

IN CONCLUSION:

Teenager, the purpose of this series is to give practical, God-honoring counsel in the area of dating. Of course, advice can be given but not forced on anyone. I hope and pray that you will take the instruction here and heed it, not for any other reason than that God wants you to enjoy delightful dating. Follow the principles given here, and I really believe you will be spared from dating disaster.

II Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Note to Parents:

It would be helpful to your teenager, if you would study through this material with your teenager. I beseech you, don't allow your son or daughter to "go steady" or practice committed dating in high school. Teenagers can learn how to interact with other young people of the opposite sex, without establishing committed relationships with one another. Committed dating ends up scarring and hurting teenagers far more than doing them any good.

This series, *Dating: Disaster or Delight* was prepared and preached by Youth Pastor Todd Sawtelle for the teens at Emmanuel Youth IMPACT at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Newington, CT in September of 1996, February of 2000, and February of 2003. This booklet is a compilation of those messages.



A series prepared for the teens of...
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If you are bored and discontented or even hurting in a dating relationship then RE-EVALUATE! Why head for disaster?

V. What they are now they always will be!

The point is - don't get into a relationship with someone with the idea in mind that "I am going to change this person..." You will be in for a long tough road. There will always be certain things that you would like to change about you future spouse; but "love endureth all things." If you can't handle how they act or what they are then don't get involved in a dating relationship with that person! Save yourself the grief.

VI. Every date is a possible mate.

This will help you to remember the purpose for dating! It is not to have fun...but to grow in your relationship with God while building a relationship with someone that you could possibly marry. Why waste your time in a relationship that you know is going to go NOWHERE! Again, this is just practical wisdom.

VII. Postpone all possibilities until parents are perfectly pleased!

Though this is somewhat of a repeat from earlier, it is a very important ingredient to making a Delightful Dating relationship! Honor your father and mother!

Psalm 27:14 Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Don't rush into a dating relationship! Too many have done so and it ended up hurting them when the time came to "break up." Be careful. Be patient!

II. Don't look for the right one; be the right one ; and you will get the right one!

Psalm 84:11 For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: **no good *thing*** will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

This plan doesn't always appear to be the most comfortable; but trust God that He will bless His Word! Be the right young man or young lady and God will direct you steps!

III. How you get them is how you keep them!

II Corinthians 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

If you have to become someone else in order to get a desired date's attention then you will have to keep that act up for as long as you intend on being with that person! **Be godly and be yourself!**

IV. Dating should be a delight not a drudgery.

DATING: Disaster or Delight

INTRODUCTION:

Dating is an important issue in many teens lives. Many teens are consumed with thoughts and concerns about who they will date or even if they will have a date. Sadly, the stories often reported among friends indicate that many young people are confused as to what is the purpose of dating. As a result the relationships that result are often *disasterous!* It's almost as if teens expect to fail in their dating relationships. Immorality is out of control in our country, sexually transmitted diseases are infecting and even killing thousands of teenagers each year; not to mention the emotional hurt and distress that millions of teenagers go through because of a dating relationship that went bad. The divorce rate is well over 50% even among people that claim to be Christians. However, there are solutions to these problems. These solutions will be discussed in the following five-part series. Be faithful. Stick it out until we get to the end of this series before you dismiss any part of what is said. God wants your dating life to be a DELIGHT, NOT a DISASTER...

We will be looking at these areas as we study dating:

1. God's Idea of a Perfect Date.
2. You are Ready to Date When...
3. Devising a Dating Declaration.
4. Hey! What About Emotional Purity?
5. Extra: "Seven Steps to Perfect Dating"

As youth pastor, it is my prayer that you, as either a teenager

or a parent, will heed God's Word as we study the topic of dating.

