

Lesson 22

Teacher's Manual

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN DATING - PART II

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.

CHART-7 I. MORAL IMPURITY

The Epistles are filled with warnings about the constant battle between the Spirit and the flesh. (See Romans 7 and 8.) Good intentions are insufficient to insure proper restraint in dating conduct. One cannot be too careful, especially when exposed to the negative peer pressure of a world without moral codes. Human nature is opposed to God's high and holy nature. (See Proverbs 16:2; Proverbs 20:4; Jeremiah 10:23; and Jeremiah 17:9.)

Further, the Scripture declares that to do the will of the flesh is to come against the Spirit's will. The penalty for succumbing to the will of the flesh is spiritual death (Romans 8:13).

1. Our society, on the whole, does not accept pre-marital sex.
2. Most parents oppose it, especially for their own children.
3. All of our major religious bodies in North America condemn it.
4. The Bible is clearly against it. (See I Corinthians 6:9-10 and Ephesians 5:3.)

Just about everyone has heard these reasons for not having pre-marital sex. But what will premarital sex likely do for your chances of a happy and lasting marriage? What has scientific research discovered on the subject?

Nine and one half out of ten of us will marry at least once in our lives. Yet more than half of those who marry will get a divorce, separate, or stay together but be unhappy. With such poor odds of success in marriage, it would be interesting to know what effect premarital sex has on your chances for a good marriage.

Science has established nine facts concerning the probable effects of premarital sex on your marriage.

1. Couples Break Up

Other things being equal, couples who engage in sex are more likely to break up before marriage than those who do not. The young woman who gives in to sex in hope that she won't lose her young man will more likely hold him if she holds out.

2. Shopworn And Rejected

Many men do not want to marry a woman who has had intercourse with someone else. As unfair as it sounds, there is a strange worldly logic that states: "It's okay for me to have sex with the girl you marry, but it's not okay for you to have sex with my girl."

3. Unhappy Marriages

On the whole, your chances of being happily married are better if you wait until you're wed to have sex. The more premarital affairs you have, the less likely you'll be happy in your marriage.

9. Poor Habits Spoil Sex

Poor premarital sexual habits can be carried over to spoil sex in marriage. Many wives—and to a lesser extent, their husbands—have poor attitudes about sex. Several reasons are frequently cited: our society is still clinging to some early Victorian prudery about sex; many people still believe that sex is evil, dirty, or only for procreation; and poor sex education in the home, church, and school.

There is a guilt producing process associated with premarital sex that could be labeled "sexual salivation." You may recall the famous experiment of Pavlov and his pooch. When shown food, the dog would salivate—its mouth would water. Each time the dog was shown food, Pavlov rang a bell. Soon the dog was conditioned to salivate any time the bell rang, even when no food was in sight. The real cause of salivation—the food—was gone, yet when the bell rang, the dog went right on salivating.

So it is with premarital sex. Many sexual "hang-ups" in marriage have their roots in a similar process. Since premarital sex is a social no-no, illicit sex acts usually produce a great deal of guilt, fear, and loss of self-esteem. This can apply to both partners, but it is especially true for women. Women are primarily fearful of two things: getting caught in the act of sex, and becoming pregnant.

So what happens if you get into a pattern of premarital sex? Each time you have an affair, you "salivate"—you feel guilt and loss of self-respect. Over and over again this happens. In time, all of these negative feelings become associated with the sex act itself. Just as the dog came to associate food with a bell, you learn to tie sex with unhealthy feelings.

Unfortunately, you cannot shed your backlog of guilt, fear, and shame when you get married. To the extent you learned to associate sex with guilt, fear, and shame before the wedding is the same extent you will recall these feelings during marriage. With the promiscuity of this day, it is no wonder there are so many inhibitions in newlyweds.

In light of God's regulation of lovemaking, and these known facts, not to mention the risks of pregnancy, venereal disease, or getting caught—premarital sex is really not worth it.

ART-9 II. SCRIPTURAL GUIDELINES

A. Warning Against Defrauding

These practical guidelines, based on scripture, should help anyone find God's safe territory in dating. First of all, the Bible tells us:

"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 3:16-17

Consequently, it is easy to see why scriptural guidance in our dating is very needful and desirable. We are cautioned by the Word of God about taking advantage of a brother or sister.

"That everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 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."

I Thessalonians 4:4-6

In this instance the apostolic writer warns against a prevalent practice that must be avoided by the born again believer: that is, arousing desires in a dating partner that cannot be righteously fulfilled according to God's Word.

Paul's letter to Titus states:

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;"

Titus 2:12

The word "flee" bespeaks urgency, concern, and a fervent involvement. The urgency of the command can be better appreciated by recalling the account of Joseph as he fled from the enticement of Potiphar's wife. (See Genesis 39:7-12.)

James described the fatal sequence that can follow our exposure to compromising situations.

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

James 1:14-15

Here, then, is the sequence: Lust, Sin, and Death (LSD)—a "bad trip" in the truest sense of the word.

CHART-10

C. Maintaining Spiritual Sensitivity

Consistent prayer and study of the Word of God will create a greater sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Ghost.

"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Hebrews 5:14

D. Right Dating In Harmony

Right dating will not cause alienation from God, nor isolation from family and friends. Attraction is normal and God honored. Any relationship which progresses between individuals committed to God's principles will flow in natural harmony with God's plan for each life. The secret is bound up in Ephesians 4:17-22, in putting off the old fleshly nature and putting on the new spiritual nature. Paul shares this precept in Romans 12:2, 21.

E. Testing Your Love

If you think you are in love, perhaps you'd like to give your love a test based on the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians.

If you pass the following test, chances are very good that you are ready for marriage. The test is as follows:

1. The Sharing Test - (I Corinthians 13:5)

Real love continually seeks to give. It is constantly thinking of the other's happiness.

