



# **Christian** **Dating**

## **What does the Bible say about Dating / Courting?**

The Bible doesn't use these words yet the principles that Christians are to live by during the time before marriage are CLEAR.

While the world's view may be to date around as much as we want, the REAL purpose of spending time with someone is to discover the character of a person before making any commitment to him or her.

An attraction usually starts physically, emotionally, intellectually or spiritually (or a combination of these) then grows, potentially leading to the pursuit of a relationship.

The most frequent initial attraction is physical and this is why it is essential during the early stages to establish the following:

Is the person you are attracted to:-

- \* TRULY "born again" - 2 Cor 6:14-15
- \* "Like minded" - Eph 4:13, Amo 3:3
- \* Sharing the same passion to be "Christ-like" - Phi 2:5
- \* Secure in their identity in Christ - 2 Cor 5:17, Rom 8:37-39
- \* Loving the Lord above all else - Mat 10:37
- \* Persuaded about no premarital sex 1 Cor 6:9,12-20, 2 Tim 2:22

Marriage is one of the most important decisions we will ever make, it needs to be taken very seriously, with CLEAR confirmation from God, parents and Church leadership and done in a way that honors God. The consequences of NOT taking the decision seriously have MAJOR ramifications.

When two people marry, they cleave to one another and become one flesh in a relationship which God intended to be permanent and unbreakable Gen 2:24, Mat 19:5-6.

A young man with a beard and a young woman with long blonde hair are smiling and taking a selfie together outdoors. The man is holding a white smartphone, and the woman has her arm around his shoulder. They are both wearing light-colored clothing. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a building.

# What is the difference between **Dating** and **Courting**?

The word “dating” can mean a variety of things, most prominently; being in a physical and often sexual relationship. This is NOT the Christian viewpoint.

Christian dating (for the want of a better word) is a relationship we enter into initially as friends, with the view of establishing; The persons relationship with Jesus, their character, their interests and future plans. This will be a guide to making the BIG decision on a potential marriage partner. Christian courtship would then be understood as the progressing of these two people to truly get to know each other in a more platonic (intimate and affectionate but not sexual) setting without the pressures of physical intimacy or emotions clouding their view as they prepare for marriage.

Creating a safe environment for this relationship to develop;

- \* Being VERY clear as to why you are pursuing a relationship
- \* Putting boundaries in place and be committed to not crossing them
- \* Cautious of spending time alone when physical attraction is strong
- \* Commitment to honouring Christ in their relationship
- \* Parents should be involved in the relationship, getting to know their child's companion and being a source of wise and discerning advice and guidance for both of them
- \* Enter into any relationship with the clear understanding that you both have no firm “commitment” to each other (other than to honour the Lord and respect each other). In other words, if either of you feel at any stage in the relationship (before marriage) that the relationship is not right, there needs to be a complete freedom to walk away from the relationship, without fear of manipulation or blame. Unfortunately all too often when a relation does need to terminate, if a couple have formed in-appropriate physical or emotional attachments, un-necessary hurt results.



# What should I look for in a Christian partner?

A Christian should be looking for someone who is serious about God and their relationship with you. Anybody can say they love Jesus or that they're a Christian. How do you know, when you're falling in love with someone, that this is genuine?

The single biggest issue with people looking for partners is that they are looking for the ideal partner, instead of looking to BE the ideal partner. When you are in a place that YOU are ready then you will be amazed at how much attention you get and how easy it is to find a partner!

The paradoxical thing is that a person is most suitable as a partner when they reach the point that they don't need a partner because they are secure in the Lord, in their relationship with others in the body of Christ and in healthy friendships with friends on the same gender and with all people. Hollywood has sold us the lie that I have to find "the one" to complete me and then paints an unrealistic picture of that one, and drives a sex-crazy agenda which elevates the physical aspect of relationships way out of proportion. Ask anyone and they will tell you that the most attractive person is someone who is confident, secure and happy in their identity and not desperate for someone to make them whole. Every one of our aims should be to become whole. Two whole/healthy people going into a relationship will result in a whole/healthy relationship multiplied. Two broken people going into a relationship will likely result in a broken relationship and even more broken people.