Here are a few thoughts which will help to govern our study:

- 1. The Bible is the final authority for teaching godly dating habits.**
- 2. The nature of God is holy; He will never violate His Holiness.**
- 3. The nature of man is sinful. He is prone to violate God's holy standards.**
- 4. God created and ordained marriage and sex. (Hebrews 13:4, Genesis 1:27,28; 2:23-25)¹**

Part I: God's Idea of a Perfect Date

INTRODUCTION:

God's ideas on anything are always the best anyone can find! [Isaiah 55:8,9] Our problem often is, however, that we feel that we know what is best even if it means disagreeing with the Bible. We live out the notion that "I am my own master - the god of my own fate" and with this attitude we ignore God and His Word which in our minds seems "a little too old-fashioned" for the 21st Century. When a teenager believes this, a testimony like the following is often the end result:

"When you spoke at our high school you said, 'the girl is the big loser in a heavy romance.' Well I'd like to say that the boy can be a big loser too. I know because I am one who is.

My girl is 15. I am 17. We started going steady two years

EXTRA: Seven Steps to Perfect Dating

INTRODUCTION:

Before I begin this part of the series, it is only right for me to acknowledge my source for this outline that I will share. Pastor Jim Schettler, Campus Church pastor in Pensacola, Florida has preached this outline on many an occasion in chapel at Pensacola Christian College. It is a great outline, and instead of "reinventing the wheel," I am using his outline with my own application and thought.

We have covered some important ground to this point; and now it is time to wrap up this study with a challenge that will "bring it all together." By the way, this series has not be completely extensive in the area of dating, of course there are other things about dating that we have not covered; but I believe we have effectively covered how to make dating a DELIGHT by laying important Biblical groundwork!

Now let's learn seven principles that will ensure delight instead of disaster.

Psalm 37:23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

I. It is better to wait and know it than to date and and blow it.

only person that your spouse has ever had romantic ties to.

This is not as unrealistic as many might think! While it may not be the popular trend of our culture to keep yourself emotionally pure, this is, by far, the best plan for God's child. What does the Bible say about all of this? Look with me at God's plan for marriage...

First, let's look in Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be **one** flesh." God's plan for marriage is rather simple: one man and one woman becoming one. Here is an interesting example of God's special math: one plus one equals one! The unity of a husband and wife is so close that they are no longer seen as two separate people but as a unified whole! Mark 10:7-9 clarifies this picture. Verse eight says, "And they twain shall be **one** flesh: so then they are **no more twain**, but **one** flesh." *This unity is more than just physical; this unity is also emotional and spiritual!* The need for spiritual unity demands that a Christian, should only marry a Christian. 2 Corinthians 6:14,15 teaches that a believer should not be "unequally yoked together" with an unbeliever. The emotional unity has to do with giving your heart to your spouse. Your heart ought to be wholly united with your spouse! According to Romans 7:3, only death can break this unity. Thus, the phrase "til death do us part" is a part of many marriage vows.

Let's summarize and make application...

1. Emotional purity and physical purity are equally important.
2. The sacrifice of emotional purity always results in regret and pain.
3. Marriage is the union of a man and a woman: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Until marriage, the young man and young lady belong to their parents -- not each other!
4. "Going steady" is not necessary to "growing up." A teenager can develop a proper respect for the opposite sex and not be attached in some sort of committed relationship.
5. Committed dating and "break-up" in high school can be a training grounds for future divorce.
6. Real love is a long-term commitment not a short-term feeling. (Ephesians 5:25,28,33)

"and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23

ago which was our first big mistake. The more time we spent together the easier it was to get a little further. Before we knew it we were doing things that we had no right to do. We made up all kinds of excuses to justify our behavior - even that old line about living every day to the limit because tomorrow we might be hit by a bomb.

The my girl found out for sure that she was in trouble. I'll never forget the agony of telling our parents. They were so shocked and hurt. It was the most horrible experience that a couple of kids can go through.

*Now my girl is in another city with relatives. Our parents have decided it would be best if we didn't write or see each other. The baby will be put up for adoption. I don't know how my girl will feel when all of this is over. All I can say is that now I am heartsick and miserable."*²

A survey conducted with 3,700 Christian teenagers gave the results that 55% of the teens had involved themselves in fornication.³

These are just a few of the many proofs of the disaster that dating can be. Now, let's see how God sees delightful dating:

The Perfect Date.

Ephesians 5:1-3 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; ² And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. ³ But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

I Thessalonians 4:3-7 ³ For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: ⁴ That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; ⁵ Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: ⁶ That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. ⁷ For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

II Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

In these verses, we find the important keys to God's idea of The Perfect Date...

