

CHAPTER 12

Dating and Waiting



Here are some **dating tips** which should be prayerfully and carefully considered:

1) Be a nonconformist.

In Romans 12:1 the Christian is told: "Be not _____ to this world, but be ye _____ by the renewing of your mind." In other words, don't let the world squeeze you into its mold! For example, don't let television, movies or the internet be your guide as to what is proper and improper in the area of dating, sex and marriage. Your standard and guide for what is proper and right should be (circle the **one** correct answer):

- a. your unsaved friends
- b. your Christian friends
- c. popular magazines
- d. parents
- e. God's Word, the Bible

If unsaved young people were to read this chapter on dating, many of them would probably get some good laughs from it and consider it to be sheer foolishness. Should we be surprised (1 Corinthians 2:14; compare 1 Peter 4:3-4)? _____

2) Honor Your Parents.

Ephesians 6:1-2: Children, **obey** your parents in the Lord: for this is right. **Honour** thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise).

Obey your parents and submit to whatever rules and regulations they set down concerning dating (see Chapter 5).

3) Rejoice in God's Sovereign Control Over Your Life.

If you really love God and are His child, then He has a wonderful plan for your life (see Romans 8:28). [How did the life of Joseph in the Old Testament illustrate the truth of Romans 8:28?] God is working out all the details in your life, and God will not allow you to miss out on that special person He has for you. God is never late, but what must we learn to do (Psalm 27:14)?

God had a wonderful person in mind for Isaac, and her name was _____ (Genesis 24:51). How old was Isaac when he took this wonderful person to be his wife (Genesis 25:20)? _____ Isaac did not miss out on God's choice for him!

Is God able to bring the right person into my life, or do I need to depend upon an internet dating service?

4) Avoid Having a One Person Complex.

It is possible for a young person to become interested in a member of the opposite sex to the exclusion of everyone else. It's important to reach out to everyone in your group, and not to focus on just one person with the result that other people are ignored or snubbed. Seek to be concerned for all of your peers. Avoid sinful cliques where only a few are included in your little group and others are excluded. Seek to include people instead of leaving them out.

The most important person that we can have a relationship to is the Lord Jesus Christ. See Philippians 1:21. Never make a "god" out of another person. Christ is the Christian's most important Person! Put the Lord first, and then show a healthy concern and interest *in others!* If you honor the Lord, He will honor you (see 1 Samuel 2:30 and Matthew 6:33).

5) Develop Healthy Friendships with Members of the Opposite Sex.

Contacts from church, school, neighborhood and elsewhere can provide excellent opportunities to build wholesome relationships with others. Group activities (approved by parents and pleasing to God) are a good way of getting to know others. Though we should be friendly all and show a loving concern for all people, what should be true about our closest companions and associates (Psalm 119:63)?

Do your closest friends fear God and obey His Word?

6) Don't Rush into Dating Prematurely. Most Young People Start Dating at Too Early an Age.

Understand the purpose of dating. **Dating** and **mating** are related. A person dates because he wants to find a mate. A believer dates because he wants to find God's will as to whether he should marry, and if so, to find God's choice for a partner. Most people would agree that a sixteen year old is too young to be thinking about marriage. They need to concentrate on

getting through high school, preparing for what they should do after high school, building strong friendships with other young men and women, and developing and deepening their relationship with the Lord. Some people get married in their late teens, but studies have shown that marriages which start later in life (especially in the mid-twenties or later) have a better chance of lasting.

Marriage is not something that should be entered into prematurely or hastily. Better to go slowly and do it right, in God's time and in God's way. Ask yourself, "Am I really ready to be married?" "Do I have the maturity that is needed to be the right kind of wife or husband?" "Do I have a mature relationship with the Lord that is marked by faithful and consistent living, and steady obedience to the Lord Jesus?" "If my future partner were to follow my spiritual example, what kind of believer would he or she be?" The man should ask, "Am I ready to be the head of the home? Can I support a family? Am I ready to be the kind of leader in the home that God would want me to be?" If a person is not ready for marriage, then this person is not ready for dating. Most teenagers begin dating long before they should.

