

Dating

The **Purpose** for Dating

Wrong reasons to date

- to have fun
- to overcome loneliness
- to develop social skills
- to satisfy one's parents or peers
- to evangelize

The right reason to date: to find a spouse

The **Person** to Date

The wrong person to date

- an unbeliever
 - passages: Deut 7:1-4, 1 Cor 7:39, 9:5, 2 Cor 6:14-16
 - proof: Solomon (1 Kgs 11:1-11, Neh 13:26)
 - practical considerations: loneliness, child rearing, etc.
- a disobedient believer (Prov 13:20, 1 Cor 15:33; cf. Rom 16:17, 2 Thess 3:6, 14)
- a doctrinally-different believer (Amos 3:3)

The right person to date

- Mr. Right
 - character: 1 Tim 3, Titus 1
 - loving leader: Eph 5:22-33
 - hard worker: Prov 6:6-11, 13:4, 19:15

- Mrs. Right
 - character: Prov 31
 - sweet, submissive spirit: 1 Pet 3:1-6
- someone your parents approve of: Eph 6:1-3

Purity in Dating

Passages

- 1 Corinthians 6:18-20
- Ephesians 5:3
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8
- Hebrews 13:4

Principles

- physical intimacy is for marriage
- God will judge those who engage in physical intimacy outside the bounds of marriage
 - physically: STDs (AIDS, etc.)
 - emotionally: “emotional scars” (Prov 6:32-33) (excerpts from *Quest for Love*)
 - spiritually: Rom 1:24-27
- believers should differ from unbelievers in the realm of physical intimacy (but often don’t—slide)

Pointers

- Don’t start dating too soon
- Avoid one-on-one dating
- Write out guidelines regarding physical contact before you start dating (seek parental approval)
- Develop guidelines that are godly, not just good (illustration: coachman who got the job)
- Put your guidelines into practice, not just down on paper

- Don't do anything with, to, or for your date that you would not do with, to, or for your sibling
- Don't engage in any form of physical contact with your date that you would feel uncomfortable engaging in with someone other than your spouse
- Don't engage in any form of physical contact with your date that you would feel uncomfortable engaging in if your parents or pastor were to suddenly enter the room
- Refrain from intimacy (verbal or physical) until engagement or marriage (excerpts from *Quest for Love* and from *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*)

Recommended Resources on Dating

I Kissed Dating Goodbye by Joshua Harris

Passion and Purity: Learning to Bring Your Love Life Under Christ's Control by Elisabeth Elliot

Quest for Love by Elisabeth Elliot

Dating with Integrity: Honoring Christ in Your Relationships with the Opposite Sex by John Holzmann

My 10-lesson series on dating, downloadable for free from www.pinegrovegoodrich.org

Dating

The Purpose¹ for Dating

No matter what the activity, *why* we do it (purpose/aim) will dictate *how* we do it (practice/actions). Dating is no exception. Therefore, the first question to be asked is: Why date? Many answers have been given.

Wrong reasons to date

1. To have fun
2. To overcome loneliness

The Danger of Idolatry in Dating

“Any time we allow someone to displace God as the focus of our affection, we’ve moved from innocent appreciation of someone’s beauty or personality to the dangerous realm of infatuation. Instead of making God the object of our longing, we wrongly direct these feelings toward another human. We become idolaters, bowing to someone other than God, hoping that this person will meet our needs and bring fulfillment.”

(Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 141)

3. To develop social skills
4. To satisfy one’s parents or peers

¹ Remember, there is a difference between the purpose for doing something and the byproducts of doing it. We must guard against the danger of making a byproduct a purpose.

“Parents should be low-key about boyfriend and girlfriend talk. Unconsciously, parents may push their teen into pseudo-dating relationships by focusing too much on ‘Who’s your boyfriend now?’ or ‘Did I hear that you and Lisa broke up? What happened?’ Teens may get the unspoken message, even unintended, that you place high value on their ability to catch and hold a romantic interest.”

(Lane Powell, *Living with Teenagers*, October 1995, p. 29)

5. To evangelize

The Right Reason to Date: Marriage

“I believe the whole purpose of dating is to find someone who would be a good husband or wife.”
(14 year-old girl, quoted in *Youthworker Update*, March 1995, p. 8)

The Person to Date

“The most important aspect about dating is who you go out with—because you marry who you date. If you date a loser, you will marry a loser. If you date a winner, you will marry a winner.”
(Pat Griffiths)

The Wrong Person to Date

1. An unbeliever

Passages: Deuteronomy 7:1-4; 1 Corinthians 7:39, 9:5; 2 Corinthians 6:14-16

Proof: Solomon (1 Kgs 11:1-11; Neh 13:26)

Practical Considerations: loneliness, child rearing, etc.