# A man should be seeking:

- \* A woman to spend his life with, not just someone to have fun with. If a man is not ready to get married, he should not be pursuing a relationship
- \* A woman with similar spiritual goals, doctrinal beliefs, and outlook on life. (In addition, it is wise to think through more practical things like energy level, common interests, and expectations about family and lifestyle)
- \* A woman exhibiting a spirit of submission to the Lord - Ephesians 5:22-24
- \* A woman who is a fit helper for his mission and call

# A woman should be seeking:

- \* A man who respects you
- \* A man who is humble and teachable - Psalm 141:5, Proverbs 9:9, 12:15
- \* A man who is honest and has integrity
- \* A man who is selfless - Ephesians 5:25-28
- \* A man who is able to provide (A man who doesn't provide for his family is worse than an unbeliever - 1 Timothy 5:8)
- \* A man who will protect, both physically, emotionally and spiritually

## **Here are some “warning lights” to watch out for:**

- \* Insecurity (Needy, jealous, fearful)
- \* Materialism (1 John 2:15-16; 1 Timothy 6:10)
- \* Lying (Proverbs 12:22; 19:22)
- \* Lustful weakness (Proverbs 7)
- \* Poor treatment of family members, especially his mother (Proverbs 19:26; 20:20; 23:22)



Usually, a man's treatment of his mother is a good indication of how he will treat his wife. Also, watch out for irrationally and controlling or jealous tendencies, as these often lead to violence (Proverbs 6:34; 27:4)

A charmer (is not actual a nice person but is very good at playing the part, treating you nice because they want to manipulate you into getting something for themselves) Ask people you trust what they honestly think of someone (Proverbs 29:5, 31:30)

REMEMBER you are discovering a persons character - someone you may spend the rest of your life with.

# Don't flirt!

A woman who flirts, for example, will develop a reputation as being promiscuous. She will find that other women look at her as a threat and take an instant disliking to her. A man who flirts will be viewed as a womanizer who is not interested in serious relationships. Anyone who flirts may enjoy the attention, but the interest shown to that person is almost exclusively sexual and will probably lack any sense of respect.



**Boys play at LOVE to get SEX and girls play at SEX to get LOVE**

## Why is sexual purity so important?

Our sex drive is a proper gift from God - 1 Cor 7:7. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit - 1 Cor 6:12-20. We need to learn to control our body in a way that is holy and honorable - 1 Thes 4:37. Jesus lives in and through us - Gal 2:20.

God gave man and woman the joy and pleasure of sexual relations within the bounds of marriage 1 Cor 7.

The marriage bed is honourable and undefiled - Hebrews 13:4.

When God spoke of two people being joined as one, He was referring to something we're only beginning to understand in a real, physiological way. When two people are intimate, the hypothalamus in the brain releases chemicals that induce feelings of attachment and trust. Having sex outside of marriage results in a person forming an attachment and trusting someone with whom he or she does not have a committed relationship. The definition of trust in the mind deteriorates. To have that kind of link with someone without the security of working together toward God is dangerous. Two individuals who are even mildly physiologically obsessed with each other but not committed to growing in God as a couple can be torn from God and His plans for them.

Conversely, if two people make a conscious, deliberate choice to commit to each other in marriage, and then allow the intimacy that releases these chemicals, the body can reaffirm the connection the mind has made. The physiological feelings of trust and attachment are reinforced by the reality of the relationship. In this way, two people become one physically, and that reflects what God has done spiritually.

Marriage is to model the relationship between the church and Christ. A married couple is to serve God in a strong, unified partnership. Sex, along with procreation, was designed by God to strengthen that partnership. Sex outside of marriage creates bonds that tear apart people's hearts instead of joining them together.

# What about masturbation?

The Bible doesn't explicitly state that masturbation is a sin, but there is no question that the actions that usually lead to masturbation are sinful. Masturbation is nearly always the result of lustful thoughts, inappropriate sexual stimulation, and/or pornography.

*These are the problems that need to be dealt with.*

If the sins of lust, immoral thoughts and pornography are forsaken and overcome, masturbation will become much less of an issue and temptation. Many people struggle with guilt concerning masturbation, when, in reality, they would be far better off repenting of the sins that lead them to masturbate.

The need for masturbation should arise naturally rather than by stimulation, when the need arises, masturbation should take place as “clinically” as possible. For those practicing self control for a lengthy period a person can have a “nocturnal emission” which is your bodies way of ridding itself of “old semen”.

## **Here are some practical suggestions on how to deal with sexual desire in non-sinful ways;**

1. Accept your sexual nature and its purposes, don't try to get rid of sexual desire, offer it to God. Do not deny that you have sexual feelings or try to repress them. Instead, in the strength of God, treasure up your power until He leads you in His time to your marriage partner. In the meantime, redirect your sexual energies into useful service for the Lord.