The Perfect Date involves two things :

1. Decision.
2. Discipline.

I. Decision.

You must decide: "I will be absolutely certain to keep myself from those things that will bring dating disaster."

"What things will bring disaster?"

Consider the following:

1. **Entertainment saturated with the Devil's Dating:** Hollywood movies and TV programs that glorify immorality of all types.

Sad to say, modern dating has become "divorce practice." The young couple "dates" each other until the feelings change or things get difficult. The easy solution (at least for one of the people involved) is to "breakup." This typically leaves one of the people in the couple feeling relief and freedom, and the other person is left with the feelings of betrayal and pain. Rarely (if ever) does a high school couple end a dating commitment without hurt feelings and emotional pain. Most of the time things get very messy! Often, friends are brought into the "fight." This is one of the biggest reasons why I as a youth pastor am opposed to committed dating in high school. While I do believe that it is right for teenagers to develop proper respect and an understanding of how to treat people of the opposite sex, this can be done without "going steady." I would be willing to say that 99.9% of all high school dating relationships do **far more harm** than good to the teens involved! Many of my adult friends are in agreement with me on this point. Teens are left with emotional scars and regrets that should never have been; and they are left with little else but confusion and doubts about having another relationship. Without even realizing it, they are practicing for a future marriage breakup: divorce! Today, the divorce rate is over 50%! This includes "Christian couples."

I am convinced that the current American practice of high school dating is one of the biggest reasons for this high divorce rate! It is up to Christians to recognize this, and change the faulty system that they have been using.

If you are thinking, "Pastor Todd is going too far with this stuff," then I want to ask you to answer the following question honestly: Would you like to stand in front of your fiancée and the whole church congregation on your wedding day, knowing that you have kept your body pure and that your soon-to-be-spouse has done the same for you? Your answer, unless you are crazy, would have to be, "Yes, of course." Furthermore, wouldn't you want to be able to present your whole heart to your future spouse and receive your spouse's whole heart that had been kept for you until that special day? Well, why not? There would be great joy in knowing that your spouse had saved himself/herself for you, not only physically, but emotionally! On that day you will be the

locker with cards and flowers, and, of course, a heart-shaped framed photo of himself. When Sally arrived at school that morning, boy, was she surprised! Underneath the frame was a card signed on the inside with the words, "I love you, Freddy." Freddy had gone way beyond what she had expected!

"What a Romeo!" Sally said to herself.

Just then, Brenda, Freddy's girlfriend of a year ago walked by. The bitter breakup that occurred in July of the past year was still fresh on her mind. At one time Freddy's family and Brenda's family had been very close. They would get together for summer cookouts, go on vacation together... They were "like family." After the breakup, however, the bitter feelings now had affected both families. They could no longer get-together. It was too uncomfortable. Brenda was fuming as she looked at Sally. She saw this as an opportunity to pour some rain on Sally's parade.

"So, did 'Romeo' give you a 24 carat gold tennis bracelet, too, Sally? Oh, yes, that was Freddy's gift to me last Valentine's Day. It had the words, 'I love you, Freddy' engraved on it. Then, 'Romeo' dumped me in July! Yeah right - 'I love you.'"

Brenda walked away from Sally. All of what she had said was true.

"I wish Brenda would just mind her own business," Sally thought. Brenda's tirade had tainted the romantic feelings of the moment. Just then Freddy walked up behind Sally and tapped her on the shoulder. "Happy Valentine's Day," he said...

What kind of thoughts do you think were racing through Sally's mind at this point? While this story is fictitious, the emotions involved are very real! Affection, interest, gifts, commitment, breakup, jealousy, bitterness, scars: these are part of the dating cycle that results in great pain. Where is this pain felt? It is felt in the heart. In this case, we aren't dealing with the damage of a sexually transmitted disease; we are talking about something even more common than that - emotional damage.

"Teens spend 7.5 to 9 hours a day watching TV or listening to the radio - more than they spend in class or on homework."⁴

2. **Music saturated with the Devil's Dating:** rock, soft rock, country, Broadway, etc.

