

Dating is one of the first big ways that you can set out on your own. Your parents probably won't chaperone all your dates, so it's up to you to "have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called." (**Ephesians 4:1**) Whatever you do, remember who you are - a Christian.

Here's a great passage to keep handy for a date. You could even keep it in your Bible and keep your Bible handy for a date. I don't mean every date has to be a Bible study, but I mean we need to keep God's will at the front of our minds, *especially* on a date.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

¹ Brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should . . . please God; ² for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵ not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter . . . ⁷ For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

The World's Expectations

The world has unwritten rules about all aspects of dating, from how to dress for a date ("Less is more," and "Alluring is the goal"), to where to go ("Dark secluded places are good!"), and when to kiss ("Always sooner rather than later"). The world has a knack for turning every date into a game where *hormones rule*. Mutual attraction, beauty and love are measured only in physical (or sexual) terms.

Only worldly people need a physical, (i.e., sexual, often confused with "romantic") relationship to be secure with each other. If you want to see some really miserable, guilt-ridden Christians, find ones whose dating relationship has become dominated by passion. On the other hand, if you abstain from kissing and making out, it may confuse or surprise the other person, but (s)he will respect you and may even fall in love with you, perhaps simply *because* "you're not like the others." (After all, deep down, people want to be wanted for more than just their bodies.) And when you do "fall in love," you'll *know* that it's not just lust in disguise, and your relationship will flourish.

A physical relationship can wait. You don't have to kiss to know that you can, and you don't have to explore a physical relationship to see if you'll be attracted to each other. God made us so that all healthy people can be physically attracted to just about *anyone* of the opposite sex, and can expect to enjoy a normal physical relationship after marriage.

A couple who are trying to get to know each other need to explore many areas. Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." (**Luke 2:52**) Every person – and thus every relationship – has four parts: intellectual, physical, spiritual and social. Dating couples may explore the intellectual, social and spiritual domains (within certain limits), but they have no right to a physical relationship. But instead of fleeing youthful lusts on a date, many people dive head first into them and allow Satan to have a field day with their souls. They may lie to themselves and to each other by saying, "I'm in control," but consider these facts:

- You can't ever control the other person. "It takes two to tango." You can't answer for

what the other person might do, even if (s)he's a Christian. In the passion of the moment, it's easy to let the other person control the situation. When both people think this way, *no one* is in control!

- You can't always control yourself.

James 1:14 Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

[Desire out of bounds is "lust".

Lust brings sin. Sin brings death. L, S, D]

- You can't think straight on a date.

When desire and hormones take over, it's natural to want to let go and hope the other person is "strong." ***You can't think straight when hormones are raging.*** Hormones can make you as drunk as alcohol can. So you have to ***decide in advance*** about ways of escape and proper behavior.

- There is no stopping point.

Once you start fanning the flames of desire, strong, natural forces take over. If you think you can stir up sexual desire and then shut it off at will, then draw me a line — show me where it's *natural* to stop! *Any* point you choose is *artificial*. Desire naturally leads you to fulfill the desire. "But," someone says, "kissing is *safe!*" NOT! If you don't think kissing stirs up sexual desire, maybe you've been practicing on your cocker spaniel!

If you've already decided that you won't have sex before marriage, why frustrate and tempt yourself and the other person by doing things that stir up that desire and those hormones, knowing you'll have to (try to) stop short?

The Stove Is Hot

Take wise advice from someone who's "been there, done that." When you tell a kid that the stove is hot, it's probably because you've been burned by it and you're trying to save him from pain and scars. Don't hurt your soul and scar your reputation and self-esteem for the sake of a "good time" on a date. The stove is hot; Stay away from the stove! Sex happens too fast and too easy. And lewdness and uncleanness (not to mention adultery in the heart! – **Matthew 5:28**) can happen long before a couple "does anything wrong."

And take advice from the apostle Paul, "because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified." (**1 Thessalonians 4:6**)

Ways of Escape

There are smart ways to approach dating. If you recognize danger and avoid it, you can "please God"; do "the will of God", maintain "your sanctification" in "holiness", "abstain from sexual immorality" and "possess [your] own vessel in sanctification and honor".

- The time of day. Most couples go out at night. But when the mall is closed and there are no clean movies and no wholesome places to go and you're out of money for a restaurant, remember, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop" (That's not Bible, but it's true!) Go home and plan to meet Saturday morning for a walk, picnic, bike ride, or whatever.

- People. Don't date someone with a reputation for being "fast" or "loose" at all. Avoid being alone with your date ... period. Don't date a non-Christian or even a Christian alone. And don't even *double-date* or group date with unpredictable people! (**1 Corinthians 15:33-34**)

- Places. Dark, noisy places (like night clubs) can make you *feel* like you're alone even in a crowd, and dark quiet places (like a parked car) should be off limits. If you want some privacy to *talk*, talk on the phone. If you want to sit and make goo-goo eyes at each other, do it with family or friends nearby. If you want to kiss and make out, remember who you are and chill out till you're married.

- Circumstances. Stay in control of the surroundings. Don't depend on (or permit) the other person to make all the arrangements.

- Thoughts.

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

2 Timothy 2:19 Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. ...
22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Romans 13:13-14 Let us walk properly, as in the day, ... not in licentiousness and lewdness ... Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

2 Corinthians 2:11 ... Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

May God bless you in all your relationships.

“Wanna Go Out?”



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