2. Cultivate a mindset of pleasing and honoring God even with your imagination and self-discipline. So much of today's media overemphasize sexuality and promote instant gratification as an ideal, making self-control a much-needed virtue. Strengthen your discipline by staying close to God, clothed in His spiritual armor, and trusting your Savior to battle for you.

3. Remember that the Holy Spirit lives in the spirit of a Christian. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 6:16). The Spirit will master and direct your desires as you invite Him to do so.

4. Let Jesus be your example. He was sacrificially self-disciplined (Luke 9:51, Isa 55:4, –Mat 27:11,14). He was “tempted in every way, just as we are yet he did not sin” (Hebrews 4:15), which means He had to manage His sexual drives to the glory of God. The Lord directed all His energies and attention to meeting the deepest needs of lost mankind. Serve alongside of Him, and let Him serve through you.

5. When a sexual urge grows, redirect your thoughts and take steps to dampen the urgency of the desire. Do some exercises, take a walk, or take a cold shower (cooling the body can literally cool sexual urges)

6. Avoid all forms of unnecessary sexual stimulation. Remember that our desires are stimulated by what the eyes see, so it's important to avoid any movie, TV, or other visual medium that shows nakedness or sexual activity. Be ruthless about this.

7. Follow Jesus' advice and don't look at any person lustfully (Mat 5:28). Follow Job's example: "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman" (Job 31:1). Train your mind, your thoughts, your imagination, and your eyes to be chaste as you consider how God might use you constructively in every person's life.

8. When you wake up in the morning, get up. Lying in bed opens the door to sexual arousal, increasing desire.

9. Work vigorously. Work with all your strength, and at night you will have an easier time falling asleep quickly.

10. Manage your mind. Philippians 4:8 gives you a list of things with which to fill your mind.

11. Sublimate sexual energy into meaningful and satisfying service for others in Christ's name. Or channel it into exciting and challenging projects and activities that fully occupy your mind.

12. Prepare for the responsibilities of marriage and family. Keep your attention on the long-term benefits of sexual purity.

13. Use your imagination and memory to conjure up physical sights, sounds, smells, feelings, and tastes that you've experienced and in which there is no shame. Make your mind work the way you choose.

14. When a sexual urge intensifies, change your environment. Ask a friend to go with you to chat, walk, jog, shop, or do something active and enjoyable.

15. Develop or cultivate a hobby that requires active use of your hands.

16. Take note of what triggers your sexual urges, and avoid it. Do what you can to change the situation associated with the desire. If wrong thoughts follow a certain activity, then stop engaging in that activity.

17. Talk to God about how you are feeling. Share every situation with the Lord Jesus.

18. If you do sin, immediately confess it to Christ and receive His forgiveness (1 Joh 1:9). Don't let shame control you. Thank God that Christ already died for all sin, that God's love is unconditional and His mercy is new every morning. Ask God for victory. In – Eph 6:10, 1 Pet 5:8, and – Jam 4:7, God gives you the means of victory over Satan's attacks.

19. Cultivate close and honest relationships and accountability with other conscientious Christians of the same gender as you. Ask them to pray for you and to be available when you need them.

20. Acknowledge your struggles to someone you can trust. You are not the first person who has struggled with learning how to manage your sexual nature. Hiding, faking, and acting hypocritically will not help you; they will destroy your character. If you do slip, your confidante can support you with prayer, exhortation, and encouraging guidance.

21. Realize that striving for the mastery may not be easy or quick. Putting on any virtue—chastity, honesty, generosity, or whatever—takes practice and commitment. Paul described self-discipline like this: “I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize” (–1 Cor 9:26,27).

22. Use music to shift your mind's thoughts. When you feel sexual cravings, listen to some music with God-focused, Christ-honoring lyrics.

23. Take it a day at a time, depending on God's grace and keeping your eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith (Heb 12:2).

God designed us to have real relationships, not to indulge the lust of the flesh. The chief purpose of the sex drive is to move us toward our spouses, not to gratify ourselves. Sinful ways of relieving sexual tension can never release anyone from lust; rather, they only reinforce the desire to act out on that lust. Sinful behavior cannot relieve the longing for real intimacy but only adds to the pressure.

Real sexual fulfillment is found in satisfying another. The proper use of sexual power is about loving another, not oneself. By God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can learn to postpone sexual fulfillment until we can enjoy the full reality that God designed for sexual intercourse within marriage.

**In conclusion, marriage is a life long commitment that will experience many and varying challenges. Your objective is to build a strong healthy family unit grounded in Christ that will stand the pressures of life and will provide a safe and secure environment for the entire family.**