A study was made of teenagers that of 62% of all high schoolers that listened to rock music six to seven hours only 27% listened to the words...It was the musical beat and rhythm that hooked the teenagers.⁵

Pythagorus an historical mathematician divided music into three parts - rhythm that is associated with physical motion, melody which is associated with emotional behavior, and harmony which speaks to the spirit.

Rock musicians and personalities say...

"Get them while they are young. Bend their minds."⁶

-Spencer Dryden

"Rock music is sex, and you have to hit them in the face with it."⁷ -Rolling Stones manager

"We take the kids away from their parents and their environment to where the only reality is the rhythm and beat."⁸

-Donnie Brewer

A letter from a teenager address to *STRYPER* (a supposed "Christian rock band"):

"I want to thank Stryper for giving me the desire for heavy metal music. Before Stryper, I never thought I'd attend an Ozzie

Osbourne in concert...I was attending Word of Life at summer camp when I realized what a stronghold that rock and roll had on my life. While at camp...I devoted my life to Christ again...to Stryper...THANKS FOR NOTHING.”

3. Published material that is saturated with the Devil’s Dating: Magazines – *Teen, Teen People, GQ, Cosmopolitan,* etc, pornography, even some clothing catalogs, and the internet!

Psalm 101:3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it* shall not cleave to me.

Guard your eyes on a minute-by-minute basis. Stay away from the magazine racks. Stay away from the internet chatrooms and filthy internet sites. The internet is filled with material designed by perverted-thinking people. Make sure that your parents and godly friends keep you accountable as to what you are doing on the internet. Put pop-up blockers and spam filters on your computer that will help to filter out some of this pollution. Don’t entertain even one thought of looking at pornography! Don’t date someone who had been involved in viewing pornography.

4. Friends that are saturated with the Devil’s Dating: Drinking Parties, dancing, drugs - these are the “breeding grounds” for immorality and dating disaster. People that try to encourage you to develop a physically involved dating relationship in order to “fit in” are dangerous! They will eventually face dating disaster if they follow their own advise, and they will drag you into disaster with them.

Part IV: Hey! What about Emotional Purity?

INTRODUCTION:

It is fair to say that many Christian parents, youth leaders, and teenagers are concerned about the temptation to become physically impure while dating. This is why in this series there has been an emphasis on seeing what God’s Word says about “fleeing youthful lusts.” Physical purity is very important. Being a virgin is truly valuable. However, there are many Christian teenagers who will purpose in their hearts to remain physically pure, but have not remained emotionally pure! There are many adults who as teenagers were committed to a handful of other people before they found the “one God had for them.” They gave romantic love and devotion to someone other than their spouse, even if they remained physically pure in each of the relationships. Answer this question: “When is it right for you to give someone your body?” “OK, now, when is it right for you to give someone your heart?”

I believe it is not only important that you present your body as pure to your future spouse on your wedding day, but that you present your heart as romantically pure to your spouse on your wedding day, as well!

Think with me through the following scenario:

Freddy, a sophomore in high school, has had three girlfriends up to this point in his young life. He is now dating Sally, his fourth “official” girlfriend. They have been “going steady” for two months now, and Valentine’s Day is approaching! Freddy is a faithful Christian. He serves in his church, is faithful to every service, and is looked to with respect by most of the youth group including the youth pastor. He has covenanted with God and his parents that he will “keep his hands off” Sally. Besides, he has a healthy fear of Sally’s six-foot-tall, 200 pound father! With Valentine’s Day approaching, he ponders how he will shower Sally with gifts. He hasn’t told her, “I love you,” yet. (Although, he had said it to three other girls before.) He decided that he would wait for just the right moment. On Valentine’s Day he decided to get to school a little earlier that day so that he could decorate Sally’s

redeemer.

- I will keep my heart pure.

Proverbs 16:2,3 All the ways of a man *are* clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits. Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

This involves my:

1. Motives - why I do what I do.
2. Desires - what I want. I will purpose to say “no” to fleshly desires and “yes” to godly desires.
3. Heart - I will keep a heart that is concerned for others.