7) *Don't Frown Upon Singleness.*

Singleness is a very special time in our lives when we are free from the duties and responsibilities of marriage, and we are thus free to serve the Lord in a very unique way: "He that is _____ careth for [is concerned about] the things that belong to the Lord, how he may _____ the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:32). You may not be single forever, so enjoy the time that you have. Make the most of it. Use your time in serving the Lord and in doing good to all men, especially those of the _____ of _____ (Galatians 6:10).

The believer can pray this prayer: "Lord, if you want me to be married, show me the person that You have for me, in Your time and in Your way. Help me to wait on You. And Lord, if you don't want me to be married, that's fine with me. All I want is Your will, because what You want for me is best. I want to serve You with all my heart whether married or single. I can't have the right kind of marriage without You and I can't live for You as a single person apart from Your grace. I have no power, I don't know what to do, but my eyes are upon You!" (2 Chron. 20:12) Marriage is not for everyone, and some of God's most faithful servants have been men and women who have been single all their lives. And remember that every believer, without exception, is married (see Romans 7:4).

THE PROBLEM OF PETTING

The dictionary defines "petting" as "engaging in embracing, caressing and kissing." Let us now consider carefully what God says about such things:

1. Petting is Part of God's Perfect Plan!

God is not against hugging. God is not opposed to kissing and caressing. These are not terrible things, they are wonderful things *in their proper place*. Remember, sex does not equal sin. Jim Smith explains this as follows:

Petting is not wrong. It isn't sinful or dirty, that is, in its right place, for you see, petting is the God-given means of bringing man and woman into the sexual act. Its place is in marriage, and in its

place it can be a very beautiful, wholesome and God-given thing leading to the most beautiful expression of a man for his wife.

But things can get out of their proper place. Take water, for instance. Nothing wrong with water--man has to have it to survive. But take water out of its proper place, as in a flood, and it can be terribly devastating--a curse instead of a blessing. It can bring havoc, destruction and misery to millions. Petting, too, can get out of place, and wreak havoc, destruction and misery. Out of the marriage relationship it brings heartache, contempt, disillusionment and disappointment. (From an article by Jim Smith entitled "Deceived" in the booklet *Dating Tips for Christian Youth*, Back to the Bible Broadcast, 1962, pages 50-51).

2. Marriage is the Place For Petting.

God clearly teaches us in His Word that sexual activity belongs in marriage, not outside of marriage. Consider the following passages of Scripture:

a) Hebrews 13:4.

The "bed" is that place where petting and sexual activity normally occurs. God's approval and blessing is placed upon the *marriage bed*. Any other kind of bed is subject to the judgment of God. This important verse (Hebrews 13:4) was previously studied in chapter 6.

b) Proverbs 5:18-19.

The sexual activity described in these verses is something holy and wonderful and beautiful because it involves (choose the right answer):

- a. a boyfriend and a girlfriend
- b. two young people who are "going steady."
- c. a couple who is engaged to be married
- d. a husband and *his wife* (see verse 18)

c) Matthew 1:25.

When did Joseph first come to know Mary in a physical (sexual) way? (see Matthew 1:25)
 _____ Joseph was very careful about this lest anyone should ever think that he was the father of Jesus! The period prior to marriage is a wonderful time to get to know another person spiritually, mentally, socially and in many other ways. Marriage is the time to begin to know your mate sexually.

Does Matthew 1:25 support the Roman Catholic teaching that Mary remained a virgin all the days of her life (see also Mark 6:3)? _____

d) Genesis 26:6-10.

In this account, Abimelech (an unsaved, heathen king) looked out his window and he saw Isaac

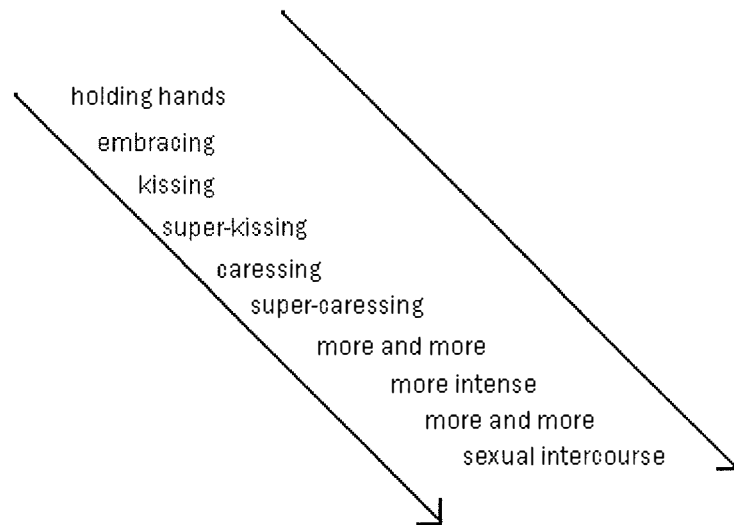
sporting with Rebekah. The word "sporting" means that he was "playing" with her in a sexual way. Today we would refer to this as some sort of "love play" or caressing or petting. When the king saw this (see verse 9), he knew that:

