

Relationships

Christian/Biblical Conduct While Dating and Waiting

- The world has a glaringly different perspective on dating than the Bible does. The world screams a lie that self-gratification, pleasure, and idolatry are valid and acceptable. The Bible heavily contradicts these ideas of thought (1 Cor. 6:19-20, Gal. 5:19-23, Ex. 20:3, 14 the list could go on and on!).
- Naturally, our fleshly bodies are prone to sin and fight against the Holy Spirit that dwells within us as believers. Paul tells us of his struggle between his fleshly desires and tendencies in Romans 7:14-21 and how they war against what is best for him spiritually. This conflict isn't new or unique to yourself- it's something every believer experiences and have experienced since the beginning of man.
- Our spiritual relationship with Christ is THE most important relationship in our lives. Ever. Period. We *cannot* live a life of joy and peace without closeness with Him.

If any person/place/thing pulls you away from the Lord, even an inch, **STOP** and **LISTEN** to the Spirit and **be willing** to follow what He tells you to do- even if you have to leave, throw something away, stop talking to a person for a while or forever, etc. We can do all things through Christ!

- When looking for a partner, analyze their character qualities **FIRST**. Our goal in dating is to find someone to whom we are equally yoked (1 Cor. 6:14). Our minds quickly become attracted to what we see. Beauty and physical appearances are enticing but fleeting. If we aren't guarded with the Holy Spirit, our hearts and minds become fogged with who we think the person is or who we want them to be, instead of truly allowing ourselves to see who they are and their identity in Christ (or lack of). ***Just because the person goes to a like-faith church does NOT guarantee they will be equally yoked to you.*** This takes a LOT of prayer time and willingness to see things God's way (even if He tells us that person isn't right for us- which can be super hard to accept if we have started to "fall" for them) There will be disappointments in this process, but devastation can be avoided when we set our eyes on the Lord and guard our hearts with His truth.

Things to Pray:

- Ask God to put unhealthy thoughts/feelings/desires to sleep until the appropriate time or season in your life
- Ask for discernment of others- we need Him to show us the people who will help to build up our relationship with Him and the people we should avoid entirely
- Strength to be different from the world- 1 Pet. 2:9, Matt. 7:13-14
- Courage to walk away or run when opportunities to sin pop up
- Forgiveness for any unholy thoughts, routines, or idols
- Joy and contentment with where we are planted
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- Don't let **lust** fuel your relationship or your life (2 Tim. 2:22)- easier said than done, but the Bible heavily warns against lust. Jesus said that a man who looks lustfully at another woman (not his wife) has already committed adultery in his heart! (Matt. 5:28) Lust can appear in many different ways- thinking about the person/how attractive they are all the time, wanting to be physically close to them (cuddling, hugging, kissing, etc.), letting your mind wander about future plans with that person, fantasizing or having conversations about how life will be once married/honeymoon days, dirty jokes, etc. can all be forms of lust. If it takes the seat of your heart instead of the Lord, it is sin. Lust is a sin that our bodies are innately prone to and something to ask for God to protect us from!
- Trust your gut while dating. If something feels wrong, it probably **is wrong**. God gave us the Holy Spirit to protect us from messing up. Your purity and relationship with God should never be jeopardized **-ever-** by your significant other. If it is, they are NOT the one for you! It's likely time to guillotine the relationship if your purity isn't valued or protected. Ask God to send you a partner who will help protect your relationship with Christ, protect your purity and influence, and help you grow closer to the Lord. Those people do exist. God knows exactly who we need in our lives and when. We need to trust that He's going to bring them into our lives at exactly the perfect time and not settle for anything less.
- Why is it such a big deal to exhibit Christian/Biblical conduct in my dating experience?
 - A: Because your influence, how you live, and what you do with your body **matters**. Satan/the world/media will tell you that it doesn't: LIES! "Our adversary the devil [is] a roaring lion, [walking] about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Satan wants to destroy your influence like he did with Lot so that you cannot turn others to the Gospel or be a light in your community (Gen. 18 & 19). Even if you feel like your actions are hidden in secret, your relationship with Christ will be in jeopardy because you are choosing the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:25). The pleasure of sin for a moment is not worth the aftermath and consequences of it.

...your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own.
 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.
 1 Cor. 6:19-20

Red Flag Phrases:

- You're not going to Hell if you _____.
- No one has to know but us.
- Everyone else does _____ and look at their lives. They are just fine.
- So-and-so did _____ with their girlfriend/boyfriend, and they didn't die/go to Hell/etc.
- It's not that big of a deal.
- I just don't know why you worry about that so much.
- It's not like we are killing someone or (insert "awful crime" here).
- Well the Bible doesn't say we can't "fool around."
- It's ok if we _____ because we are going to be married one day...

Although these lists aren't exhaustive, it's a great starting point! Try to add more on your own or with your small group.

Things to Do While Dating and Waiting:

- ★ PRAY. All the time. Every day.
- ★ Enjoy life being single- the blessings are endless and God's timing is perfect!
- ★ Try activities alone, and invite Christ to go with you
- ★ Group dates and events
- ★ Wear modest clothing or shirts with positive messages
- ★ Know your boundaries- journal or make a list of non-negotiables
- ★ Keep your family and church family close- talk about your singleness or relationship with them
- ★ Read scripture and sound devotionals on purity, dating, fruits of the spirit, etc. Learn as much about the Bible as possible!
- ★ Rely on Jesus to meet all your emotional needs
- ★ Journal about the qualities you want in a partner & the ones you definitely won't accept
- ★ Maintain interests outside of relationships- hobbies, activities, etc.
- ★ Observe godly couples who have been married for decades- note their example
- ★ Talk about God with your partner! Discuss your salvation experiences and find out ways you can pray for one another

Things to Avoid in Dating:

- Time alone/unsupervised with the opposite sex, especially early on
- Lowering your standards or allowing boundaries to be crossed
- Inappropriate/revealing clothing
- Giving all of your time or energy to your significant other
- Expecting him/her to be able to fulfill all your emotional needs
- Lust. See previous page!
- Moving too fast- give yourself at least 60 days to look for fruits of the Spirit or red flags
- Texting/Calling/FaceTiming allllllllll the time
- Music, videos, books, or articles that portray dating themes in a worldly view
- Staying overnight under the same roof, even if you have separate sleeping quarters from him/her
- Fantasizing about a future with him/her before you allow the Spirit to show you their character (Matt. 7:20)
- Physical touch- proceed with extreme caution, prayer, and self-control

Notes: