

# The Challenge Of Dating

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## INTRODUCTION:

### **A. Striving to serve God in our youth can be a very great challenge!**

1. The Psalmist saw this & asks, "How can a young man cleanse his way?" (**Ps. 119:9**)
  - a. Our song, "How shall the young secure their hearts?" is based on this passage
  - b. He answers this by saying that he must take heed to God's word, seek God with his whole heart, hide God's word in his heart, & meditate on God's ways
2. There are certainly challenges either unique or especially difficult for a young person!
  - a. Issues like modesty, alcohol & drugs, friendships, dances, etc are difficult to meet
  - b. These become very difficult because of the pressures from friends & acquaintances and the inward challenge of not conforming to this world!

### **B. Another issue that can be a great challenge for a young Christian to meet is dating!**

1. There are intense pressures and challenges that arise when a Christian decides to date!
  - a. There is the desire to please the other person and impress them
  - b. There is the struggle to keep ones passions and physical contact in its proper role
  - c. There are challenges of having the kind of relationships that do not cause the other person emotional or spiritual harm – Many other difficulties surely exist!
2. While dating can be a tough time, it is not bad! When conducted within the parameters of God's word it can bring people closer together & closer to God!

## I. ONE'S APPROACH TO DATING & ITS IMPACT

### **A. First of all: What is dating and why do people date?**

1. Someone once defined dating as being "a process that leads two people to marriage"
  - a. It's certainly true that every person doesn't approach it with this intention in mind; however, when you follow dating to its logical end then it's purpose is clear!
  - b. While you will not marry every person you date, you will date the person you marry!
  - c. May call it dating, courting, etc – You are getting to know someone with the intent of developing a relationship & discovering if they're one you'd want to marry!
2. The ideas of dating, or courtship, are not found in God's word:
  - a. Ways spouses were chosen during Bible times: Sometimes parents picked, some picked for themselves, some sent servants to choose a future spouse
  - b. Yet the impressive thing is that people had successful and long lasting marriages!
  - c. They had a commitment to one another, love, marriage, and a commitment to God!
3. With this in mind I question whether one should date until they are ready for marriage!
  - a. You are creating a relationship you'll want to deepen but are unable to take further
  - b. You will also likely be creating passions and desires you will not be able to fulfill
  - c. This is why it is so difficult for even two Christians who are striving to remain pure till marriage to resist the temptation – Its easy to just give in! (**Romans 13:14**)

### **B. A Christian understanding dating should have a huge impact on who he/she dates!**

1. Some have said that it is a sin for a Christian to marry a non-Christian:
  - a. They base this on Paul's warnings about associations with the world (**2 Cor. 6:14**)
  - b. I don't understand how the relationship itself could be sinful because in order to repent one would have to get a divorce and that would be sinful! (**Matt. 19:9**)
  - c. While it may not be sinful, we certainly could question the wisdom of doing it!
  - d. Few, if any, who married non-Christians will recommend it to those who are dating!
2. Some Christians, with no intentions of marriage, will date one who has no right to remarry!
  - a. They might be heard saying, "I don't want to marry the person, only date them!"
  - b. Ask yourself, "Would I want to do these activities or have this type of relationship with someone else's spouse?" They are bound to another!!! (**Rom. 7:2-3**)
  - c. A dangerous situation! Creating passions & desires that can never be fulfilled! A relationship that would naturally grow hits a dead end!
3. When we date, we should be looking for someone who will draw us closer to God!

- a. **Illustration:** Marriage is like a 3 legged stool → Some try to have the physical without the emotional or spiritual! The stool missing a leg or legs will fall!
  - b. The sexual aspect is certainly wonderful! But the marriage is first spiritually based, then emotionally, and the physical side is like a celebration or culmination!
  - c. A good marriage has a husband & a wife who are joint heirs in Christ! (**1 Peter 3:7**)
  - d. So when a Christian dates they will consider, “Will this person I am dating help me go to heaven?” → If not, then we have no business dating them!
  - e. Dating for “a good time” alone, or because the person is hot, or for the physical contact is dangerous at best! A desire to live righteously is not our priority!
4. What about dating someone who is not a Christian but is sincere & seeking the truth?
- a. There are those out there like Cornelius who with teaching will turn to God!
  - b. But why not spend time going to gospel meetings and studying together – This will actually help ensure that if a relationship is pursued it is first spiritually based!
  - c. If they obey the gospel of Christ, then start dating! But make sure you’re on the same page first, because after hearts are involved its tougher to back out!