- a. Rebekah must be Isaac's girlfriend
- b. Rebekah must be Isaac's fiancée
- c. Rebekah must be Isaac's wife.

This pagan king understood what many today do not! He understood that this kind of sexual activity was only appropriate in marriage! **Note:** *There was nothing wrong with what Isaac and his wife were doing, except that they should have found a more private place to express their love. What was Isaac's sin (verses 7 and 9)?*

3. One Step Leads to Another.

Some might say, "What's wrong with a little sex before marriage?" The problem is that a little sex leads to a little more! Just like it is very hard to stop a giant snow ball once it starts rolling down a hill, so also sexual activity is very hard to stop once it gets started. God has built into man and woman a powerful sex drive, and we must understand ***the steps to sexual arousal:***



These different steps and stages are wonderful and satisfying in marriage, and are designed to bring a husband and wife to the final step which is intercourse, as **the two become one** _____ (Ephesians 5:31). Each step is intended to lead to the next. This is why it is dangerous for an unmarried couple to experiment with a "little sex." A small amount of physical contact always leads to more. Holding hands may be satisfying at first, but soon the novelty and thrill of holding hands will wear off, and there will be a need to go a step further. Soon they will go further and further, deeper and deeper. This can only result in frustration, guilt, tragedy, pain and scars that could remain with the person for the rest of his or her life.

It is very possible to get going on a downhill course to the point where the person is unable to stop. Consider a person sitting on a toboggan on the top of a hill and saying, "I don't want to go down this dangerous slope. I just want to approach the brow of this hill little by little to see if it

is really as steep as I have been told." One little inch forward could start the sled flying, and even though the person did not want to go down, he must because he has gone a little too far!

Even though it is difficult for young people to stop sexual activity once it starts, it is not impossible. It is wrong to get started with sexual activities outside of marriage, but it is even worse to continue to the point of sexual intercourse. Even though it is hard, a person can choose not to continue. Suppose a couple engages in heavy petting because they think they are alone in the house and they think that the parents are away. Suddenly they hear the parents' car come up the driveway. Immediately they stop what they are doing for fear of being caught! This simply illustrates the fact that people can stop if they choose to.

If you choose to honor God, then don't even get started! Keep yourself pure.

4. Good Things Are Worth Waiting For.

Suppose you lived next door to an ice cream shop and whenever you felt like it you could buy all the ice cream you wanted. Do you think the ice cream would soon become rather commonplace? It's not that special if you can have it all the time, as much as you want. Suppose, on the other hand, that your doctor told you to remove ice cream from your diet for six months. After those six months were over, how do you think your first ice cream cone would taste?

In the same way, those who follow God's instructions and abstain from sexual activity in the years prior to marriage will have a wonderful and blessed experience when they are finally married. How terrible and tragic for two people to get married, arrive at the motel on the first night and sadly admit to each other, "There's nothing special about this night; we've done all this before."

5. Seek To Picture Purity.

Christian young people should want to present a good testimony before God and men. If two young people are seen holding hands in public, onlookers may think, "If they do this in public, I wonder what they do in private." The general rule is this: Physical contact usually goes *at least* one step further in private. When two young people avoid any kind of physical contact, they are giving forth this message: "The proper place for physical contact is in the privacy of holy marriage." Since we want God's highest and best, we are pursuing and picturing **purity!**"

Ultimately, whether you stay pure and clean is *your choice!* You must decide. God has already decided what is best for you. Will you **agree** with God's decision? Will you follow His perfect plan for you? Do you believe that He really knows what is best for you and wants what is best for you?

I've never met anyone who regretted waiting for marriage. However, there are countless numbers of people who have deeply regretted not waiting.

***In God's time and in God's way;
In the meanwhile I can cheerfully obey!***