

DATING & RELATIONSHIPS



notes by
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Dating—Not Now

Intro:

--Relationships will be a reality in most of our lives and should be considered Biblically.

--The Bible does not have many direct commands in relation to romance but God does give us principles to govern every situation of life.

--Obviously, our consideration will be in the context of two Christians who desire to marry and remain faithful in the Biblical ideal.

--I want to begin by stating why I think the Bible would show us that teens are close but not quite ready for a dating relationship.

1) You are not ready practically

Eccl. 3:1+8+11: *To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven. . . A time to love, and a time to hate. . . He has made everything beautiful in its time.*

--The Bible makes it clear that there is a proper and improper time to express even love. To take something out of its proper timing is to ruin its beauty. *An 8 year old driving a car. . .*

--One day you will be in a place where you can express your heart to someone and literally decide at that moment to move forward and marry them.

--The reality is that for most teens, that day is still many years away. It is not your fault as youth, it is simply reality.

--Healthy relationships have practical realities that cannot be ignored. It is only immaturity that would do so.

--We must be careful about our “just friends” speech when we are really playing the field. Lets live in reality of our hearts. We are not called to draw one another’s hearts to ourselves. *Desires should be acknowledged but controlled.*

2) You are not ready emotionally/personally

Proverbs 4:23: *Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.*

Song of Solomon 8:4: *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.*

--The Bible makes it clear that we are called to guard the affections of our hearts and our emotions. They are not to be released just because we have them. Life isn’t really a Disney movie where you can just “follow your heart”.

--You are still figuring out yourself and God’s call on your life personally. This is not a slight or insult to a teen; it is simply the reality of life. It may be different in other cultures but not here! *Think of how different you will be after college—What if a pastor, soldier, missionary, don’t want kids, etc...?*

--This is where most teen relationships break down. After high school, when life direction becomes a focus, teens discover that they are moving different directions personally. Marriage is not our calling but it may be a part of our calling. Personal pursuit of God is primary and shared pursuit of Him is secondary.

--Until we come to a more mature view of ourselves and life we base our decisions on feelings alone.

This leads to false expectations and false pressures. Guarding/keeping our emotions is not sinful; it is in fact a sign of maturity. *Dante’s Panther *

*Alas, how easily things go wrong! A sign too deep, or a kiss too long,
There follows a mist and a weeping rain, And life is never the same again.*

--The Bible warns against this immaturely placing ourselves in positions of temptation.

Romans 13:14: *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*

--Here are some practical questions for emotional "waves":

-Why does this romantic expression need to happen now?

-Where do I get my dreams? or views of romance?

-Am I thinking of Biblical love or TV love? *Fake love is quickly squashed in real life troubles*

-Do I seek or heed spiritually mature counsel?

-Do I pray about my actions? Or search the Word for guidance?

-Am I giving in now because I fear what will happen if I don't?

3) You are not ready spiritually

1 John 5:21: *Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*

--Hence the danger that comes to most, and in the end conquers most young people who carelessly give their hearts in romantic relationships is idolatry. You cease your own growth with God to pursue romance with a person. Passion for a boy or girl overcomes obedience and love to God. This idolatry proves we are not spiritually mature enough to handle a relationship.

--The type of love God would have us express to one another is a spiritually mature type of love. You are still becoming the men and women who fear the Lord. True disciples of Christ. If you cannot progress in your personal walk you are not ready to be equally yoked with another who is; and you are particularly not ready to live out the type of love God would desire.

--Do you personally express true Christian love toward God? Toward others? Your romantic interest will be the hardest to express it to! Am I ready to give love or only receive it?

-Do you have time where you actively and personally seek God? Devotional life?

-Do you go to church/bring your Bible to church?

-Are you able to worship God in blessing? Let alone difficulty?

-Are you a blessing and encouragement to anyone other than yourself?

-Do you enjoy an active and growing personal relationship with Jesus?

--Can this other person "hang" with me in my spiritual pursuit of God?

