

Lesson 21

Teacher's Manual

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN DATING - PART I

READ & MEDITATE ON: I Corinthians 6:9-20 MEMORIZE: II Timothy 2:22

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is God's supreme object lesson on the relationship of Christ to the Church. There is no mention of dating in the Bible, but there's plenty on marriage. Since, in our culture, dating is the road to marriage, God is concerned about how we build a friendship with a potential marriage partner. From Ephesians 5:21-33 we readily see some important relationships. Every time a wife submits to her husband, she illustrates how the Church is to love Jesus Christ. When a husband gives all his love to his wife, and loves her as much as he loves himself, he is demonstrating Christ's love for His Church. Dating is a very important preparation for our future happiness, because habits we enact now will definitely affect our future marriage relationship.

GENERAL HOME MISSIONS DIVISION

CHART-1 I. PURPOSE OF DATING

A. Scriptural Relationships

The Scriptures recognize every level of human relationships. In God's Word we find principles to insure divine blessings on our lives, and those with whom we are involved. At first there may be an inner resistance to the governing principles of God, but a careful study of the Bible confirms that as God's government increases in our lives...peace increases (Isaiah 9:7).

involves the freedom to ask general questions. Each person has the responsibility of viewing the other as a divine appointment, and should be prepared to ask appropriate general questions.

2. Casual Friendship

The second level of human friendship is a casual friendship. This level of sharing is based on common interests, activities, and concerns. It includes the freedom to ask specific questions about opinions, ideas, wishes, and personal goals. This relationship bears the responsibility of identifying and praising positive qualities in the other person.

3. Close Friendship

The third level of friendship is based on mutual life goals; it affords the freedom to suggest mutual projects toward reaching life goals. This level of sharing is marked by an effort to visualize achievement in each other's life. Each person feels the responsibility to discern and develop appropriate projects to gain this achievement.

4. Intimate Friendship

The fourth, and most complete level of friendship is intimate friendship. This level is based on a commitment to develop each other's character, and is open to freedom to correct each other. There is open honesty, with discretion, and a discernment of basic causes of character deficiencies along with suggested solutions.

CHART-4

C. Levels Of Dating

Obviously, dating involves different stages of friendship. Since the very purpose of dating is to become friends, intimate friendship should be the goal of dating. The Godly progression would be dating, engagement, and marriage.

1. Dating

In dating we become one in spirit. Our relationship should cause us to have a greater love for God, a new desire to

people unto the Lord. They were commanded against marrying those of other blood and persuasion. Balaam's success in causing the backsliding of Israel came by infiltration and inter-marriage of the Moabites with the Hebrews. (See Numbers 25.)

A. Prerequisites For Dating

Since the purpose of dating is to become friends, and together grow in Christian maturity, you need to meet and get to know many different people, so you'll be better equipped to make your final choice. All teenagers ask, "How old should I be before I start dating?" Of course, they're waiting for some magical number to be announced by their pastor; suitable to their parents. Even more critical than mere age, are the following guidelines that should be used as prerequisites for successful dating. You are "old enough" when:

1. You are fully informed and aware of both the benefits and dangers of dating.
2. You have personally worked out, from Scripture, a set of dating standards.
3. You have determined in your heart that you will not lower these standards even if it means losing dates.

Some positive, scriptural qualities to look for in a guy are:

1. Does he love and seek God? (Psalms 27:4)
2. Is he a leader? (Luke 22:25-27)
3. Is he thoughtful? (II Timothy 2:24, 25)

Some positive, scriptural qualities to look for in a gal are:

1. Does she love and seek God? (Proverbs 31:30)
2. Does she have a gentle and quiet spirit? (I Peter 3:3, 4)
3. Is she industrious? (Proverbs 31:13-16)

B. Scriptural Goals In Dating

In establishing a scriptural set of dating standards, the following list of suggested goals may be helpful:

"(Treat) the elder women as mothers;
the younger as sisters, with all
purity."

I Timothy 5:2

4. Keep The Golden Rule

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye
would that men should do to you, do
ye even so to them: for this is the
law and the prophets."

Matthew 7:12

When a boy and a girl park and kiss, arousing their passions, they embark on the road that leads to fornication. They should remember that several other people are involved, and deeply concerned about what they do. The girl has a father and mother who love her dearly, and would be grieved if they knew their daughter was so close to fornication and a possible pregnancy. The girl has a brother. Young man, are you treating that Christian brother right? Are you willing for others to treat your sister as you are treating another man's sister? When you have daughters of your own, will you want them treated as you are treating someone else's daughter? Another fact of importance, that girl will someday be a wife. If you take liberties with a girl someone else is to marry, when you would not want others to take liberties with your future bride, then you are not keeping the golden rule. You're being unfair. And, young woman, you should keep the golden rule, too. Don't do with someone else's future husband what you would not want them to do with your future husband.

5. Promote Christ Honoring Activities

Your activities should be centered upon those things which will honor and glorify the Lord.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or
whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory
of God."

I Corinthians 10:31

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

Psalms 37:4

10. Wait For God's Choice

You should be willing to remain unmarried as long as the Lord desires.

"Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

Luke 22:42

11. Obtain Parents' Consent

You should not get married without the full consent of both sets of your parents. (See Ephesians 6:1-3.) If both sets of parents do not give full approval of your partner, or permission for marriage, it may be because certain immature attitudes have been detected. When these weak areas are improved, approval may then be given. Marriage is in reality, a uniting of two families. The importance of establishing respect for parents' opinions and advice cannot be overemphasized.

