

The Dating Game

(appropriate for high-schoolers or older)

Michael R. Daily 4/9/09

Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

(ref #1: Christopher D. Hudson, et. Al., *Come Here Often? The Indispensable Guide To Dating Do's And Don'ts*, Barbour Publishing, 2005)

(ref #2: Univ. of Maryland, HONR 269J: The Beat Begins – America in the 1950s, <http://universityhonors.umd.edu/HONR269J/projects/sombat.html>)

(ref #3, Mike Daily, "Purity Before Marriage", <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>)

(ref #4, Mike Daily, "Marriage Convictions For Teenagers", <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>)

(ref #5, Mike Daily, "Modesty in Dress for Teenage Women", <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>)

(ref #6: Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, Multnomah Books, 2003)

I have never seen the fires of hell. But twice in my life I have seen their smoke.

When I was in grade school my parents let me stay up late one night to finish watching a 4 hour documentary on the Jewish Holocaust of WW II. I was stunned by the pictures of emaciated corpses piled like garbage everywhere.

Inside the building their clothes lay in stacks, their eyeglasses in one pile, jewelry in another, their hair in a pile, teeth with gold fillings in another. Factories engineered to kill inexpensively with an emphasis on "recycling".

The furnaces where bodies burned 24 hours a day – that's where I first saw the smoke of the fires of hell.

Fast forward to 2004.

I'm standing in front of a group of about 40 high schoolers at church. I just finished teaching a lesson on "purity before marriage" (see reference #3). I could see the regret in a few of their eyes, tears in some cases, tightly folded arms in others. And now its question and answer time. And the questions come:

"My christian friend's girlfriend is pregnant but he doesn't really want to marry her. What should I tell him?"

"My friend is going to get an abortion. How do I talk her out of it?"

"My friend's boyfriend has other girls she doesn't know about. When I tell her about it she gets mad and calls me a liar. What should I do?"

And then the private questions later:

"He said he loved me...."

"He said God told him we were to be married someday....."

"It was just kissing but then she put my hand on her....."

And I saw it again, 30 years later, the smoke of a holocaust.

Funny, it wasn't the holocaust of 30 million aborted American babies that hit me. It was a different holocaust.

It was the smoke of stained dreams, dimmed faith, fractured hearts, guilt, shame, things given that should have been kept, experiences burned into memory by passion – to haunt at times yet future, disease, illness, murder.

It was the smoke of Christian teenagers deceiving and using each other. And for what? For fun. To have a "good time".

For... entertainment? How did this happen?

A History of Dating (see reference # 2)

People have been on the earth for about 6,000 years. During all of this time there was no dating as we know it today until about 100 years ago. Before that people got to know one another as they worked together in the community and marriages happened quickly without much in the way of dating. Economies were such that boys just through puberty soon began working for a living without the delays needed to complete a high school and college education. The closest people came to dating was something called “courting” or “calling” which existed up until the mid-1920’s in America.

Calling was a formal process where a man came over to a woman’s house and, if she allowed him in, they would spend time in the parlor under the supervision of the woman’s parents. It was a time of talking and other parlor activities. The purpose of “calling” was to determine if the couple should be married. They either married or the process of calling was ended relatively quickly.

The advantages of this process were that the woman and her parents had control of the situation. There was little, if any, opportunity to engage in sensuality (kissing and touching) much less sexual activity. The intent of both people was clear. They knew each other from observation in public settings and activities in the community and church. Now they were exploring the possibility of marriage. Discussions of intent or “where the relationship was going” were not needed.

Key Point: Before the 1920’s the standards for dating were that only those whose intent was to marry should “date” and even then only under parental supervision.

This began to change in the 1920’s. In cities, the less well off did not have parlors or places of semi-privacy so couples began to “date” away from the home. The practice was soon adopted by the upper and middle classes. This took the couple away from parental supervision, one of the advantages of calling.

After World War II dating changed dramatically. The automobile provided not only privacy from parental supervision but privacy from the public. At the same time people no longer thought of “dating” as something you do as a final evaluation before marriage. It was now an end in itself. It was a chance to “have some fun”. It also completed the transition of power from the woman to the man. The man picked up the woman, took her away from her parents, paid for the entertainment, etc. The man now had control of the situation. Dating was now viewed primarily as a method of entertainment as well as an indicator of social status (popularity).

