

**Our Topic:**

Dating is risky business (especially in Christian circles) – should you, could you, and how do you get into committed and godly relationship.

**For:**

Unmarried Men or Women – in or hoping for a relationship

**Aim:**

To consider the *roles and responsibilities* of a Christian Boy or Girl in a godly relationship.

Specifically:

- How much of what the Bible says about marriage should be put into action?
- How can we better show care to each other?
- Discuss what should or could be done to get into a committed godly relationship.

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**Outline**

Introduction

Why 'go out' with someone?

A Biblical View of Relationships

    The Nature of Marriage

    The Purpose of Marriage

        Christian Marriage

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How to act towards the opposite sex?

How to get into a Relationship?

Holy Dating

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**Introduction**

### **Why 'go out' with someone?**

- What are some of the reasons people yearn to go out with others?

### **A Biblical View of Relationships**

- What passages in the Bible (that you can think of) say anything about Christian Dating?

### **The Nature of Marriage**

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Gen. 2:24)*

## **The Purpose of Marriage**

### **Togetherness – by God**

The Lord said, '*It is not good for a man to be alone; I will make a helper fit for him*' (Gen 2:18)

- Marriage is for the expression of romantic feelings.
- Marriage is for physical satisfaction of sexual urges.
- Marriage is for the stability of society.
- Marriage is for the bringing up of children in a safe and stable environment.
- Marriage is for producing Godly offspring (Mal 2:15)
- Marriage is because it is not good for the mankind to be alone.

### **Rule – by God**

*'God said let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over the all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in his own image in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them' (Gen 1:26-27)*

## **Christian Dating: Putting your Brave Pants on!**

### **Relate sexually – by God**

- The women being taken from the flesh of the man (Gen 2:21), to become flesh of his flesh (2:23) and to then join together as one flesh (2:24), naked and not ashamed (2:25) - is sexual and deeply relational.
- If sex is so important - wouldn't you expect to read far more about it than we in fact do?

God's command (Gen 1:28) is to *be fruitful and multiply and fill all the earth.*

### **Christian Marriage**

Gen 3

Matthew 19

Ephesians 5

- It is with Jesus and because of our sin that we *move away from the sphere of creation* and we move *towards the sphere of redemption*.

## **Christian Dating: Putting your Brave Pants on!**

- Matthew 22:30
- For Christians – the job is to.....
  - while single, we serve God in our singleness.
  - while going out, serve God as an exclusive couple but with the intention of glorifying God in all you do.
  - When engaged, serve God by being pure and blameless.
  - When married (if God so intends that gift for you), serve God as husband and wife recognizing that your marriage, like everything else, should be to glorify God.

If interested there are several passages in the Bible that may be worth further reflection:

- Matthew 19:11-12 – Remain unmarried? - single by birth or event or single by choice.
- Matthew 22:29-30 – At the (final) resurrection there is no marriage
- Revelation 19:6-8 – The wedding of the Lamb – when all will rejoice and give him glory.
- 1 John 4:10-11 – Love: that God loved us and sent his son.
- Ephesians 5:21-27 – Love and Submission in marriage out of reverence for Christ.
- 1 Peter 1:14-16 – Be holy, because I am holy
- 1 Corinthians 7:1-39 – Matters to do with singleness, marriage and relationships
- Matthew 5:27-30 – Adultery
- 1 Thessalonians 4:2-8 – Sexual Purity

  

- Being in a relationship, being married, is not the fix if you are ‘unholy’.

### **Who to go out with?**

Guys ....

Proverbs 31 draws a picture of a godly woman and excellent wife. The qualities that are written of this woman are a great guide to who you should go out with especially if you are seeking to be ministry-minded (and married). Of course the picture is of a married woman, so what you are looking for is evidence that she would aspire to these qualities – the greatest and most important being a fear of the Lord.

10 *An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.*

11 *The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.*

12 *She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.*

13 *She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands.*

14 *She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar.*

15 *She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens.*

16 *She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.*

17 *She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong.*

18 *She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night.*

19 *She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle.*

20 *She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet.*

22 *She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple.*

23 *Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.*

24 *She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant.*

25 *Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.*

26 *She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.*

27 *She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

28 *Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:*

29 *"Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all."*

30 *Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a **woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.***

31 *Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.*

This woman, works for the sake of those she is caring for (husband and children and poor and needy). She is a woman of strength, dignity, wisdom, kindness. Note this is not a physical description (must be thin, large, tall, short, pretty, blonde, etc.)