--I know there will be some that disagree and claim to know a rare couple who dated all the way through high school and are now happily married.

--First, I would respond that I could cite ten times more that failed and were wounded trying to do just that. Just because someone else did, doesn't mean that you can. *Climb Everest*

--Second, you don't really know how pure or edifying their relationship was. Maybe it would have been better if they waited.

--Lastly, I would make that point that just because it may work out in the end (Grace) doesn't mean that it was pleasing to God through the process. *Think David and Bathsheba*

Dating—Until You Do

Intro: The reality for most people is that they will have a few years as a single person or at least time between relationships. What should we do until we are in a relationship?

1) Grow Practically and Personally

Luke 16:10: He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in least is unjust also in much.

Col. 3:17: And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

--If we are not ready practically and personally we should be growing in both of these areas.

Faithfulness in singleness will prepare the path for faithfulness in relationships.

--Be a good steward of all the gifts, talents, and opportunities God has given you. Do things that will actually relate to life Vs. things that will never benefit anyone. *Back in the day they cared about your “prospects”.*

--What are we bringing to our future relationships? *Save money (Engagement ring/Honeymoon); Work (Saving for a house); College Scholarship (No debt); Cook, Art, Music, Etc.*

--The opposite would be: No money, no job, no degree, large college debt for play/experience, no life talents, no simple blessings, etc.

--There is no point in life where a Christian can live without concern and thought toward others. Wild and excessive and indulgent single life is selfish and a sin.

--Also, find God’s personal path for your life. How are you to live and serve Him? That way, you will know if another person will “fit” or “join” in your life direction.

2) Grow Spiritually

Luke 2:52: And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

2 Peter 3:18: But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

--You want to bring a person spiritually alive and mature into the marriage—not perfect.

Strange thought, but your wedding day should be the worst version of the person you are and the person that you will marry!

--Grow in Jesus now. You don’t want to be a weight of spiritual immaturity or baggage. Spiritual life is difference between: Loving and cherishing Vs. Providing; Submitting Vs. Submissive; Unity Vs. Conflict; Religious Vs. Spiritual; etc. These are the virtues that make or break marriages.

--Spiritual baggage accompanies spiritual immaturity in action and attitude. *Pornography, drugs, alcohol, gambling, selfishness (irreconcilable differences/mean words), Parenting issues, Luke 15 sins of body and disposition—make for a plain miserable marriage.*

3) Trust God

--So much of what happens in this "middle" period between singleness and dating really ends up being an issue of trust and faith in God. Can I trust God to provide what I need?

--Have faith and patience in God's goodness. Don't settle! *Sadness of settling*

***Psalm 37:4-5:**

***Psalm 84:11-12:**

***Proverbs 3:5-6:**

***Lamentations: 3:24-26:**

***Matthew 6:33:**

***Romans 8:32:**

***Hebrews 6:12:**

***Hebrews 11:6:**

--Either we are trusting in and waiting on God or we are working in the flesh to get what we want when we want it? *Mr. Right vs. Mr. Right now. Temptation is tempting!*

--If I had known that at 25 I would be married how differently would I have looked at things?

--The real battle is faith with patience. Can we really trust Him with our lives?

--Is there only one person for us? I don't know, but I honestly believe that God will be as involved as we will allow Him to be. *Adam & Eve; Isaac & Rebekah; Joseph & Mary*

Proverbs 18:22: *He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD.*

Proverbs 19:14: *Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.*

--We have covered why not to date in high school, and what to do in the meantime. So some might ask: *Is there an age to start dating?*

--No! Allowing dating at an arbitrary age is foolish parenting! Some people shouldn't date at 17 and some shouldn't date at 30. What age does the Bible give us? None. What principles does the Bible give us?

1) Are we practically ready?

2) Are we personally ready?

3) Are we spiritually ready?

4) Are we trusting God?

Dating—When You Do

1) Set the standard of Christian love.

