

Just Going Out? Issues of Dating

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Date: 27 July 2008

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[0 : 0 0] Let's pray Father God, we thank you that we are free people That we can choose to live and follow you And we just pray tonight that as I speak You would teach us how we can date And investigate romantic possibilities In a way that honours you That respects your holiness And that is different and changed Because we are followers of you In Jesus' name we pray, Amen Well, we are talking about dating tonight Which more commonly is known as going out with someone And we're going to talk about going out with people Who are of the opposite sex to you We're not going to touch what we think If maybe you want to go out with someone Who isn't the opposite sex, that's for another night The Bible doesn't really talk specifically About how we're to go about dating Because of the culture that it's written in

It was, they didn't really date Back in first century Palestine or before that So God in his wisdom has left it up to us Now to try and work out how we are going to date And because he's done that And because Christians like to write books There are a lot of dating books That you can read And I've got a few here But I'll just quickly give you a kind of a picture Of all the different kind of books you can read On dating from your local good Christian bookshop Dating with pure passion Talks all about how to date with pure passion You need to understand that Jesus is your husband Datable This is quite a good little book It talks about how to know if you're ready to date And if you're dateable And it talks about how you should assess the other person You're thinking about dating

That's pretty good I rate that Maybe I should just chuck it a little less further away Boundaries Before Marriage Also called Boundaries in Dating Quite a good book Kind of just says Yeah dating's pretty cool And you should do it But you should do it in a way that respects and honours God It's not a bad read I strongly recommend it I own all these So you can borrow them off me at some point if you like This one How to get a date worth keeping V-dating in six months All your money back That's the subtext of my sermon And It's not too bad It's written by the same guy Who wrote the Boundaries book Or one of the guys who wrote the Boundaries book And It's alright I wouldn't take everything it says to heart But there's some wise stuff in there about The need to meet people The need to be a normal person The need to be a complete person It's good And then Our good friend

The famous Joshua Harris I Kiss Dating Goodbye You've probably heard of this book It's caused a lot of controversy He wrote it when he was 21 And that's surprising Because it doesn't read like a 21 year old To be honest I'd always thought I would never read this book Because Of the title And I thought I don't want to kiss dating goodbye I like dating And girls and stuff But It's really quite good I would strongly recommend We all read this You don't have to take everything to heart That it says But It's got lots of good principles in there He wrote another book Because after he kissed dating goodbye What did he have to do?

He had to sort of start dating again But And so he could get married But He wrote this book Boy Meets Girl That's him That's his wife And he talks about How they Courted each other Which is his new word For dating in a godly way Basically So That is just a few Of the many books That are out there On the subject of dating And tonight I'm going to try and take Some of what's written in there Some of what I think We can take from the Bible And some of what I've learnt from my own Experiences In dating And hopefully Give you guys A way forward If you Are Thinking about Dating someone Hopefully you can use What I say tonight If you are dating someone Maybe There are things you'll need to change About your relationship If you're already married Then Hopefully You'll be able to use These principles To Talk to your kids about dating Or talk to your friends Who Aren't Yet as lucky as you

[4 : 48] To have found The one So I'll start by Talking about myself When I was in grade 5 Yeah Grade 5 I went out with this girl Called Liz Apparently In a very grade 5 Kind of way I didn't actually meet her Until I was in year 8 Because I went to an all boys school And she went to an all girls school Basically what happened Her friend Went out with My friend And they actually Kind of did go out And She decided That she would go out with me But we never met And then we did meet When I was in year 8 And it was really awkward But you know I pushed through Apart from That little flurry Into the dating scene For the rest of high school I did not date anyone I lived I lived my good little Pure high school years

And then I got to university Turned 19 And I did have my first Full on proper Attempt at dating And Unfortunately There was no Dating sermon Given at my church Before I embarked on this Rather disastrous Affair And there was no one Who sat me down And said You really ought to Read a few books Or You really need to Think hard About what God Might want in a dating Relationship And so I made Lots Of mistakes Things that I regret Now Things that I hope I can save you From making Mistakes that I'm Going to have to Deal with Into the future And I hope That By listening tonight You will be able To avoid Some of my mistakes And That will be a great Thing A thing to praise God for