Seek these fundamental aspects about the person you may be interested in.

Ladies ....

Colossians 3:1-17

This passage is not written specifically about men – but ladies, if you are looking for a man, then it is a great start! Note the things he should put off (put to death – vv 5-11) and then note the things he should put on (vv 12-17) – and all because of Christ (vv 1-4).

I am sure you know this, but for the Christian seeking to get into a relationship the ***Biblical imperatives*** are (four things):

- a. The \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen 2:18, 22-24)
- b. Not \_\_\_\_\_ (Lev 20:10-12, 17-21; 1 Cor 5:1)
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ (Rom 7:2, Tit 1:6)
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Cor 7:39)

A Christian is a new creation (2 Cor 5:17) and a non-Christian is in rebellion with God. What do you fundamentally have in common?

If it is of lasting substance it will be Christian (2 Cor 6:14-7:1).

***Wisdom*** would also say (three further things):

- e. \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 2:1-5)
- f. \_\_\_\_\_
- g. And you like them!

Go out with someone with both eyes open, if you get married close one eye!

### **Why don't we get into Relationship?**

There are as many reasons under the sun why many will find it difficult to get into relationships. Here are some common ones.

- God does not want you to be in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship – right now.
- You may not be someone who should get married.
- Because you are more worried about what others think (or might think) than you are worried about what God thinks.
- You are scared
  - of getting hurt
  - of being embarrassed
  - of being vulnerable
  - of it not working out.
- You are self-absorbed
- You don't make yourself available (e.g. the ladies standing in a huddle at church talking about why there are no godly men around! Or the guys being so adverse to hanging and chatting that they go home instead of going out)
- For guys – don't want to hurt a friendship.
- For girls – waiting for the guy to take the lead!
- You have baggage that you don't want to let it go (yet).
- You do nothing about getting into a relationship.

### **How to act towards the opposite sex?<sup>1</sup>**

It is totally appropriate to be friends with Christians of the opposite sex. It is not appropriate to lead someone on as if you are interested in a relationship when you are not.

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<sup>1</sup> This section has been written by Naomi Noakes

### **Guys**

Men in leadership are often attractive to women. If you happen to have a half-decent personality as well then even more so! Men, if you want a relationship, it is your job to lead and make something happen!

Beware. Women will want your attention and will read attraction into your attention. So...

- Relate to women with absolute purity. Keep your eyes off what you shouldn't. Develop the skill of bouncing eyes!
- Avoid touch and repeated eye contact.
- Do not show repeated interest or engage in repeated interactions with a sister if you have no intention of building the relationship. Before you have coffee twice, she will have planned your wedding!
- Do not flirt. Flirting aims to get a reaction from the person you are flirting with for your own self-gratification.
- Do not confide. Avoid being a confidant.
- Be especially aware of the potential feelings of the women you do ministry with. Share experiences create relationship, which is appropriate. Without care you can easily lead a sister to read far more into the relationship than you may have intended.
- Be aware of 'needy' women or women who flatter you.

But men, when you are interested, then do something about it (see below).

### **Ladies**

Ladies you can steal a man's heart intentionally and unintentionally! Where you may see a man from the inside out – men will see you from the outside in. Beware.

Men can promise quickly but often selfishly, they will commit slowly. Men can give you attention and be blind to their own intentions. So...

- Relate to men with absolute purity. Be the Proverbs 31 woman (even though Proverbs 31 is a picture of a married woman).

## **Christian Dating: Putting your Brave Pants on!**

- Do not flirt. Flirting aims to get a reaction from the person you are flirting with for your own self-gratification.
- Be careful what you wear. If you aim to attract guys by how you look, then you will find they value you first for your external appearance and be blind to what should be more beautiful – your godly character.
- Don't rush. Guys get with the program quickly sexually, but not relationally!!
- Do not confide. Avoid being a confidant – until you are in the relationship.
- Do not lose yourself – don't listen more to your dream than the reality.
- Be especially aware of the potential feelings of the men you do ministry with. Share experiences create relationship, which is appropriate.

