved relationships in your past?
16. Is sex under control?
17. Have you spent time together? Stafford suggests, "a year of real closeness is the minimum."

Scriptures:

Ephesians 5:21-28

Ecclesiastes 9:9

Proverbs 18:22

22 Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:3

3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

2 Corinthians 6:14

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?