John 13:34-35: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

--Our call to Christ-like love is not any different when it comes to romantic relationships. In fact, it is greater! They should be better off having been with us. Your love should set the standard for true Christian love.

--How can you tell if your love is godly or ungodly? Does your love produce spiritual or sensual fruit/works? *We should get better at this!*

--Don't "play the field" or lead people along. Be clear about your intentions with other hearts! You cannot be a "player" and love as Christ has called us to. Figuring out God's will and timing is okay, but selfish indulgence of our desire to be gratified because of our lack of faith in God's provision is not.

--Either we are meeting God's standard of Christian love, or we are being used of the devil to ruin and pollute our brothers and sisters in Christ for every other relationship that they step into. Are we opening negative doors they have never previously gone through? *Lowering the bar, Regrets, Bad habits, Substance abuse, etc.*

2) Guard them physically. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

--This is one of the clear commands when it comes to dating and relationships. This is the will of God for your life and theirs!

--Most of us are aware of *What* God commands when it comes to sex but we are not very clear as to *Why*. God tells us to abstain because He loves us.

A) **Sex does not equal intimacy! & Cohabitation does not equal companionship!**

--God is trying to nurture intimacy and companionship in our marriages. Those cannot come to fruition if the person can leave the intimacy or home at any time. The trust that the covenant of marriage supplies is necessary for the rest to flourish. Otherwise, we have to harden our hearts to committing ourselves in intimacy and life companionship.

--Sex outside of a marriage covenant distorts boundaries—fights/companions/expectations.

--God knows that it is only safe to open the door of sex once there is a safe and sure supply.

Who says consensual sex doesn't hurt anyone? *Porn, abuse, rape, adultery, divorce, etc.*

B) ***Sex outside of marriage adds mental, physical, and emotional competition.***

--How many other men or women do you want your spouse comparing you to? Comparing your body, your emotional moments, and your memories?

--It is unfair to expect one person to compete with numerous others, or even one other!

Pornography distorts, Romance novels, he/she won't do such and such sex act, etc.

--God never designed humanity to be a society of sexually experienced single people.

C) *They are someone else's spouse!*

--You do not want to harm or shame or steal from another person's marriage. They are someone else's spouse until you both say: *I do!*

--Even when there is forgiveness there can still be a burden of shame, guilt, and condemnation from the enemy. Don't give Satan any extra ammo in your life.

D) *Selfish use of one another totally ignores the value God sees in a life.*

--Careless sex where people simply use one another for their own gratification—even if agreed upon mutually—feeds a sinful desire to see people as things Vs. humans.

--Ladies especially! Do not give sex to seal a relationship. If they cannot appreciate you for more than your body, they do not actually appreciate you (Same for guys).

--You can get attention for your body, but that will fade quickly, and it doesn't produce any intimacy or companionship or love.

Final Points: Abuse or rape is not the same as willing sexual sin. You are not impure if your body was abused by someone else.

--To those who have made a willing mistake, don't give in to Satan trying to say you should just keep going. God will bless obedience! *If you are in 5,000 debt, why dive further in and pay 50,000? What is easier to get out of?!*

--Let me tell you *why* God says not to have sex outside of marriage. Because He loves you and He knows what He is talking about! Because He made sex and He actually wants you to have a pure and enjoyable experience of sex in marriage. He also is wise enough to know that you need more than simply what sex can provide.

3) Be in the light.

John 3:20-21: *For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.*

--If you are in a godly dating relationship you should have nothing to be ashamed of but sin. If it cannot be in the light it is not of God. There should be no need to sneak around! *Texts, Emails, Photos, Life, etc.*

4) You should sense God's pleasure!

Proverbs 30:18-19: *There are three things which are too wonderful for me, yes, four which I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a virgin.*

--God is the Designer and Creator of marriage and human love and relationships. They have a universally recognized beauty in Him. God will give you a sense of His pleasure because a godly relationship is pleasing to Him!