

GUIDELINES FOR DATING; PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE:

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A. Never, never, never date an unsaved person.

1. When you date an unsaved person you are opening the door to marry an unsaved person.
2. Dating is a yoke of fellowship that someday may result in marriage. (II Cor. 6:14-17) In God's sight it is a travesty for a saved person (godly) and an unsaved person to be united in holy matrimony, or thus to be "one flesh".

B. Use wisdom to determine the age for beginning to date.

1. It is wise to wait longer than to begin too soon.
2. It is wise to plan to get schooling, college, etc., behind you, prior to marriage.
3. Wait until you are old enough... maturity is being developed and wisdom to make wise choices, understanding God's will. (Eph. 5:10, 5:17; Phil. 1:9,10)
4. There is nothing wrong with occasional dating for the 16-17 year old, but within the confines of a controlled group, church activity, etc.
5. Dating is for good, clean, Christ honoring fun, fellowship, learning, companionship, etc. One of the major purposes of casual dating is to better understand yourself and those of the opposite sex and therefore have great wisdom as to the kind of person God would have you date seriously.
6. ***You begin too early, you will married too soon!***

C. Consider the dangers of going steady... too soon.

1. There is the **danger of** and **temptation of careless familiarity**, of taking liberties that are not right, of being serious too soon, and building passion and desire.
2. There is the temptation to "shut out" of your life everyone else to the exclusiveness of one.
3. An honorable engagement tends to promote a happy successful marriage. (I Tim. 4:12; II Tim. 2:22)

D. Dating should be approved by your parents in advance.

1. Your parents must give full, and **total approval** about who you are dating, and have full right to control this.
2. They do know best for you, and your depth of maturity, and readiness for dating, etc.

E. The parent should know always where the teenager is going, and what he/she will be doing on that date. They have that right to know.. and control.. where, when, how... etc.

F. Your parents should set a "curfew time"

1. You should be willing to abide by that time... best if 11:30 at the latest. So the girl should be home by 11:00 pm, and the boy right after that.
2. Any exceptions should be approved. Maybe every minute late should mean a loss of 15 minutes in the next date. Of course this is up to each parent.

G. Conduct yourself appropriately.

1. There ought to be the attitude of treating the opposite sex as a "**brother or sister**".
2. There must be dating etiquette, based on the Word of God. Fellows "**keep your hands**" off the girl.
3. Girls should **not set** too close. (I Tim. 4:12; II Tim. 2:22; I Pet. 2:11; I Thess. 4:3-5; I Cor 6:19.20) Probably a one foot rule would be best, with no holding of hands, embracing, etc., until after engagement. (With physical passion fulfillment comes a lack of communication and knowledge of the other person. Then lust and not godly love can rule and reign.)

H. Close with prayer. Later, when engaged, reading the Word of God together, pray, thanking God for the good time, etc.

PRINCIPLES TO CONSIDER PRIOR TO DATING & MARRIAGE:

A. Your present and future condition and circumstances are a result of your own personal choices or sowing. Gal. 6:7-9

1. You are presently the product of past sowing.
2. Your future reaping is based on present sowing.
3. If you are to have the right harvest, you must sow the right seed.
4. If you sow lust, impure thoughts, build infatuation and physical desire in the process of dating -- you will have a life time of results from the seed sown. It may only be seen in wrong attitudes toward your spouse, but it could result in sexual activities prior to marriage. Only purity can bring the joy of a godly life and the smile of God's blessing upon a marriage.
4. Are you sowing indifference, neglect, impure thoughts, pride, materialistic desires, OR humility, love, diligence, purity, generosity, obedience?

B. Your covering the problem brings tragedy. Prov. 28:13 We too easily blind ourselves to our own sin; we ignore our sin, deny our sin, and bring tragedy, for we do not deal with sin. (Jere. 17:9; Psa 139:23,24)

FALSE IDEAS ABOUT MARRIAGE:

A. Marriage is built upon and dependent upon falling in love.... Cf Rom 7:1-3; I Cor 7:39; Malachi 2:16

1. Love is not an uncontrollable happening that comes, without reason and/or will.
2. Romantic love is primarily a whimsical emotion, and is not the foundation or basis of marriage.
3. "Love is the duty and privilege of marriage, but not the foundation of marriage." The foundation of marriage is **commitment**.
4. **Commitment makes possible love to flourish and blossom.** Marriage is a Divine covenant... before a Holy God. (Mal. 2:14-16; Prov. 2)
5. The feeling of love is the result of the practice of Biblical Love.
6. Right feeling is the result of right thinking and right doing.
7. We are not to get married because of the "feeling of the heart, the hearing of the ear and the seeing of the eye." But because of God's will and direction in our lives... based on commitment for all of life.)

B. Things will be the same after marriage as before. They must change. The me/mine... must become the ours/yours. The his and hers must become ours. (Gen. 2:24)

SINFUL ATTITUDES IN MARRIAGE:

These sinful attitudes are often seen in marriages and had to be in the lives of the newly-weds prior to their marriage. We do take the baggage of our sinful ways into our marriage. Sinful practices, habits, attitudes and sinful thinking will come to light in the marriage. If we don't deal with these things prior to our marriage what make us think we will do so later? Here are some sinful attitudes that may be held by the person you plan to date.

A. "This is just the way I am, I can't help it. Don't change me."

1. You are the result of your choices... real change is possible and real change is commanded. (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:8-14)
2. You say you cannot change your -- thoughtfulness, rudeness, deceitfulness, stinginess, self-will, unforgiveness. Change is a choice and by God's grace anyone can change.
3. These sinful attitudes begin prior to marriage. They must be faced.
4. Do you understand that marriage is a life of ministry to the other person that continues on until death? Do you understand that selfishness is the major sin that destroys many marriages or renders them unhappy at the best?

B. "I must watch out for myself." -- here is manifestation of selfishness; self-centeredness and a wrong emphasis on self-esteem.

1. Instead, "I must die to myself; I must deny self." (Luke 9:23; Jh 3:30)
2. You must put away selfish interests, selfishness and self-centered living. (Cf Matt 16:23,24; Jh 3:30; Gal. 2:20)

C. "I do not have problems." (I Cor. 10:12-14)

1. We all do, and we must face them. And these problems are sinful habits, practices, and attitudes as well as sinful thinking.
2. It would be wise to make a thorough examination of your life and seek to understand the personal sin practices and habitual thinking that lends itself to sinful thoughts and actions. (Psa. 19:12-14)
3. It would be wise to examine your heart attitudes and reactions and then honestly face sin in the heart and life. (Prov. 28:13; Psa. 139:23-24)
4. Inward sin will bring many sad results in the marriage as the couple battles with each other. They will probably engage in power plays, each seeking control. In anger they apt to sin against each other daily. (cf I Cor 10:13; Job 14:1; Phil. 4:13; Eph. 6:10; Rom. 8:37)