

# Dating



# God's Plan for the Family

“God has ordained the family as the foundational institution for human society” (*The Baptist Faith & Message*). The marriage relationship initiates the start and growth of a family. Marriage must be understood from Scripture and valued as a lifelong commitment. Statistics show that our culture continues to devalue marriage and family. With more states considering legalizing homosexual marriages, rising teenage pregnancies, and increased divorce rates, Christians should protect the family by living by the truth of Scripture and instilling biblical principles in teenagers and children.

*Genesis 2:1-5* – God created men and women to be in relationship together. He planned for one man and one woman to live together in marriage.

## Biblical Roles for Men & Women

1. God created men to be:
  - a. Husbands
  - b. Fathers
  - c. Leaders
2. God created women to be:
  - a. Wives
  - b. Mothers
  - c. Foundation Builders (w/the children)

## Marriage is...

3. Created by God
4. Good
5. Foundational for society
6. Top priority relationship for a married person

## Purposes of Marriage & Sex

1. Meet basic needs – People get lonely, need help, and desire sexual fulfillment.  
*Genesis 2:24* – Sex unites a man and a woman.
2. Produce children  
2 Truths about Children:
  - 1 – They are a blessing from the Lord (*Psalms 127*)
  - 2 – They must be trained to love and fear the Lord (*Deuteronomy 6:1-9*)
3. Illustrate the relationship of Christ and the Church (*Ephesians 5:22-23*)

*1 Corinthians 7:1-5* - **Marriage is the context for sex.** Fire serves to be helpful and necessary for basic human living. It offers heat, cooks meals, and assists in construction of buildings and vehicles. However, when fire exists outside of a controlled environment, it can be deadly and devastating. In the same way, sexuality is good and godly, but outside of the context of marriage it can wreak havoc. We often share with students that that *1 Corinthians 7* shows that God intends for most people to grow up, get married, and *then* have sex – in that order. Marriage was created before, not separate from, sex. Urges for sex are urges for marriage. The Bible teaches that, in God's timing, one should grow up, find the person God has intended for them, and get married. Understanding sex from a biblical basis provides the foundation for managing your sexual behavior.

# The Difference Between Boys & Girls

*Genesis 1:26-27* - Males and females are similar but different. Both are made in the image of God. Both share characteristics with God. However, we are made different.

The following characteristics are generally true about males and females, although there are times when one may possess characteristics commonly seen among the opposite gender.

## Boys

Visual  
Aggressive  
Constant  
Risk Takers

## Girls

Emotional  
Guarded  
Moody  
Comfort & Safety Seekers

In addition to creating us uniquely, God has given males and females different roles in the family.

## Men

Husbands  
Fathers  
Leaders

## Women

Wives  
Mothers  
Foundation-builders

Teenagers should be preparing to one day fulfill these God given roles in the family. They should also base their choices on God's word.

*1 Thessalonians 4:3-8*— Your sex life is to be holy and honorable before God. An ungodly sex life mimics that of people who do not know God. You have the responsibility to control your own body. Likewise, God holds you accountable for how you treat others sexually.

*1 Corinthians 6:18-20*— You avoid sexual immorality by fleeing tempting situations. If you play with fire long enough, you will get burned. This old

adage rings true. If you repeatedly allow yourself to be in tempting sexual situations, at some point you will probably give in to those temptations.

Scripture commands Christians to honor God with our bodies, because the Holy Spirit dwells within us. This passage goes beyond telling us that we should not have intercourse until we are married and states that we are to stay away from *any* sort of sexual immorality.

## **Sexual Immorality** –

*anytime you willfully seek sexual stimulation or satisfaction outside of your marriage.*

## Dating Should Lead to Marriage

1. God has designed us for that relationship. (*Genesis 2:18-25*)
2. When you date someone, you are potentially dating someone else's future husband or wife.
3. The goal of romance is intimacy in marriage. With true intimacy comes no fear of rejection.
4. You should be developing characteristics in your life that will attract the type of person you want to marry.
5. The people you date are potential future spouses. So do not date someone you would not want to marry. That means you should only date growing Christians. (*2 Corinthians 6:14-15*)
6. The choices you make in your dating life have great potential to affect the rest of your life.