The end result of these changes is that sensuality (intimate kissing and touching) increased dramatically as part of the dating process, starting in the 1950’s, even though virginity was still highly valued. In addition these changes increased the level of confusion and misunderstanding in relationships. Some were dating with an intent toward marriage while others were more interested in entertainment and sensuality – having a good time. The custom of “going steady” only amplified these problems.

Key Point: The world’s view of dating during the 1950’s was that anything was OK as long as you kept your clothes on. (For a detailed study on what the Bible says about the dangers of sensuality please see: reference #3)

Today, the world’s view on dating is that sensuality is expected and sexual activity is good as long as it is done in a “safe” way.

Steve Harvey, in his popular book, *“Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man: What Men Really Think About Love, Relationships, Intimacy, and Commitment”*, talks about a 90 day probation period which has caused some controversy. Any guesses what he is talking about? He noticed that when you go to work for Ford Motor Company the company does not allow you to use their benefits program for the first 90 days. During this time Ford is evaluating you to see if they want to keep you. If they decide to keep you, you can participate in their benefits programs starting on day 91.

Now get this. His argument is that women possess a benefit highly valued by men - sex. So, he recommends that women give men a 90 day probation period where they will not have sex with them and use that time to get to know the man first. 90 days! The controversy is not that 90 days is too little. The controversy is: that is too much to ask. Incredible!

God's Standards

But God's standards have never changed. He views people as single or married, period. There is no special situation with its own rules called dating, going steady, etc. The idea of dating is a recent invention of the world system.

I Corinthians 7:1-9

Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. 3The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6But this I say by way of concession, not of command. 7Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that. 8But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. 9But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

This verse makes it clear that the marriage bed is to be undefiled. Notice that God says that defiling of the marriage bed can be done by either fornication or adultery.

Defile – morally blemished, stained, impure; place under suspicion or cast doubt upon; tarnish, make dirty or spotty; foul, spot, stain, or pollute.

Fornicator – an unmarried person who engages in sexual intercourse.

Adulterer - a married person who engages in sexual intercourse with another person who is not their spouse.

Another way to think of it is this.

Key Point: Purity in marriage does not start when you get married – it starts right now.

Guys, whatever you are doing to that girl you are doing to someone's future wife. Do you want someone doing that to your wife?

Girls, whatever you are doing to that boy you are doing to someone's future husband. Do you want someone doing that to your husband?

Ephesians 4:17-25

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. 20But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. 25Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.**

How many pre-marital encounters with the opposite sex do you want to burn into your memory so that Satan can bring them back up when you are being intimate with your spouse?

"Zero" is the answer that will bring you the most happiness and fulfillment in your marriage.

A few years ago the doctor was running some blood tests on me to figure out what I had. When I met with him he said that he wasn't sure what was wrong with me yet but he was happy to report that I was one of only 5% of Americans who did not have antibodies for mononucleosis. In other words I had never been exposed to mononucleosis (also known as the "kissing disease"). I told him that was because I had only kissed one woman in my entire life.

Trust me, I have not missed anything.

So, what does all this have to do with dating?

Dating is a High Risk Activity

Proverbs 4:23-27

Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life. 24Put away from you a deceitful mouth And put devious speech far from you. 25Let your eyes look directly ahead And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. 26Watch the path of your feet And all your ways will be established. 27Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil.

I Corinthians 6:12-20

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. 13Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. 14Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. 15Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! 16Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." 17But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 18Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Dating puts your heart, your body, and through these, your spirit at risk.

I'm not saying you can't date. Its not a sin to go on a date. But if you date please be aware of what it is, where it came from, and what the risks are.

So, what are the risks?

I am an engineer so let me describe it this way. Very high reliability systems that can't be fixed such as deep space probes or satellites use something called, "dual redundant systems" to make them extremely reliable. Basically, two copies of a critical system are included on the satellite. Each one is pretty reliable. But if one system starts to fail you can switch over to the other one. Having two copies of the system pushes the overall reliability to extremely high levels.

Unfortunately, dating is also a kind of dual redundant system but one that is oriented toward failure.

For example, a girl may be very committed to maintaining her purity while dating but constant pressure from a boy who wants to be sensual can wear down her defenses and prey on her fear of being abandoned.