IV. My accountability partner will be:_____

Signed by you:_____Date: _____

Signed by your partner:_____Date: _____

Covenant with the Lord and this accountability partner that you will keep yourself pure until marriage!

Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

II. Discipline.

I Timothy 5:22 ...keep thyself pure.

I Timothy 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and *follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*

The phrase **follow after** literally means “to run swiftly in order to catch a person or thing, to run after.”

In a perfect dating relationship, God would have me to decide not to get physically closer to my ‘friend’ but to discipline myself to grow in my relationship with Him.

God wants you to *strive* to or to *run after* these things with your date:

1. **Righteousness** - integrity, purity, virtue.

* Found in the Word of God - 2 Timothy 3:16.

2. **Godliness** - respect for God, your date, and both sets of parents.

3. **Faith** - conviction in the Eternal Truth of the Bible, and you relationship with God.

4. **Love** - selfless caring; selfless giving. This is REAL love! Love is my giving to a person out of concern for his betterment and well-being without concern or thought about what I can get.

Think about this... John 3:16 tells us that Jesus came to give of Himself so that you and I could have eternal life. He did not come for His personal gain.

An Illustration of Love...

Booker T. Washington was born a slave. Later freed, he headed to the Tuskegee Institute and became a leader in education. In his autobiography he writes:

The most trying ordeal that I was forced to endure as a slave boy... was the wearing of a flax shirt. In that portion of Virginia where I lived, it was common to use flax as part of the clothing for the slaves. That part of the flax from which our clothing was made was largely the refuse, which was of course the cheapest and roughest part.

I can hardly imagine any torture, except, perhaps, the pulling of a tooth, that is equal to that caused by putting on a new flax shirt for the first time. It is almost equal to the feeling that one would experience if he had a dozen or more chestnut burrs, or a hundred small pinpoints, in contact with his flesh... But I had no choice, I had to wear the flax shirt or none...

My brother John, who is several years older than I am, performed on of the most generous acts that I have ever heard of one slave relative doing for another. On several occasions when I was being forced to wear a new flax shirt, he generously agreed to put it on in my stead and wear it for several days, 'til it was broken in.

5. Patience - willing to wait; endurance.

6. Meekness - gentleness; mild-tempered; controlled.

What does this result in?

PEACE: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual peace. No guilt, disease, or depression ever resulted from The Perfect Date because it was conducted God's Way. Dating can be a delight!

¹ *The Wilds Counselor Handbook*, "Biblical Standards of Purity," 1993.

² "Why Wait 'till Marriage," Amazing Grace Mission, Chattanooga, TN.

³ Josh McDowell, *Right From Wrong* (Dallas: Word Publishing), p. 9.

⁴ *Parade Magazine*. (August 18, 1996, page 5)

⁵ Dan Peters, *What About Christian Rock?* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1986), p. 20.

⁶ Lowell Hart, *Satan's Music Exposed*. (Rossville, GA: Grapevine Book Distributors, Inc., 1987), p. 48

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ David Benoit, "Christian Rock: The Rock that could steal our fold," video.

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○ I will apply God's "Dress for Success" standards to my wardrobe!

■ I will be sure to dress modestly. I will not wear clothes that will stimulate emotions and desires in my date that cannot be satisfied outside of marriage.

I Timothy 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

■ I will seek advise of a godly adult in whether I am accomplishing this. I will ask the following person to keep me accountable: _____

■ I will wear clothes that clearly communicate my gender.

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

○ I will control my testimony.

■ I will walk, stand, and sit properly at all times in the presence of others.

■ I will keep my mouth clean.

Proverbs 21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

Psalms 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my

Psalm 101:3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it* shall not cleave to me.

- I will not watch MTV or associated rock music videos. (Psalm 101:3)

- I will not listen to rock music, the purpose of which, according to their industry is to present immorality to youth.

Mark 4:24 And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.

Ephesians 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

- I will not drink alcoholic beverages.

Proverbs 20:1 Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

- I will not be a part of parties where these things are practiced.

- I will not read magazines or books that contain immoral stories or immodest pictures. (Psalm 101:3).

- I will set up safeguards for using the internet, IM, chat rooms, and email. I will stay accountable to my parents and friends regarding my internet use.