So it's important That you listen It's important That You don't Think that Your dating life Doesn't matter to God Or Is an area where God doesn't care about Because He didn't say In the Bible Okay you have to Meet a girl And then after Six months You have to do This and then You do this And then you do This He does care About how you Live all of your Life Especially your Dating life And even though I've made mistakes And even though Lots of people Have made mistakes When they've been Dating I think tonight I can encourage You all That Not to run away From dating I think that We can encourage At Holy Trinity A healthy dating Culture Not where we just Go around Dating each other Randomly But A culture Where we're not Afraid To To date If If we think That it's the Right thing to do And we're not Afraid to keep Each other Accountable And to do it In a way that Honours God And is open And honest

And Most of all I want to Encourage us To put God First As we think About dating Not to put Dating first As we can Sometimes do So I'll just Briefly sketch How I'm going to Try and tackle This subject I'm going to Look at The idea of Love Because I think That's pretty Important To dating We did have A sermon on It About three Or four Weeks ago So I won't Touch on it For too long And then I'm Going to look At purity Which has also Kind of been Talked about In the last Few weeks And then I'm Going to try And answer Four questions Question one How do I know If I'm ready To start going Out with someone Question two How do I Get someone To go out With me Question three What kind of Person should I Go out with And question four If I'm already Going out with Someone Or if I'm About to go Out with Someone How should

We behave How should We act Physically Socially And spiritually Are going to be The three kind Areas that I Touch on So Love We live in a Society that Is obsessed With love But unfortunately It's obsessed With this kind Of non-tangible Fleeting Heart beating A thousand Miles per Hour Roses Chocolates Kind of Romantic Nothing Kind of Love And it's Not necessarily Nothing If you Have a Wife You should Probably Love her Like that Sometimes Otherwise She might Not be Your wife For much Longer But We don't Often think Of what The bible Says about Love So Very briefly I'm going to Just take us Through a couple Bible verses That talk about Love Say what I Think that Means And then

[9 : 50] Say why That That view Of love Should affect How we Date So John 3:16 Everyone knows This verse For God so Loved the world That he gave His only son So that everyone Who believes in him May not perish But may have Eternal life Romans 5:8 But God Proves his Love for us That while we Were still Sinners Christ died For us 1 John 3:16 We know Love by this That he laid Down his Life for us And we Ought to Lay down Our lives For one Another And Again in 1 John 4:8 To 11 Whoever does Not love Does not know God For God Is love God's love Was revealed Among us In this way God sent His only son Into the world That we might Live through him In this Is love Not that we Loved God But that he Loved us And sent his Son to be The atoning Sacrifice For our sins Beloved Since God Loved us

So much We also Ought to Love One another That's just A small Example Of the many Verses in the Bible that talk About love But I think There are four Things that They kind of Show us about Love One God is love That's important Two Love is not Primarily a Feeling Although The feeling Is important But it's an Action And in the Case of God His love For us Is shown In the Action Of sending His son Jesus To earth To live And to Die For us So that we Can come Into a Right relationship With him And related To that The third Thing we See is That God's Love Is sacrificial So God Sacrificed His son For us And we Are called To love Others In that Same Kind of Way Putting Others Before Our own Needs Not a Selfish Kind of Love Not a What I Can get Out of It Kind of Love But a Love

That Puts Others First And the Fourth Thing Is that God's Love Is not Confined To Just the People who Love God But to All To sinners Is why Is why we Are still Sinners Christ Died For us And so Our love Ought not Just to be Confined to The people Who we May or may Not be Trying to Get to Think that We're Awesome But it Should be A love That we Demonstrate To all Our brothers And sisters Not that We should Go around Kissing Everyone But we Should be Putting Everyone's Needs Before Ourselves And I Think If we Have that Picture of Love A love That is Beyond Feeling A love That is Beyond Society's View of Romance Self Interested Love You know Often We think When we Think of Love We think You know

If I Buy her Flowers Then And we're Christians So we Think Then she'll Make out With me For a Little While Or if I make Out with Him For a Little While Then he'll Buy me Flowers And that's That's kind of What we think Of as love But we see That real love Is other Person Focused It's about What they Want And it's About denying Ourselves And laying Our lives Down Serving Other people And not Just the People we've Got the Hots For But the Old grandma Who can't Take her Groceries To a Car Because she's Too frail As well as The very Nice and Attractive Blonde Girl who You see On the Side of The freeway Who can't Start a Car Both Both Deserve Our love Alright So that's Love Sacrificial Love Self