12. Be Financially Stable

Young man, you should be of financial stability so that you will be able to assume the responsibility of supporting your future wife.

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (unbeliever)."

I Timothy 5:8

This also gives your girlfriend confidence in God's ability to provide for her, through you as her future husband.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19

D. Submission To Earthly Authority

A further characteristic that concerned Christians should look for in the person they choose to date is his harmony with the earthly authorities God has placed over him. Proper submission to spiritual leadership, secular authorities, and parents, is an absolute must in choosing a dating partner.

Proper communication and harmony between a girl and her father is a foundation for the same harmonious submission to her husband. In other words, the way a girl treats her father will most likely be the way she treats her future husband.

A girl should seek friendship with a man who has learned proper respect and obedience to his parents. The way he responds to his father will display his understanding and appreciation of authority. The way he treats his mother will probably be the way he administers his authority over his future wife.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed,
do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God and the Father by
him."

Colossians 3:17

6. Keep A Christian Testimony

If others knew all your escapades on your dates, could you win them to the Lord? Paul gives voice to the dire need to be a living testimony, and win souls to Jesus Christ in I Corinthians 9:19-22.

7. Respect God's Property

You must realize that your date is God's property, and that He has the right to do with His property what He wants. If this relationship doesn't progress, thank God for His purpose in this "temporary" relationship. (See Luke 9:23-24.)

8. Honor The Temple Of God

As a young person, you have a special duty to be careful about misusing bodily passions. Your bodies are the temple—the habitation—of the Holy Ghost.

"What? 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? For ye are bought
with a price: therefore glorify God in
your body, and in your spirit, which
are God's."

I Corinthians 6:19-20

You have a great responsibility to keep yourselves CLEAN.
(Romans 6:12, 13 and I Corinthians 6:13, 18.)

9. Develop Personal Qualities

You should concentrate on developing the qualities God wants to be a natural part of your life. When these qualities are evident, God can easily introduce His choice to you.

1. Date Only A Christian

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

Amos 3:3

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:..."

II Corinthians 6:14

2. Have Compatible Goals

God's goals for your life should be compatible with God's goals for his/her life. You should help the other develop in his/her Christian maturity.

"In this way aim for harmony in the Church and try to build each other up."

Romans 14:19
(Living Bible)

"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

Colossians 1:28

3. Maintain Acceptable Behavior

Your behavior with the other person should be acceptable by God's standards. (See I Thessalonians 4:3-8.)

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."

Psalms 19:14

study Scripture, and a new desire to share Jesus with others. As each person draws closer to Jesus in his individual life, he will automatically encourage and help the other draw closer to the Lord. Consequently, they will draw closer to each other.

When physical oneness becomes the goal of dating, then a barrier of guilt develops between each person and the Lord. Eventually a communication barrier develops between the dating partners. If physical awareness is prevalent, then the marriage suffers later.

2. Engagement

In an engagement, two people develop a deeper oneness of mind, will, and emotions. An intimate friendship and fellowship is established, but intimate physical contact and consummation is reserved for marriage.

3. Marriage

In marriage, a man and a woman become one physically. Here is the ultimate expression of a friendship that has been carefully built on love.

Satan has subtly impressed the world to reverse this divine order. Instead of marrying a friend they truly know and care about, they enter marriage as a result of physical attraction with a person they have not taken time to get to know.

CHART-5 II. QUALIFICATIONS FOR DATING

Truth brings freedom. (See John 8:32.) God, in infinite wisdom and fatherly care, has provided boundaries in our relationships for our protection and welfare. Involvement in a dating relationship can provide opportunities for blessings or obstacles to growth. Consequently, God has some very reasonable instructions for believers about dating.

God set out in the Old Testament to establish purity in the nation of Israel, and prevent them from being led away to false gods. One method used to accomplish this was forbidding a Hebrew to take a mate from another nation. The Hebrews were a special, separate

In any relationship, especially a partner in romance, it is of utmost importance that Jesus Christ remain the central focus of one's thoughts and affections. It is worth noting, that any friendship that distracts you, and causes spiritual separation from Jesus Christ, is an improper one. A dating relationship that's governed by God's principles will provide spiritual growth and learning for both parties. Such relationships will draw each person closer to the Holy Spirit, as their spirits draw nearer to each other. Scripturally sanctioned friendships and attractions are perfectly normal, and are used by the Lord to mature us spiritually.

CHART-2

Dating is discovery!

"Whoso findeth (discovers) a wife
findeth (discovers) a good thing and
obtaineth favor of the Lord."

Proverbs 18:22

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for
her price is far above rubies."

Proverbs 31:10

Dating is a means of unlocking the ambitions, personality, and mannerisms of other individuals. It is not a futile venture, but rather a very important endeavor that should be enjoyed and undertaken with great carefulness. It can be a hallway through which we pass, developing various friendships along the way. Simultaneously, we find our goals and purpose in life taking shape as we discover traits worth emulating (copying) in others, as well as some characteristics to avoid.

CHART-3

B. Levels Of Friendship

The path to a meaningful relationship is a progressive one. Each level of friendship holds its own set of responsibilities and freedoms. It is necessary to know where we are in friendships, so as not to probe into the privacy of someone's life. In order to have friends, we must be one (Proverbs 18:24).

1. Acquaintance

The first level of human friendship is in making acquaintance. This level is based on occasional contacts, and