Part II:

You are ready to date when...

Introduction:

We have now begun this important series with an understanding of how God views the purpose of dating. The Perfect Date in God's eyes is outlined in 2 Timothy 2:22: Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Now let's move onward. You are ready to date when... Let's consider a list of essentials that ought to be in place so that you will be ensured that your dating life will be a *delight* not a *disaster*!

You are ready to date when...

I. You understand the Purpose of Dating.

* It is not just for the purpose of...

1. Having fun.
2. Fitting in with my friends.
3. Filling a vacuum of need in my life.
4. Having my needs met.

The purpose of dating is to develop a friendship, under the guidance of my parents, with someone whom I could marry. This relationship will enable both of us to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, meekness, gentleness, and love for the glory of God.

II. You understand what love is...

WHAT LOVE IS NOT:

1. Sex.

Parade magazine revealed a poll taken of 938 teenagers...

“Teenagers are not prepared to have babies.” 91% agree

“Premarital sex is OK.” 40% agree

“Condoms should be available in schools.” 61% agree¹

Girls are having sex much younger these days, the median age for a young woman’s first act of premarital sex from 19 in 1960 to 17 in 1990.

By age 18, 27% of church youth have experienced sexual intercourse.²

Of those that had premarital sex, three out of five wished they could go back a change their actions and wait until marriage.³

More reasons to be convinced that sex alone is NOT love...

In the USA 1,000,000 teen pregnancies a year resulting in 480,000 births; 420,000 abortions; and 100,000 miscarriages.

Within the late quarter-century five STD’s (sexually transmitted diseases) have been discovered - two are deadly. Some of the known STD’s:

CHLAMYDIA: most common; 4.6 million cases occur annually, may not be a visible disease; however those contracting it receive

III. My dating regulations are...

○ I will not engage in premarital sex or develop a physical relationship which leads to it.

I Corinthians 3:16,17 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

I Corinthians 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. ¹⁹What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

- I will not be alone with my date in a parked car.
- I will not be at home with my date unless my parents are home.
- I know my body belongs to God and not to any other person other than the one that God will give me on my wedding day.

○ I will flee youthful lusts.

II Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

- I will not watch or go to movies that teach that disobedience to my God in the area of immorality is OK. This includes TV programs.

been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet *is* she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. ¹⁵ And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. ¹⁶ For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for *one* covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

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II. My dating goals are...

- I will only date a growing Christian.
- I will care enough for my friend to desire and guard God's best for him or her.
- I will obey the counsel of my parents.

Ephesians 6:1-3 ¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. ² Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) ³ That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

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severe pelvic inflammatory disease with severe abscess. One sexual contact can infect you. 25% OF WOMEN WHO CONTRACT THIS DISEASE CAN NEVER HAVE BABIES.

HPV (Human Papilloma Virus: The newest identifiable STD. There is no cure. It passes from partner to partner without that person ever knowing it. It can take 20 to 30 years before it manifests itself in outward symptoms.

GONORRHEA: 700,000 cases reported every year. Can cause complications leading to death.

HERPES: It is a viral and painful STD with no cure. It make an individual very susceptible to the AIDS virus.

SYPHILIS: 100,000 cases a year.

AIDS: 34,000 find out that they have this disease annually. The only protection against aids is to be sure that you marry a spouse who has kept their purity!

Do not misunderstand. The physical relationship between a husband and wife can be a wonderful and fulfilling thing. The Bible calls it "honorable in all." But when sex is taken outside of the boundaries which God intended for it, it becomes sinful and destructive!

2. Infatuation.

Feelings change with circumstances. Webster defines feeling as "emotion, sentiment, intuition, belief." Infatuation is defined as "deprived of sound judgement, an ardent **temporary** love." Take notice of the word "temporary!" Real love is not temporary!

WHAT LOVE IS...

God's definition is:

I Corinthians 13:4-8 Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, ⁵ Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; ⁶ Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; ⁷ Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. ⁸ Charity never faileth:

Here are three great definitions of genuine love:

1. A determined act of the will that always results in determined acts of self giving.
2. Giving others not what they deserve but what God gave you.
3. A decision of the will.