2. A disobedient believer (Rom 16:17; 2 Thess 3:6, 14; cf. Prov 13:20 and 1 Cor 15:33)

3. A doctrinally-different believer (Amos 3:3)

The Right Person to Date

1. Mr. Right

Character (1 Tim 3; Titus 1)

Loving Leader (Eph 5:22-33)

Hard Worker (Prov 6:6-11, 13:4, 19:15)

2. Mrs. Right

Character (Prov 31)

Sweet, Submissive Spirit (1 Pet 3:1-6)

3. Someone your parents approve of (Eph 6:1-3)

Purity in Dating

Passages: 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4

Principles

1. Physical intimacy is for marriage (Heb 13:4).
2. God will judge those who engage in physical intimacy outside the bounds of marriage (1 Thess 4:6; Heb 13:4).

Physically: STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)

Emotionally: the emotional scars of sexual sin (Prov 6:32-33)

Spiritually (Rom 1:24-27)
3. Believers should differ from unbelievers in the realm of physical intimacy (1 Cor 6:19-20; Eph 5:3; 1 Thess 4:5).

Pointers

1. Don't start dating too soon
2. Avoid one-on-one dating

"I avoid one-on-one dating because it encourages physical intimacy and places me in an isolated setting with a girl. Can't I handle it? Don't I have any self-control? Yeah, maybe I could handle it, but that's not the point. God says, 'Flee the evil desires of youth ...' (2 Timothy 2:22). I won't stick around to see how much temptation I can take. God is not impressed by my ability to stand up to sin. He's more impressed by the obedience I show when I run from it."
(I Kissed Dating Goodbye, p. 95)

"If virginity is to be preserved, lines must be drawn. Why put yourself in any situation where the lines become smudged and obscure? Why take the risks? Why accept the pressure of tremendous temptation when you can easily avoid it by refusing to be anywhere where compromise is possible?"
(Passion and Purity, p. 147)

3. Write out guidelines regarding physical contact before you start dating. Seek parental approval (Eph 6:1-3).

"As you enter the world of dating, resolve now what you believe in, what you won't compromise on, and what path you'll pursue. Now is the time for thinking and planning. The heat of passion is no time to make such moves."
(Mark Littleton)

4. Develop guidelines that are godly, not just good.

"If you're worried about falling over the edge of the cliff when it comes to your relationships with members of the opposite sex, quit looking at the guardrail—'how far you can go'; keep your eye on the center line: God's purpose for your life and relationships."
(John Holzmann, Dating with Integrity, p. 126)

“If we were honest with ourselves, many of us would admit that we’re not really interested in purity at all. Instead, we feel satisfied by meeting the minimum requirements, content with spending our time in the ‘gray areas,’ flirting with darkness and never daring to step into the light of righteousness.”
(Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 88)

5. Put your guidelines into practice, not just down on paper.

“Many couples have made commitments to sexual purity, but instead of adopting a lifestyle that supports this commitment, they continue relationships that encourage physical expression and place themselves in dangerous settings.”
(Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 92)

6. Don’t do anything with, to, or for your date that you would not do with, to, or for your sibling (John Holzmann, *Dating with Integrity*, p. 48). See 1 Timothy 5:1-2.

“I stopped viewing girls as potential girlfriends and started treating them as sisters in Christ.”
(Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 24)

“Guys, it’s time we stood up to defend the honor and righteousness of our sisters. We need to stop acting like ‘hunters’ trying to catch girls and begin seeing ourselves as warriors standing guard over them.”
(*I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 97)

“I want to weep when I think of the many times I have neglected my responsibility to guard girls’ hearts. Instead of playing the role of a warrior, I played the thief, stealing their focus from God for myself. I’m determined to do better. I want to be the kind of friend to whom girls’ future husbands could one day say, ‘Thank you for standing watch over my wife’s heart. Thank you for guarding her purity.’”
(*I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, pp. 98-99)

7. Don't engage in any form of physical contact with your date that you would feel uncomfortable engaging in with someone other than your spouse.

"I will do nothing with members of the opposite sex now, while we are unmarried, that we cannot continue to do in good conscience later, after one or the other of us has married someone else."

(John Holzmann, *Dating with Integrity*, p. 33)

"We need to ask ourselves a serious question. If another person's body doesn't belong to us (that is, we're not married), what right do we have to treat the people we date any differently than a married person would treat someone who wasn't his or her spouse?"

(Joshua Harris, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, p. 94)

8. Don't engage in any form of physical contact with your date that you would feel uncomfortable engaging in if your parents or pastor were to suddenly enter the room.

"Young people who indulge in looks and caresses, or speak words in which they would be unwilling to be surprised (i.e., overheard) by their fathers, mothers, husbands or wives, bear witness that their conduct is not that of honor and conscience."

(St. Francis de Sales, quoted in Elisabeth Elliot, *Quest for Love*, p. 61)

9. Refrain from intimacy (verbal or physical) until engagement or marriage.

"My father counseled his four sons never to say, 'I love you' to a woman until they were ready to follow immediately with 'Will you marry me?'"

(Elisabeth Elliot, *Passion and Purity*, p. 93)

Recommended Resources

I Kissed Dating Goodbye by Joshua Harris

Passion and Purity: Learning to Bring Your Love Life Under Christ's Control by Elisabeth Elliot

Quest for Love by Elisabeth Elliot

Dating with Integrity: Honoring Christ in Your Relationships with the Opposite Sex by John Holzmann

A 10-lesson series on dating, available from the writer of this lesson