Likewise a boy who is very committed to maintaining his purity while dating will collapse if the girl makes aggressive sensual advances (see reference # 3 for some "true story" examples).

"Oh but Mr. Daily, Mr. Daily, what if both are committed to maintaining purity, now things are OK, right?"

Well, things are better but we still have some risks. You see, the problem is bigger than it first seems.

Why People Date

The truth is that when someone chooses to date you one-on-one, you don't really know the reason why. You can hope, you can wish, and you can dream – but you don't really know why, do you?

What are some of the reasons someone might want to date another person? (make a list on the board)

- 1) Physical intimacy (kissing, touching, or sex) without emotional intimacy
- 2) Emotional intimacy without physical intimacy (romantic experiences)
- 3) Emotional and physical intimacy without commitment
- 4) To have new, entertaining experiences (the good timer)
- 5) To have someone else pay for gifts and experiences they want to have (the gold digger)
- 6) To be seen as normal by others (if you don't date there must be something wrong with you)
- 7) To participate in the social circuit (parties, dances, etc.)
- 8) To find someone to marry

Here's a partial list of some of the reasons people date. Perhaps you can come up with others.

This list gives 36 possible combinations of why two people are dating each other!

28 of these reasons are couples who are dating each other for different reasons. Work through these combinations and see if you can identify the problems that each of these types of relationships is going to produce.

<u>Reasons</u>	<u>Results</u>
1&2 / 1&6 / 2&3	frustration, guilt, loneliness, rejection, anger, pressure
1&3	disease, loneliness, constant stream of serial physical relationships
1&4	disease, waking up when you are 40 and realizing you are alone
1&5 / 1&7	a civilized form of prostitution
1&8 / 2&8 / 3&8 / 4&8 / 5&8 / 6&8 / 7&8	heartbreak, rejection, deception
2&4 / 2&5 / 2&6 / 2&7	loneliness, feelings of being used
3&4 / 3&5 / 3&6 / 3&7	mutual feelings of being used
4&5 / 4&6 / 4&7 / 5&6 / 5&7 / 6&7	a business partnership, not a relationship

The point is, one-on-one dating is more complicated and risky than you might have realized.

What about the 8 combinations where the two people have the same reason for dating?

1&1 - Both want physical intimacy without emotional intimacy

This is rare. The number of women who truly want this is tiny. When it does occur the end result is large numbers of sexual relationships one after another resulting in disease, loneliness, and hardness of heart.

Proverbs 7:18-23

"Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with caresses. 19"For my husband is not at home, He has gone on a long journey; 20He has taken a bag of money with him, At the full moon he will come home." 21With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him. 22Suddenly he follows her As an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool, 23Until an arrow pierces through his liver; As a bird hastens to the snare, So he does not know that it will cost him his life.

2&2 – Both want emotional intimacy without physical intimacy

This is rare. The number of men who truly want this is tiny except if it is short term and the real goal is marriage.

This brings up the issue of, “Can men and women just be friends?” Maybe. They certainly can be acquaintances but a real friend is someone who you share intimate information with.

Here’s a test to see if you and that person of the opposite sex are “just friends”.

When your friend starts telling you about that new person (of your sex) that they met how do you feel? They go on and on about how attractive the person is and how talented they are and how wonderful it feels being with them. What is your initial reaction? Are you thrilled and excited for them? Or are you somewhat shocked and hurt that the relationship you have “means nothing” to them? Be honest. If your initial reaction is shock and hurt then you are more than just friends - at least you think so.

3&3 – Both want emotional and physical intimacy without commitment

This couple will end up living together or “playing marriage” temporarily. When things get difficult or inconvenient they will end the relationship and move on to the next relationship. A marriage license may or may not be involved.

4&4 – Both want to have new entertaining experiences

This couple will date only as long as the good times continue. Because the priority is fun, the relationship usually doesn’t last long because someone offering newer experiences usually comes along.

5&5 - Both want someone else to pay for gifts and experiences they want to have

Unless a third party (such as a matchmaking parent) is funding the dates, this does not happen.

6&6 – Both want to be seen as normal by others

A temporary business partnership

7&7 – Both want to participate in the social circuit

A temporary business partnership

8&8 – Both want to find someone to marry

These people value commitment. They will either marry or end the relationship without having reasons for guilt or regret.