Teenager, you ought to practice the love of 1 Corinthians 13 because that is real love! God's love is much different than the *love* you'll find in popular culture today.

REAL(GOD'S) LOVE:

1. "Suffereth Long" - patient
2. "is kind" - sacrifices self to meet the needs of others.
3. "envieth not" - is content
4. "Vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" - sacrifices self to remain small.

"POP" LOVE:

- I want it now!
- Acting in favor of me.
- Envious. Is greedy.
- Proud

SO, Teenager, SET UP A PLAN! PURPOSE IN YOUR HEART THAT YOU WILL NOT DEFILE YOURSELF AND BRING DISASTER TO YOUR DATING LIFE. HAVE A *PERSONAL DATING DECLARATION*. WHAT FOLLOWS IS A RECOMMENDED PLAN THAT CAN BE USED TO DEVELOP A *PERSONAL DATING DECLARATION*.

Establish the following standards...

I. Marriage goals.

○ I will marry a mature, growing Christian.

2 Corinthians 6:14 ¹⁴ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

○ I promise God to keep my home together and not let my marriage end in divorce.

Romans 7:2,3 ² For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. ³ So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Malachi 2: 14-16 ¹⁴ Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath

Part III: Establishing a Personal Dating Declaration

INTRODUCTION:

Daniel 1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

This verse provides an example of a teenager that had firm character in the midst of a wicked culture and negative peer pressure. Consider the following:

1. Daniel belonged to a royal family in Isreal.
2. Daniel was now a captive in a foreign land - miles away from parents and authority.
3. Daniel was popular. (Daniel 1:9)

All of the above are significant to the surroundings that Daniel and his three friends found themselves in. They could have decided to get involved in sin and later made excuses trying to sooth their consciences. However, they did not. If Daniel had partaken of the meat offered to the idols he would have:

1. Taken sides against God with idolatry.
2. Marred his testimony and distinctiveness.
3. Missed the opportunity to be used of God.

If you are immoral or even questionable in your dating life, you are:

1. Taking sides against God with SIN.
2. Marring your testimony and distinctiveness.
3. Missing opportunities to be used by God.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 5. "doth not behave itself unseemly" | Loud, silly, rude, doing what I want when I want. |
| 6. "seeketh not her own" | selfish; It's my life - I'll do what I want with it! |
| 7. "is not easily provoked" | Retaliates; Explodes. |
| 8. "thinketh no evil" | Indelible ink. Builds a case for evil. |
| 9. "Rejoiceth in the truth" | Entertains sin. |
| 10. "beareth all things" | Gossips |
| 11. "believeth all things" | Believes the worst. |
| 12. "hopeth all things" | Gives up living for God. |
| 13. "endureth all things" | I'm not sticking my heart out there again so that |

he/she can
hurt it!”

14. “never faileth”

Eventually fails
Gal. 6:7,8

You are ready to date when you understand what real love is!
Next, you are ready to date when...

III. You have your parent’s permission.

If you are not right with your parents then you are not right with God. If you intend to have dating delight and then marital delight, then you must honor your parents!

Ephesians 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. ² Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) ³ That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

“Why?”

1. God commands it. God gave you parents to give guidance and protection.

2. Whether dating is a delight or a disaster in you life will be determined largely by if you will submit yourself to this truth. If you are not honoring God’s plan by honoring your parents and obeying them, then you are not in a place for God to bless your decisions. You are instead attacking God’s walls of protection that are there to keep you from disaster!

“BUT...What if my parents don’t care???”

Most teens, cannot honestly say this. Even if you have unsaved parents, you must submit yourself to their direction and guidance. However, even if it were true that your parents don’t care, then you can go to a godly person in your church family that you respect and ask them for godly advice.

IV. You have developed your own personal Dating Declaration.

Next, we will address this vital step! In this day when sensual lust for immorality will present itself to you every minute of the day, you must “purpose in your heart that you will not defile yourself”! Keep reading...

¹ Parade. *The Hartford Courant*. August 18, 1996,p.5.

² *Right from Wrong*. pages 55 and 56.

³ *Ibid.*, page 60.