**C. A Christian understanding dating should have a huge impact on how he/she dates:**

- 1. We must realize that we are dealing with the life & emotions of another child of God!
  - a. Some guys and girls view the person they are dating as nothing more than an object by which they can fulfill their own desires and needs!
  - b. Bible principles should govern the relationship: (**Mt. 7:12; Phil 2:3; Rom 14:13**)
  - c. You may treat her well for fear of her father – But she has a Father in Heaven whom you had better fear! Mistreat her and you’ll answer to Him!
- 2. Paul told Timothy to treat the younger women as sisters (**1 Tim. 5:2**)
  - a. Now we understand that we do not date our sisters... that is not Paul’s point at all!
  - b. He’s telling Timothy to maintain a relationship that is essentially that pure!
  - c. Seems like an extreme, but you’d have to admit that the one who maintained this dedication to purity would keep themselves & the one they are dating pure!
- 3. A proper perspective should motivate you to treat the other with care, respect, & purity!
  - a. It may be that you do not marry the person you are dating, but someone else will!
  - b. We should treat the person we are currently dating the same way you would want whoever might be dating your future spouse to treat them!

**II. FACING DANGERS & CHALLENGES WHEN DATING:**

**A. Anytime a Christian dates there must be a determination to remain pure!**

- 1. The scriptures are very clear that sexual relationships outside of marriage are sinful!
  - a. It’s only within the confines of marriage that sex is honorable & good! (**Heb. 13:4**)
  - b. It’s God’s will we exercise self-control in harnessing our passions (**1 Thess 4:3-5**)
  - c. One who does not turn away from sexual immorality cannot inherit the kingdom of God! It’s a serious matter that can cost us our souls! (**1 Cor. 6:9**)
- 2. A dedication to purity is more than not committing full blown fornication:
  - a. Some will do anything and everything up to the point of full blown fornication and walk away saying, “I’m still technically a virgin... we didn’t go all the way!”
  - b. Paul identifies not only sexual immorality as a work of the flesh but also sensuality and impurity – These don’t mix with the life of a Christian! (**Gal. 5:19**)
  - c. When contact begins to excite the passions and desires it is time to back away!
- 3. Every young person who approaches dating must do so with purpose of heart!
  - a. It’s like Daniel who purposed in his heart not to defile himself (**Daniel 1:8**)
  - b.
  - c. Don’t just say, “I won’t do that!” → We all need definite lines drawn to which we make a commitment to not cross or move!

**B. There are challenges and dangers to this purity that must be faced along the way:**

- 1. We make it more difficult by putting ourselves in dangerous situations: (**Rom. 13:13-14**)
  - a. It’s tempting to go park off into secluded places to talk! The danger is that we have

- a false sense of comfort... No one is looking and no one knows!
- b. The statistics are shocking! When do many teenagers experience sex for the first time? During the evenings, in their house, and while their parents are home!
- c. Two young people who have feelings for one another have no business being alone in secluded places! It's foolish no matter how strong you think you are!
- d. When we aren't careful, even though we may have every intention not to let our desires get out of hand, we can let our guard down & give in!
- 2. Sometimes there's the danger of going only one small step further:
  - a. One might make an exact stopping point saying, "I will not allow the relationship to get more physical than this" but in time, those lines are often moved!
  - b. Once we've compromised that line it becomes very easy to take things just a little further & we might think, "It's only just a little bit more!" → Where will this end?
  - c. One step gives way to the next and then the next – It's like a snow ball effect!
- 3. Really, striving to remain pure begins in guarding our hearts! **(Mark 7:21-22)**

**C. There are wonderful benefits to meeting the challenges of dating by following God's will!**

- 1. Some might think that abstaining from sexual immorality till marriage is only stifling their fun! That God is hindering them from enjoying their youth! **(Ecc. 11:9-12:1)**
  - a. You need to understand that God wants you to have fun and enjoy being young!
  - b. But notice God says that while you are enjoying your youth... think eternal!
- 2. God has given us commands not to hamper fun, but for our own good! **(Prov. 3:1ff, 8)**
  - a. If you abstain from sexual immorality you do not have to worry about pregnancy outside of marriage and the difficulties that follow it → Many life in fear!
  - b. There are also diseases that you would never have to fear receiving
- 3. There is also guilt and emotional pain that can be avoided
- 4. What if you have already made mistakes? Things are not hopeless!
  - a. Determine today to remain pure for yourself, God, and the one you'll one day marry
  - b. You can say, "Yes I made mistakes, however, from that point on I began saving myself for you!" → Shows your strong commitment and says a lot about you!

**CONCLUSION: Dating can be a challenging time to one who is striving to serve God! Let's not allow our society to determine how we approach it, but apply the principles of God's word!**