

SHOULD CHRISTIANS ONLY DATE CHRISTIANS?

It should seem obvious that Christians are most wise to date and marry Christians. However, there is no commandment to this effect. But we need to consider that if a marriage is successful only when it permits us to be enabled to serve God, and that this requires joint Christian commitment, and that dating is for the purpose of finding that life partner, then it would be the wisest course of action to date those who have similar faith.

As well, dating non-Christians usually means dating those who do not have the same values as us in dating. They may have different concepts of purity and integrity, and may pursue situations we know are dangerous. At the same time, these dangers are present when we date Christians. We need to not let our guard down just because someone is a Christian. Anybody can have a weak moment, and one weak moment can ruin your life.

LISTEN TO GOOD ADVICE

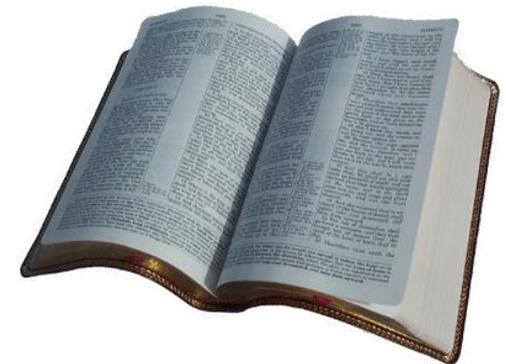
There are no comparable examples of dating in the bible because courtship was such a different event in ancient times. Rather than being left to find a spouse on your own, your family and friends found the one. An exception to

this was Esau, who did not seek his family's help, but instead married women who were Canaanites and caused his family great grief.

The point to this is be ready to listen to advice from spiritual friends and family on dating. If they are concerned that the person you are dating is not going to be a Godly partner, listen to that concern. If they think your behavior is too intimate for safety, take that advice to heart. Again, this is not speaking of advice from just anyone, but those who are more mature in Christ (Titus 2:2-6).

Be wise in dating. It is either helping or hurting you in making the second most important decision of your life.

Dating and Courtship



MODERN VIEW OF DATING

In times past dating was very, very different than it is today. Chaperones (another person who watched over a couple) were always present, and dating was a firm commitment that there was an intention to become engaged. Even when people were engaged, they were not expected to spend time alone. However, this all changed when the automobile was invented.

Today, dating looks a lot different than ages past. As Christians, it is clear that the world's view of dating (its purpose and intent) is going to be dramatically different than dating for those who are in Christ. What should a Christian know about dating?

DANGERS IN DATING

There are multiple dangers in dating today that Christians must overcome. Some are obvious, and some are not. Perhaps the most dangerous issue is fornication. We are repeatedly warned in the New Testament of the danger of fornication (Matthew 15:19, Acts 15:20, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, etc.). But most Christians who stumble in this sin did not intend to do so; they simply put themselves into situations where the temptation to sin was too great to resist.

As Christians we need to know that overcoming sin means avoiding temptations. We need to see that there are circumstances that we can be in that may not be sinful of themselves, but offer temptations that are difficult to overcome and then give birth to sin (James 1:15).

The second danger in dating is not guarding our heart. We are encouraged by the world to follow our heart, and to "fall in love". But simply allowing our hearts to be emotionally unstable is dangerous. Solomon repeatedly provided this advice: "*do not awaken love until it pleases*" (Song of Solomon 2:7, 3:5, 8:4). "Falling in love", especially if we seek to do it often and uncontrolled, results in emotional instability.

We must guard our hearts (Proverbs 4:23). This means we need to not be anxious (Philippians 4:6-7) about the one whom God will enable us to find, and devote this to prayer. Too many people are obsessed with finding someone, and date someone with disastrous consequences. People who allow their hearts to attach themselves to others without spiritual consideration hurt themselves terribly.

DATING WITH A PURPOSE

Christians act with purpose; this includes dating. The world's mindset of dating is to have a good time. In all things, pursuing a good times is dangerous. In regards to dating, this will only lead to sadness and ruin. Another reason people date is because of peer pressure. The idea that we should do something because others are doing it is always bad (1 Samuel 8:5).

The Christian purpose of dating is to find that help-meet as described in Genesis 2. Dating should be the opportunity to become familiar with a person and determine if they will enable you to better things. Dating can be fun, and that is okay. But if that is the only reason we are dating, we are not pursuing a wise course of action.

At the same time, Don't go looking for a spouse until the time is right. Solomon said in Proverbs 24:27 that a man should plow his field before building his house; this advice means that a man needs to have a profession to support a family before he starts one. We should let God have His time in finding our spouse.