

## Dating

Relationship Series Part 3

*1 Corinthians 7:25, 39, Proverbs 18:22*

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### Dating

- Most of us can probably remember our first crush. Even though I do not remember mine, I remember the first girl who had a crush on me. In the third grade a girl wrote on her black Trapper Keeper in white-out, "I love Ryan Cole." Believe it or not, a girl actually liked me. In a Christian/church context, I also remember the first girl who liked me. It was at an area-wide youth rally. This girl liked me, and at the end when the leader told us to get in a circle and hold hands as we closed in prayer. This girl walked from across the room to stand next to me to hold my hand. She did her best to hold my hand with our hands interlocked. But I did not let that happen.
- We've all had these similar experiences in dating.
- Dating, who to date, who you used to date, and who you want to date are the things that are on your mind more than almost anything. Dating is the predominant thing or at least one of the most predominant things on the minds of students here at WKU.
- Tonight we will look at some principles for Christian dating and answer a few of the questions you submitted regarding dating.
- But first, one caveat.

### Dating and the Bible

- You will not find anything in scripture about dating.
- Last week we looked at *1 Corinthians 7* when we discussed singleness. We saw that the church in Corinth wrote to Paul and asked him several questions. *1 Corinthians* is Paul's response to their questions and his response to other things going on in that church. He was asked a question about marriage and celibacy (should a man ever have sexual relations with a woman, *1 Corinthians 7:1*). Paul said that of course it is permitted and even encouraged for a man to have sexual relations with his wife. And on that topic, he also addressed single men and women and widows - Should they get married? And throughout this section of his letter he said that he did not receive specific instruction from the Lord, but as a man full of the Holy Spirit, he did offer them some advice. But it was prefaced with "I have no command from the Lord" (*1 Corinthians 7:25, 40*).
- So like Paul, I fully acknowledge that I do not have a direct command from God concerning Christians and dating. If you've been around our ministry very long you know that I generally teach by looking at one passage of scripture and explain it and draw implications from it. Tonight will be a little different. Rather than looking at one primary scripture, we will look at many passages and from there draw out biblical principles for dating Christianly.

## PRINCIPLES FOR CHRISTIAN DATING

### **Be content where you are.**

- We discussed this at length last week when we looked at singleness and *1 Corinthians* 7. If you were not here for our discussion on singleness, I encourage you to go to our website and listen to it.
- Paul encouraged the people in the church at Corinth to be content where they are. It is ok to be married. It is ok to be single. It is ok to pursue marriage if you are single. It is ok to remain single and not seek a spouse. We discussed this last week, but I think it should be repeated: Being a disciple of Jesus is the highest calling on a person's life, not marriage, singleness, being parent, or anything else.
- A spouse or boyfriend or girlfriend will not fulfill you or complete you. They will not bring you ultimate joy. The only one who can bring you ultimate joy is God.
  - "In your presence is there fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." *Psalm 16:11*
- We've all witnessed those who go from one boyfriend or girlfriend to the next, constantly seeking the perfect person. But they always realize that their next relationship will not satisfy them and bring them complete joy.
- Like Paul said in *1 Corinthians* 7, be content where you are. If you find a godly boyfriend or girlfriend, that's great. If not, that is totally fine, too. Be content where you are.
- And this leads to our next principle.

### **Work on yourself.**

- "Are you who the person you are looking for is looking for?"<sup>1</sup>
- Are you a disciple of Christ?
- My first campus minister, Steve Tyree, once told me a story that a parent of a college student who was living an unfaithful life while at college reached out to him asking him to find a "good Christian girl for him." He told me that he wanted just the opposite. He hoped that none of the girls in his ministry would date a guy like that.
- Ask these questions:
  - Am I financially in a situation to be married? Both men and women
  - Am I actively growing in my relationship with God?
  - Am I dating for the right reasons?

### **Do not act like you're married if you're not married.**

- This has everything to do with commitment and guarantee of a future. Marriage is a lifetime commitment. Dating is not. Even if you think that you are going to marry the person you're dating, there is no actual commitment or guarantee until marriage.
- If you're acting too committed before you're actually committed, and things end, there will be much more heartbreak.
- Don't act like you're married until you are in that committed relationship.

### **Set boundaries.**

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<sup>1</sup> Andy Stanley, <http://northpoint.org/messages/the-new-rules-for-love-sex-and-dating>

- Do not make it easier on yourself to sin.
- For example, someone might not be strong enough to resist looking at porn when his computer is in his bedroom, but he is strong enough to not bring his computer to his bedroom.
- Set boundaries for yourself. Do whatever it is best for you and your significant other. Have this discussion with them.
  - Don't nap together .
  - Don't go to your boyfriend's or girlfriend's room alone.

**The person you're dating is your brother or sister in Christ even more than your boyfriend or girlfriend.**

- You're fellow disciples of Christ.
- Ultimately, this person belongs to God way more infinitely than they will belong to you.

**Date only Christians.**

- This might be a tad bit controversial: don't date non-Christians. Some of you will disagree with me, and I am ok with that. But before you tune me out, hear me out for a bit.
- It is clear that Paul says to only marry Christians - *1 Corinthians 7:39*
- I do not want to be legalistic here. The Bible does not say do not date a non-Christian. I do not want to say it is sinful. It is not exactly sinful, but it is, I think, unwise.
- It might not be sinful to eat a lawn mower, but it's not a good idea.
- If you would never marry a non-Christian, why date them?
  - There's temptation to remain pure - It is very hard to remain pure when both people in the relationship want to remain pure. How much harder is it when only one wants that.
  - Your priorities are different. As a Christian your number one priority is to love God. This means to obey His will and follow his commandments.
- Don't date to convert.
  - I fully admit that I know several people who came to Christ because they dated Christians. I am fully aware of this claim.
  - Be honest with yourself here: if you are with this person to evangelize them, if/when they convert, would you break up with them?
  - If you were to break up, how strong would their faith be after the breakup?

**Find someone that will help you follow Jesus better.**

- You are each disciples of Christ. Find someone that will make it easier to follow Jesus, not harder to follow Him.
- Katelyn was offered this piece of advice when a woman from her home church found out we started dating. Find a man who loves Jesus more than he loves you.

**Dating Questions that were submitted:**

- Is it okay for a Christian to date or marry someone who isn't a Christian? What does the Bible say about dating someone who isn't a Christian?
  - We've addressed this a lot tonight. It is wrong to marry someone who is not a Christian. It is unwise to date a non-Christian. See *1 Corinthians 7:39*. Also see *2 Corinthians 6:14*.
- Is it okay to talk to multiple people? Like talking as in maybe date?
  - I would probably say no. I'm thinking of the Golden Rule here: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them" (*Matthew 7:12*). Plus it is not completely honest.
- At what point in a relationship do you know when to get married/ after how long? If your unsure of financial stability do you trust God will help and it will work out or do you wait? What does the Bible say about this?
  - It depends. Some people know they're ready for marriage immediately, some it takes a lot longer. What you need to seek is commitment. If both of you are committed to each other for life, why wait?
  - Always trust God. There are countless examples in scripture of people acting on faith and God provided. We know that God will provide for us. This takes wisdom. Ask God for wisdom as well as other trusted Christians to discern what is the best decision.
  - The Bible does say that men should provide for his family (*1 Timothy 5:8*). Paul says in *1 Corinthians 7:8-9* that it is better for a person to marry than to burn with passion.
- Is it okay to date/go on dates "for fun" or should your only intention be dating for marriage?
  - This could possibly be a false dichotomy. Is there dating that is not for fun or for marriage? I think one can hang out with people to see and learn if they would be a suitable spouse.