Whether I got all the details exactly right or not I hope you can see that dating is a complex and risky game. So, what are your reasons for dating? Figure out which reasons apply to you and use this information to identify the risks you will need to be ready for.

But Wait! There’s More! (risk that is)

Here’s another risk you need to be aware of that complicates everything else. The human heart is the most deceitful thing in existence. It has the ability to convince a person to believe something that is not true.

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

On top of everything else, you or the person you are dating may not be fully conscious of the real reasons you are dating. Your heart may have deceived you. Their heart may have deceived them. They think they are dating you for one reason but the real reason is something different. This is why people that are dating can say one thing and sound so convincing (because they really do believe it) but their actions say another thing.

Key Point: Actions reveal the heart’s intent, not words - even deeply believed words.

And More! (see reference #6)

Dating one-on-one has other risks that you need to be aware of:

It tends to skip friendship and go right to romance.

Instead of working together on a common interest, the relationship itself becomes the focus.

It tends to isolate you from other people.

It distracts you from preparing for your future or from serving God.

It tends to make people feel discontent with being single.

It creates an artificial atmosphere for evaluating another person's character.

It trains people to have serial relationships instead of one committed one.

Someone is Better Than No One – Wait! Reverse That!

Some people say, 'Well, he's (she's) not Mr. (Ms.) Right but they're better than nothing so I'll just hang with them and kill time until Mr. (Ms.) Right comes along'. That's a really bad strategy. If you are always tangled up in a mediocre relationship all you are doing is making it difficult for God to bring the right person to you when it is time.

When I was a young Christian in college I had a morning test so I took my physics book and went down early to have breakfast in the dorm cafeteria. I got my food and sat down by myself to eat. It was early in the morning so the dining area was almost empty. As a new Christian I bowed my head to pray before eating, following the example of the guys who had led me to Christ earlier that year. I opened my book and started eating my breakfast when I heard a girl's voice say, "Excuse me, may I sit here?" When I looked up it was a beautiful girl so I said, "Of course". I closed my book and we had a nice breakfast and discussion. She was a mature Christian (way ahead of me) and we ended up going on a few dates. Later I asked her why she came over to my table that morning. She said, "Well, I noticed that you were sitting alone and then I saw you bow your head to pray – so I came right over". If some other girl had already been sitting with me she would not have come over. If I had not bowed my head to pray she would not have come over.

Although she was not the one for me to marry, God taught me a powerful lesson through that experience. The lesson I learned was: "Don't worry about girls. Put Me (God) first, serve Me without reservation, and don't let yourself get tangled up in mediocre relationships. Do those things and it will be easy for Me to bring you the right girl when it is time".

Matthew 6:31-34

"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' 32"For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

What to Do

The decisions are up to you but if you want to save yourself a lot of grief and regret please consider the following recommendations:

- 1) Don't date one-on-one until you are emotionally ready and financially able to get married.
If it's the right person, emotional intimacy is going to snowball rapidly and temptations for physical intimacy are going to ramp up. If the ability to marry is not available, you have a problem. (see reference # 5)

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven-- 2A time to give birth and a time to die; A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted. 3A time to kill and a time to heal; A time to tear down and a time to build up. 4A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn and a time to dance. 5A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones; A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing. 6A time to search and a time to give up as lost; A time to keep and a time to throw away. 7A time to tear apart and a time to sew together; A time to be silent and a time to speak. 8A time to love and a time to hate; A time for war and a time for peace.

- 2) Before you are ready for marriage spend time with the opposite sex in group settings. Church service projects are a great way to get to know people and observe how they react in real life situations.

Proverbs 18:1

He who separates himself seeks his own desire, He quarrels against all sound wisdom.

II Timothy 2:22

Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Romans 12:10-13

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; 11not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, 13contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

- 3) Focus on serving God and preparing for your future. Its hard to know if you want to marry someone if you don't know what they are going to be or what you are going to be.

Colossians 3:1-7

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. 5Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, 7and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.

- 4) Trust God – Let Him take care of getting you the right person at the right time. God delights in those who follow him closely and obey Him. God takes pleasure in arranging circumstances in order to orchestrate the bringing together of two people who have set themselves apart for each other in obedience to Him.

Jeremiah 29:11-12

'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. 12'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

Psalms 37:23-24

The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights in his way. 24When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, Because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.