And ladies, if you are interested in a Christian guy, show interest in him directly. Don't assume he knows what you are thinking! Don't show interest through others. Don't expect the guy to break into your huddle of female friends – it will probably not happen!

### **How to get into a Relationship?**

So what do you do when you do want to make something happen? Here are some suggestions:

- Pray
- Put your brave pants on! Step out of your comfort zone.  
Yes there is a risk. You could get hurt. Pray that it is worth the risk.
- Time is a friend – don't rush. Build a friendship.
- Be intentional
- Be honest about your intentions – with them (rather than everyone else).
- Look them in the eye – often. Look them in the eye from across the room.
- Be interested in them – who they are, what they think, what they like. Listen.

- Show repeated interest.
- Guys - be a gentleman – protect women (e.g. open doors for them, walk them to their car, wait for them to get in the door, stand between them and odd characters)
- Girls – be a lady – allow the guy to be a gentleman. Show respect (rather than embarrassment) when he does.
- Chase them – write them a note, give them a gift, send them flowers, invite them out.
- Allow others to set you up (but don't rely on this).

Recognize this Christian paradox:

Christian women want the men to show leadership and get frustrated when they do not.

Christian men don't want to hurt the friendship and so will often hold back (unlike the Non-Christian guys).

Girls – make yourself available – if interested.

Guys – man up. Ask her out.

- And if you enter into a relationship – Give thanks to God.

An Aside: *Christian Dating Websites*.

## **Christian Dating: Putting your Brave Pants on!**

### **Holy Dating (Tips for how to conduct yourself when Dating)**

1. **Set boundaries.** Be specific and intentional about how you want to protect your relationship. Write them down.
2. **Read the Bible and Pray together.** It is difficult (not impossible) to be sexually impure when you have the Bible passages ringing in your ears. Read it lots. Be aware however that this closeness can be dangerous – It can be a turn-on to spend one-on-one time reading the Bible and praying with your girlfriend/boyfriend. So follow the next few suggestions.
3. **Get someone to hold you accountable.** Choose a Christian friend of the same sex who you can be honest and open with. Give them the questions to ask you. Both you and your girlfriend/boyfriend should have someone to be accountable to. Friends can be a gift from God in this area. What should you ask? Try these: *Has your physical relationship progressed further than last time you met? If so, do you think that where it has progressed would please God as much as you?* These types of questions mean that you don't have to tell your accountability partner all the gory details, but you know someone is also going to hold you to account if you are continually progressing physically and beyond what is good for the relationship.
4. **Spend time with groups of people.** Where does it say that dating is about being alone with someone – the movies! Wrong. If you want to get to know someone then see how they relate to others. See how they relate to your family and friends (after all, other than God, who knows you best?).
5. **Be alone in public places.** When you do want alone time, be alone in public – go for a walk, a picnic, coffee shop, movies, zoo, ferry etc.
6. **Don't be alone together where things could happen.** Never in closed door rooms, avoid your bedroom, use the car to travel and don't park (at least in secluded spots).
7. **Be honest with yourself about what arouses you** – avoid it. Stop early. Out of marriage, sexual touch does not mean love! Protect your heart by protecting your body.
8. **Work hard on communication.** Be intentional, regular, planned and committed in the times you set to talk (and find different ways – Skype, letter, email, delivered gifts, text messages, phone calls).
9. **Have Fun – to the glory of God.**

I hope this has been helpful. Put your brave pants on and have some fun!!!

### **References** (for further reading)

Ash, C., *Married for God* (Nottingham: IVP, 2007).

Hsu, A., *The Single Issue* (Leicester: IVP, 1997).

Kostenberger, A.J., *God, Marriage and Family – rebuilding the Biblical foundation* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004).

### **Podcast**

Jensen, P. D., *Love, Sex and Marriage* (Kingsford: Matthias Media, 2003). 4 Talks. (<http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au/love-sex-and-marriage>)

This seminar appreciates earlier work done by Peter and Lyndy Berthon in *Marriage, Love and Sex – enjoying God's good creation in the light of Christ's work*. (Unpublished paper)