

## DATING: THE SCRIPTURAL PERSPECTIVE

With two teenage children, the issue of dating has featured in our conversation. Dating seems to be the in-thing to do when one becomes a teenager even among the Christian circle. Having both a son and a daughter has given my husband and me the opportunity to explore God's Word on the issue from both sides of the coin. Dictionary.com defines a *date* as *an engagement to go out socially with another person, often out of romantic interest*.

Some have rationalized dating to be a means of having fun with the member of the opposite sex. However, the question is: what kind of fun is that? When you date someone, you give the impression that you are interested in him/her romantically. As the dating continues, you increase the chances of getting emotionally attached to the person. Most of the time, dating has resulted in the sin of fornication. When dating does not result in marriage, you have given out a piece of yourself that you should have reserved for your husband/wife and have put yourself through unnecessary heartache. I believe that dating is worldly.

As a single person, you may ask: shouldn't I go out and have fun? Sure, you may go out and have fun but you should be careful what kind of fun. Going out with a bunch of people to restaurants, shows, etc is ok. But going out with a member of the opposite sex even if it is platonic in nature is unwise. It sends the wrong message and it gives room to the devil to cause unnecessary hassle for you ... **do not give the devil a foothold – Ephesians 4:27**.

From my observation of dating, the person dating does not necessarily date because he/she is sure it is going to end in marriage. In dating, the person has this underlying assumption: let me go out with this person to find out if he/she is the one. If he/she is, then we may consider marriage; but if he/she is not, then I move on to the next person. The Christianized dating is this: let me go out with this person to find out if he/she is the one God has chosen for me and as I date him/her I will pray for God to speak to me. Based on God's Word, there is something fundamentally wrong with this picture because **we live by faith, not by sight – 2Corinthians 5:7**.

Also, you may ask, how do I get to know who I am supposed to marry? God's Word tells you: **trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own**

**understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight** – **Proverbs 3:5-6**. God is not a hit-and-miss God. If you say you believe God's Word, then you should be willing to live your life by it. From the way I see dating and even courtship being done in the Christian circles, there is unbelief and worldliness attached to it. My question is this: why should you date someone you are not sure is God's will to be your wife/husband? God's Word states: **He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD – Proverbs 18:22**. The Word of God did not talk about boyfriend or girlfriend, or man or woman you are romantically interested in. Being romantically interested in someone and going out on a date with or even courting that person without being sure that he/she is God's will for you is just giving room for unnecessary temptation of fornication and heartbreak at the end.

The bible says, **"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth... – John 16:13."** Also, **"...those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God – Romans 8:14."** You have the Spirit of God to lead you and guide you into all truth. Knowing how important marriage is to God, do you think that He will leave you in the dark about knowing who He intends for you to get married to? I tell my son, "When the time is right for you to get married, God Himself will lay that desire in your heart and He will lead you by His Spirit to that special girl He has chosen for you." **Proverbs 3:5-6 says "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."** You can apply this scripture to the issue of a husband or wife. When you date supposedly to find out who God's will as husband/wife is for you; then you are not trusting God, you are leaning on your own understanding, you are not acknowledging God in your way and you are not allowing God to make your paths straight.

A dear beautiful sister gave me a great analogy about marriage that God gave her months before she got married. When she became convinced that dating was the wrong way to getting a husband, she wondered how she would ever get to meet *Mr. God's will*. To quiet her mind, God gave her a vision. She saw herself as the daughter of a mighty king. And when it was time for marriage, this king sought out princes from all over and ended up selecting the best of the best for her. She did not have to do anything except wait patiently, trusting that her father had her best interest at heart and would provide the best prince for her. Some months after this vision, a tall, dark,

handsome and kind godly man came her way that was everything she had prayed for and much more. The ending to this beautiful story is that they are now happily married.

Now you may ask, when I met the person I know is God's will for me to marry, shouldn't I go out with him/her to get to know him/her? My answer for you is court her or allow him to court you. For the sister I mentioned above, it was not until after God confirmed to both of them that they were meant to get married that she started going out on dates with him to get to know him better. Courtship as defined by Dictionary.com is *a man's courting of a woman; seeking the affections of a woman (usually with the hope of marriage)*. However, if you are courting someone or being courted and you are not sure that the person is God's will for you, then that is wrong as well. With courting, the goal is marriage. The courting period allows both of you to get to know each other. An important point to note is that courtship is not a license for sexual intimacy.

**"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future – Jeremiah 29:11."** To every single person, I say, God desires the best for you. However, you will only get the best God has for you if you believe and live by His Word. God's Word says: **He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD – Proverbs 18:22.** As a man, seek God's face in finding a wife; as a woman, seek God's grace in waiting to be found.

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