2. The Strength Test - (I Corinthians 13:7)

Does your love give you new strength and energy, or does it sap your strength and drain your energy?

3. The Respect Test - (I Corinthians 13:4)

Are you proud of your partner in many ways? Do you want your family and friends to be around your dating partner? Would you want this person to be the mother or father of your children?

4. The Habit Test - (I Corinthians 13:6, 7)

Love can accept another's bad habits. Can you accept the difference and uniqueness of your dating partner?

5. The Quarrel Test - (I Corinthians 13:5)

Marriage, and life in general is filled with conflicts. Learning how to apologize and forgive in order to resolve conflicts is essential in marriage.

6. The Time Test - (I Corinthians 13:8)

Lust cannot wait for a chance to GET, but love can wait for an opportunity to GIVE. Getting to really know someone takes time. To observe their reaction in various situations is important in getting to know them. Leaves fall from trees, but love, like the entire tree—GROWS. Give your love time to grow.

One must respect the sacredness of his or her own person, as well as that of a dating partner; in the fear of God, and in the light of eternal salvation. Peter declares,

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"

I Peter 2:11

Here again the Epistles bring to light the guard against the flesh that must be kept by the individual intent on spiritual growth and success.

B. Making No Provision For The Flesh

Another very reasonable and powerful warning involves the places and circumstances of failure. A stern warning is delivered by the Apostle Paul:

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

Romans 13:14

First, clothe yourself in His love, holiness, and purpose. Then avoid all situations which break down your moral code of conduct, and leave the door open to failure. Paul again warns,

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

I Corinthians 10:12

Paul begs his young friend to,

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

II Timothy 2:22

C. Benefits Of Waiting

There are some definite benefits to waiting until you are married to have sex:

1. No Guilt

Waiting ensures you of not feeling the guilt that comes from violating God's divine plan for marriage. Guilt would hamper your relationship with Jesus, your sex partner, and others around you.

2. No Fear

Waiting ensures you of not being afraid of losing your partner, contracting venereal disease, or having to build a marriage on an unexpected pregnancy.

3. No Comparison

Waiting ensures that you will never fall into the devastating trap of comparing your spouse's sexual performance with that of a previous sexual partner.

4. Spiritual Growth

Waiting will help you subject your physical drives to the management of the Holy Ghost. This is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Also, after you are married, and have to be separated temporarily (e.g., for a business trip or military duty), this discipline early in your relationship will give both of you confidence and trust in each other during that time of separation.

5. Great Joy

Waiting ensures that there will be something special saved for your marriage relationship. The anticipation of the consummation of your love in sexual union is exciting. Waiting keeps that excitement from being spoiled.

4. Marriages End In Divorce

Those who have premarital sex are more likely to have their marriage end in divorce. Again, the more premarital sex the individuals had, the greater the chance of divorce.

5. Extramarital Affairs

Persons and couples who have had premarital sex are more likely to have extramarital affairs as well. That is especially true of females. The Kinsey report shows that women who had sex are more than twice as likely to cheat on their husbands as women who are virgins at the time of their marriage. The more premarital sex a person has had, the more likely he or she is to commit adultery. Few wives, and even fewer husbands are able to tolerate—much less approve—acts of adultery on the part of their spouse.

6. Chose Wrong Marriage Partner

Testing the thrills of sex can blind you. It may fool you into thinking you've found real love, when, in fact, only sex has held you together. If you wait for sex until you have established a sound relationship that leads to marriage, you can avoid this error.

7. Satisfaction Sooner After Marriage—BUT—

8. Less Overall Satisfaction During Marriage

Persons and couples with premarital sex experience seem to achieve sexual satisfaction sooner after they are married. However, they are less likely to have overall satisfaction with their sex life during marriage. A couple who is really in love can work out the physical mechanics of sexual adjustment in marriage. On the other hand, a couple who has made mere physical union their goal have robbed themselves of the joy and satisfaction of total sex. Total sex involves the completion and co-joining of total personalities. It merges the minds, the emotions, the social, and the spiritual selves of a couple, as well as their two bodies. The two of them truly become "one flesh." It is a beautiful gift from God. One out of every three engagements in the United States is broken, and premarital sex is one contributing factor.

A. Dangers In Petting

Petting is not sexual satisfaction—it is mere stimulation. Because of its teasing nature, petting demands more and more. Holding hands is stimulation that has only a certain tolerance point. It demands embracing, then kissing, and then caressing. Finally, you've progressed into heavy petting with nowhere to go but premarital intercourse.

Consider these two great dangers in petting:

1. Once you have reached a certain level of physical contact, it is impossible to return to a lesser level and be satisfied. This only results in frustration.
2. Petting does not build up tolerance against further desires; it stimulates those desires.

The more you get, the more you want. Soon you lose your spiritual dignity, and self-respect. Petting is selfish in dating because you not only hurt yourself, you cause another to fail as well.

Once you've engaged in petting with your date, your relationship gradually deteriorates to mere body contact. The wholesome activities you once enjoyed together are now replaced by physical awareness which only produces tension and conflict.

You've lost each other in an intense game of physical intimacy that has trapped you both! What perhaps started out to be a growing friendship, leading to marriage, has degenerated to a guilt-ridden relationship and a regretful break-up.

Every step toward intimacy should parallel a step toward responsibility. Gals, don't excite or "turn-on" a guy with your body and false promises. Likewise, guys don't manipulate a gal's emotions with insincere lies and selfish romance. Remember, they that "sow" a broken heart will have their turn to "reap" a broken heart (Galatians 6:7-8).

B. Forbidden Fruit

Most of us are aware of the more common reasons why premarital intercourse (fornication) is a "no-no" for Christian young people.