Jeremiah 31:20

"Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a delightful child? Indeed, as often as I have spoken against him, I certainly still remember him; Therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him," declares the LORD.

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Questions & Answers

What about special events like the Prom?

A group of you can go together or you can meet there. It takes a little more effort but if its something you just can't miss, turn it into a group event - at least for some of you.

Won't I miss some important life skills if I don't date and other people do?

I don't think so. I only dated two girls in my life and I seem to be OK. When I was developing this study I asked my friend, Don, who I meet with every week for bible study, what his thoughts on dating were. Don and his wife have been happily married for 22 years. Don said, "I'm the wrong person to ask, I didn't start dating until I was a senior in college". I replied, "You act like there is something wrong with that – I think that's the answer". Some of the happiest marriages I know are made up of people who were not big daters.

If everyone else is dating one-on-one and I'm not, aren't I just depriving myself for nothing?

No. You are saving yourself for marriage both physically and emotionally, not depriving yourself. The real question is, "If I am going to all this trouble will it pay off?" The answer is yes. There are 300 million people in America. If only 0.3% of those people have led pure lives and are in your age group that is still 1 million people. How many of these 1 million people are you going to marry? One. Do you believe God will honor your obedience and bring you together with that one person? You should. By the way, if you think my 0.3% is too high, pick a percentage you think is realistic. Multiply that by 300 million. If you get a number greater than one you're still in good shape because God has a future planned for you and He is personally directing it.

Proverbs 23:17-18

Do not let your heart envy sinners, But live in the fear of the LORD always. 18 Surely there is a future, And your hope will not be cut off.

Boys rarely call me now. If I don't date when they do call, won't I be doomed?

No. For insight about why some high school girls don't get a lot of calls from boys and why it is not a bad thing, see reference # 5, *Mike Daily, "Modesty in Dress for Teenage Women"*, <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>. The truth is that unless you have the spiritual gift of singleness, God has plans to get you married. But don't worry, if the thought that you might have the spiritual gift of singleness horrifies you – that means you don't have it!

When I am ready and able to get married what should I be looking for in a potential spouse?

Someone who understands the roles and responsibilities of the husband and the wife as presented in the bible and who demonstrates the capacity to grow into those responsibilities. See reference # 4, *Mike Daily, "Marriage Convictions For Teenagers"*, <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>.

I Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Other things to look at are: How do they treat members of the opposite sex in general, do they have a positive attitude, are they diligent in their work responsibilities, do they dress appropriately, what are their closest friends like, do they respond well to those who are in authority over them, are they able to support a family, are they likeminded with you doctrinally, is their spiritual maturity and yours about the same. (reference # 1)

It sounds like all of my problems will be solved once I marry the right person, is that right?

Not exactly. Keep in mind that life is a character building experience. God is using our few brief years on the Earth to develop our faith and a Christ-like character. Once you marry the person God has for you, most of the problems you have now will disappear or be greatly reduced. But in their place a new set of problems will be given to you. This is why Christian books and seminars on Marriage, Parenting, and Money are so popular. This is true for every life transition. That's why you should be content regardless of what stage of life you are in. You will never get to a point in this life where you have "arrived" and everything is in perfect harmony.

John 16:33

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

I Corinthians 7:32-34

But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; 33but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, 34and his interests are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

Additional Verses Related to Dating

I Thessalonians 4:1-8

Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. 2For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. 3For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 7For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. 8So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

Ephesians 5:1-8

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. 3But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; 4and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7Therefore do not be partakers with them; 8for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

Romans 13:8-14

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 10Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. 11Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. 12The night is almost gone, and the day is near Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *The Dating Game*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 7:1-9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 13:4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 4:17-25*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *The Dating Game*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 4:23-27*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 6:12-20*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 7:18-23*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *The Dating Game*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Jeremiah 17:9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 6:31-34*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *The Dating Game*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 18:1, II Timothy 2:22, Romans 12:10-13*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Colossian 3:1-7*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Jeremiah 29:11-12, Psalm 37:23-24, Jeremiah 31:20*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *The Dating Game*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 12:1-2, Proverbs 23:17-18*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 13:4-7*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 16:33, I Corinthians 7:32-34*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *The Dating Game*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Thessalonians 4:1-8*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 5:1-8*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 13:8-14*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?