## Acknowledge Parental Authority

God has given your parents authority in your life and your boyfriend or girlfriend's parents' authority in his or her life. It is important for

you to honor these authorities. One way for a young man to honor the authority of his girl's parents is to introduce himself to them and ask permission to take her on a date prior to asking her, if his parents have consented as well. Likewise, a young lady can acknowledge the authority of her parents by asking a boy interested in dating her to introduce himself to her parents and let them know his intentions. Parents have a God given responsibility to protect their children. They should hold teenagers accountable for what goes on in dating relationships. When a young man or young woman dishonors or disobeys his or her parents, he or she is dishonoring and disobeying the Lord.

# How Far is too Far?

## Strategies for Success

*1 Thessalonians 4:1-8* – Scripture commands us to avoid sexual immorality. But how do we determine what is appropriate behavior towards those we date?

### Warning Signs of Sexual Immorality

- I often deceive or disobey my parents concerning my dating life.
- I talk to my boyfriend or girlfriend in sexual terms.
- I have a constant desire to be with my boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Almost every date ends up in a questionable situation.
- We constantly have to talk about physical and emotional boundaries.
- I have feelings of guilt, embarrassment, or shame about my relationship when I am not with my boyfriend or girlfriend.
- I spend a lot of time talking about what it would be like to be married.

### Boundaries

They define your area of temptation. Relationships are meant to progress. Once you make progress it is extremely difficult and usually impossible to go back to where you once were. Therefore, boundaries are critical. If you draw the boundary at holding hands, then the consequences of stepping over the boundaries are minimal. If you say your boundary is not going "all the way," and you cross over that boundary, then your consequences will be more serious. Wherever you place your boundary, that is where your temptation lies. You want to draw your boundary line somewhere if you fail a little bit, you will not hurt yourself or others as much.

## 2 Principles to Guide Dating Relationships

1. Minimize time alone between guys and girls before they get married. People usually do not give into sexual temptation when in the presence of others. It generally happens when two people are alone.

The following equation has proven helpful in understanding the principle of minimizing alone time:

Opportunity + Desire = Temptation

Opportunity + Desire + Repetition = Overwhelming Temptation

2. Until you get married, minimize physical interaction. Once physical interaction is initiated, the level of that interaction continually increases.

At different ages and stages of life, there are different ways that are appropriate to relate in romantic relationships. Below are suggested boundaries to help teenagers guard their hearts and follow God's plan for marriage and sexuality.

### Before Age 16

- We recommend that you do not date
- Guys and girls hanging out together in group is a healthy alternative to dating

### Age 16 through High School Graduation

- Under the authority of their parents, students at this age may have the potential to succeed at dating relationships
- It is natural and normal for significant relationships to form at this point (Until about 100 years ago, people would marry at this point in life)
- Holding hands and giving hugs while standing side by side are may be acceptable

- We recommend that you should avoid kissing and frontal hugging, as they may lead to other more intense forms of physical interaction
- We highly recommend that you should not lie down together, as it too may lead to other more intense forms of interaction. In Scripture, "lying down together" was used to reference sex.
- Avoid time alone in any setting (This controls the opportunity for anything to happen)

### High School Graduation to Engagement

- We recommend minimal physical interaction. For example - Holding hands is entirely appropriate
- There are times when you will be alone, but time alone should be kept to a minimum. A dating couple can spend alone time in a public place, such as a park or shopping mall.

### Engagement through Marriage

- Kissing may be acceptable
- We recommend that engagement is only as long is necessary. We have observed that shorter times of engagement promote success in avoiding sexual temptation.

# How to Recover from Failure

We realize that many people do not make wise choices in the dating lives and those choices have led to emotional pain and feelings of guilt. Guilt, shame, and pain from failure in this area can lead to years of hurt and even future failure. However, our God is a God of grace and forgiveness.

*Psalm 51* – Forgiveness is available to those who have been sexually immoral. In this Psalm, King David repents and cries out to God after he has committed adultery with Bathsheba. This Psalm provides a model of repentance and restoration after one sins sexually.

## Principles to Help Yourself

1. Take responsibility for your sin – Psalm 51:4
2. Admit and confess your sin to God – 1 John 1:9
3. Ask for forgiveness from everyone that you have sinned against – Matthew 5:23-24
4. Stop putting yourself in tempting situations – 1 Corinthians 6:18
5. Seek true accountability – 2 Samuel 12 (Nathan exposed David's sin and held him accountable for his actions); Titus 2:2-6
  - a. Allow someone more spiritual than you to hold you accountable
  - b. Meet with them regularly
  - c. Decide on a set period of time they will hold you accountable
  - d. Be honest with them

First Baptist Church West Palm Beach  
Student Ministry  
1101 S Flagler  
West Palm Beach, FL 33414