



The dating game

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

"The Dating Game", now there's something to grab your attention! It sounds like some daytime game show with Rosie O'Donnell as the host with contestants playing for dream dates or discussions/fights over bad dates people have endured. This may bring back memories for you of junior high when notes were passed around with things like... "does Tommy like me." Or the gossip among your friends of who is "seeing" whom.

Unfortunately, dating has become some kind of game and many of you feel caught in the middle. You don't necessarily want to be a part of the game but you would like to date. The next segment I think is some good advice from a young man in my youth group at Cornerstone URC. Read it and see if your dating relationship is described below:

'Throughout the years, love and dating have been such an influential part of our lives. Some consider love as an abrupt and sudden emotion that they feel when seeing that perfect person. No matter what, people have been a part of it and been affected by it in some way or another. I see that in today's society teens think they have to be involved in a part of the dating scene no matter what the consequences may be.

First of all, dating often tends to skip friendship, which is much needed to have a relationship later. There is a large variation between dating and friendship. Dating is an attraction where both people want to get around friendship and quickly get to know each other, and see what happens after that. Friendship is where both people share common interests and want to enjoy them with one another without the worry of getting serious. The ideal time to start dating someone is after they have been friends, or at least known each other for more than a couple of years.

Secondly, dating often mistakes a physical relationship for true love. Often couples feel that just because eyes and lips have met or that hearts have joined that they are in love. Other times they might think that just because their bodies are drawn to each other means that they were meant for each other. I feel that today people feel free to think that the words love and sex are interchangeable. They often forget about looking at each other as possible lifetime partners, but instead focus on the desires of the present. Most of the time they forget about what God wants but instead fall to the pressure that others put on them.

Third, God's intention for us is to be physically pure before marriage. God did not want us to have a string of uncommitted dating relationships or physical experiments before marriage.

Another negative thing that dating and having a girlfriend can possibly do is take time away from our relationship with God. We have to be good stewards of our free time and desire to spend more time with God.

Love and dating can be such a complicated subject for some, and yet it can be so simple for others. We should focus on God and His intentions for us throughout our lives. It's too bad that we are so sinful that we can't live up to everything we say or set before ourselves. Personally, living up to this article could be the hardest and toughest goal I have ever set

before myself. Lately, I have learned to rely on Philippians 4:13 which says, "I can do ALL things through Christ who gives me strength."

By Matt Van Til

I know often teens feel lonely and want to be loved by someone and think dating is the way to find instant love. This isn't how it happens. Just look around and you will see plenty of evidence for that.

The best advice for you is threefold:

1. Have your parents involved in your dating life (they should be already but if they aren't, get them involved).
2. Put your trust in the Lord (Proverbs 3:5-6)
3. Learn from God's word (a few examples from scripture with questions for your further study is provided in the special section of this article).

Dating should not be a game. It should be a good experience, done properly and according to God's word.

Read Genesis 29:1-20 and Judges 14:1-20, and make note of these questions while reading the passages.

- What role did the parents take and did it help or hurt the relationship?
- Was the here and now more important or a long lasting relationship?
- Who seems not to be more concerned with what God wanted for his relationship?
- What was the basis for each relationship?
- What was the outcome of each relationship?
- What is the purpose of Dating? After thinking about this for a few minutes read Ephesians 5:22-33.

Now, what are you going to do with your dating practices?

Dave Vander Meer

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