

God's Purpose for Dating

Dating for a Christian is different than what the world views. The world makes you feel inadequate, or that something is missing if you're single. The world makes dating look like it's completely normal for elementary kids to be in a "relationship". The worldview encourages dating as many people as you can for as many shallow reasons as possible. The world says, "You can have a casual relationship, with no strings attached." Once you define yourself as being in a relationship, it can no longer be thought of as casual. The only thing that this type of behavior leads to is heartache.

DATING IS NOT:

- a way to make you feel complete.
- a status symbol.
- a method of gaining a free meal.

There isn't much information on dating in the bible. This is because in biblical times, your parents were very much involved in choosing your future spouse. The bible does have quite a bit to say about marriage. The bible gives clear instruction on what a husband and wife's role are in a marriage and how they are to complete one another. There are also many examples of single life detailed in the bible. Dating is the first step in the process of finding a spouse, and learning what God has planned for you.

DATING SHOULD:

- teach you better ways to communicate
- help you determine character traits that you desire in a spouse. Such as, honesty, and trust. As well as traits to avoid such as lying or gossip.

It is important to get a clear idea of what dating is before you start to date anyone. The most important thing to do is pray, A LOT! It is so important to be in prayer with God to help you through this time in your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in making wise choices on who you choose to date. Ask God to guard your heart through the emotions that come with dating.

Please remember how precious you are to God. He designed you in a special way. Girls and guys are wired completely different...and that's the way God intended for it to be. But it is important to know this before you

date. Girls and guys will react differently to dating. But one thing is true for both; the baggage that comes with each broken heart will follow you into your next relationship.

WHAT BAGGAGE???

- A Broken Heart – We look for the next person to mend it.
- Remorse—Regret over becoming too physical
- Anger—How could they do this to me

It is so important to realize what the purpose of dating is and to prepare you heart and mind before you start. Set up ground rules for yourself to guard your heart before you start to collect “baggage”.

SET UP BOUNDARIES

Here are a few important things you should do before you date anyone.

- Make a rule for yourself that you will only date a Christian who desires to grow in their faith. God makes it very clear, this is **NOT NEGOTIABLE**.

[2 Corinthians 6:14] Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

- Talk with your parents. We sometimes overlook one of the most important sources for advice. Our parents have our best interest at heart, plus a lot more life experience. Another added benefit, when you are open with your parents about dating, it builds trust.

[Proverbs 1: 8-10] My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck.

- Set up boundaries before you start to date. This helps to prepare you for situations before they are needed, and helps to resist against temptation.
- Make a list of qualities you are looking for in a person, such as character, interests and goals. Also, make a list of things that are **NOT** desired Such as poor behavior, laziness, etc.

[Proverbs 3: 22-23] My son, let them not depart from your eyes— Keep sound wisdom and discretion; So they will be life to your soul and grace to your neck. Then you will walk safely in your way, and your foot will not stumble.

[Ecclesiastes 11:9] Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.

- Always remember we are influenced by the company we keep.

[1 Corinthians 15:33] Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

[Proverbs 22:24-25] Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man; lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.

[Proverbs 24:1-2] Do not be envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them; for their heart devises violence, and their lips talk of troublemaking.

WHAT THE WORLD DOES

The world has role models who jump from one dating situation to the next.

- The world looks at dating as, “what’s in it for me?”
- What will people think of me when they see me dating so and so.
- If I could only date so and so everything would be perfect.
- The worldview is that I have to look out for my own best interest.
- The world misses out on God’s perfect truth and protection.

WHAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD DO

Christians are to aspire to live up to God’s standards. This is why it is so important to only date other Christians. God knows the power in love and the damage a broken heart can do. Becoming involved with a non-Christian will always lead to heartache. Do not fool yourself into thinking that you will convert someone by dating them. Some people have even through that marriage will change a person and they will become a

Christian. It usually does not happen and the pain involved is **HUGE**. Only God knows who he will call as his own.

So remember, take it slow when it comes to dating. When you begin to date, it's really a good idea to focus on being friends and to go out as a group as opposed to dating as a couple. In going out as a group, you and your Christian friends can encourage one another and help to keep each other accountable relax and know that God is in control and He knows exactly what you need. He has the perfect plan for your life, weather that means marriage or singleness. By following God's plan, we will be complete!

Discussion Questions

1. What are benefits of going out with a group of friends as opposed to couples dating alone.
 - Accountability
 - Eliminates being put in tempting situations
 - Encourage Friendships
2. What would good character traits to look for in someone who you might like to date?
 - Trustworthy
 - Honest
 - Good Student
 - Responsible
3. Would you be comfortable going on a date with your parents as a chaperone?
 - Why is it a good idea to involve your parents in your dating choices?
4. What is "Dating Baggage" and how do you avoid it?
 - Regrets
 - Broken Hearts
 - Emotional Walls
 - Revenge
5. What are examples of good "boundaries" to set up before you decide to begin dating?
 - Only date Christians who with a desire to grow spiritually
 - Date in groups or with a chaperone
 - Decide what physical boundaries you will not cross.