Not Self Interested Love The second Thing we Need to Look at Is purity And again The bible Is full Of things Full of References That call Us to Turn away From Immorality And especially Sexual immorality And to Focus And rely On god And so Again I'll give You a Very Very Brief Overview Of some Of the Verses In the Bible That talk About Fleeing Fornication I feel Very old School When I Say that Word Matthew 5:28 Jesus Says But I Say to You That everyone Who looks At a Woman With lust Has already Committed Adultery With her In his Heart If you Applied To a Dating Situation Your Girlfriend Isn't Your Wife So Stop Thinking About Your Future Wedding Night I Think Is Probably One Good Example Of How You Can Apply That Ephesians 5:3 And 4

[14 : 52] But Fornication I really Feel like I'm Preaching Fire And Brimstone When I Say Fornication But We'll Go With It Because That's What's In The NRSV But Fornication And Impurity Of Any Kind Of Greed Or Sorry But Fornication And Impurity Or Of Any Kind Or Greed Must Not Even Be Mentioned Among You As Is Proper Among The Saints 1 Thessalonians 4 For this Is The Will Of God Your Sanctification That You Abstain From Fornication That Each One Of You Know How To Control Your Own Body In Holiness And Honour not with lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God, for God did not call us to impurity, but to holiness.

And finally, Hebrews 13, 4, and this I think is a verse that should shape how we date. Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.

See, God cares about marriage, and we heard last week that God loves sex in a marriage relationship, but we ought to avoid things as we date that threaten that honor, threaten the marriage bed.

Yeah. We're also told in the Bible that we should treat each other with absolute purity. If you look in 1 Timothy 5, 2, you'll see there.

It's not okay to think of your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ as, you know, objects for your own gratification, but you're meant to love them and to flee that kind of thought, to control your thinking.

[16 : 45] So there's love, there's purity, and they're the two kind of big things I think that should guide how you date. And now we're going to go look at these questions.

How do I know if I'm ready to start going out with someone? There are a few ways I think you can test whether or not you're ready to date someone. One, you need to be satisfied in your relationship with God, and you need to be satisfied as a single person.

And I think this is actually biblical. If you look at Philippians 4, chapter 4, starting at verse 6, you'll see that Paul says, And then he goes on to say, I have learned to be content with whatever I have.

I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances, I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. And then in Ecclesiastes, in the Old Testament, we read in Ecclesiastes 3, verse 1, For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.

[18 : 09] So what's that saying? It's saying, don't worry. Don't worry if you're single. Don't worry whether you have a date or whether you've got a boyfriend or a girlfriend. Don't lose sleep about it. Pray about it.

Ask God to provide you with someone or ask God to stop you from wanting to have one so bad. There is a time for everything, and in good time, you'll be able to have those desires of yours for a wife met.

But in the meantime, if you're a single person, I want to encourage you to be satisfied as a single person and to focus on serving on God and relying on Him for your strength, not relying on other people.

The second thing is that you are ready to start going out with someone if having a boyfriend or a girlfriend is not an idol. So in 1 Corinthians 10, we read that Paul encourages us to flee from the worship of idols.

And what exactly is an idol? Well, it's when you value anything more than you value God. And I think relationships are a key place where we put the relationship with our boyfriend or girlfriend or even our wife or husband above God.

[19 : 31] And especially if you're single, you can place that need or that want to get into a relationship above your desire to live to please God.

And if you don't know whether or not you're doing that, I think you can test it by examining yourself and thinking, what do I fear the most? What's the one thing that I really, really worry about?

And I think there are lots of people, and I've probably been here myself, who fear nothing more than ending up living alone, than ending up being single for the rest of their life.

And so this can work itself out in a number of ways. Maybe you kind of just date anyone. You have no standards just because you're really afraid that you might not end up with someone.

Or perhaps you are in a relationship and it's clearly obvious to everyone except, and probably even deep down to yourself, that it's a disaster.

[20 : 44] Absolute disaster. But you're too afraid to break up and to deal with it and to get back on track with God because you're too afraid of this being the only chance you'll get to spend a life not alone.

If you feel like that, if you're worried about being alone for the rest of your life, and if you don't think that God can meet all your needs, then you're not ready to date.

You're not ready to have a boyfriend or a girlfriend. Third thing. You're ready to go out with someone when you're not going to be using your relationship with your boyfriend or girlfriend as some sort of tool for validation, as some sort of way of making you think you're worthwhile.

So this comes from my own experience when I was 19 and I went out with this girl and it was a disaster on many levels and I was too afraid to break it up because before I went out with her, I thought, man, I'm 19 and I've never been out with anyone.

I must not be that cool because clearly if I was cool, then the chicks would dig me. And so I turned 19.

[22 : 16] This girl came along. She did dig me for a while and I thought that was awesome and I thought that meant, well, thank goodness, finally I'm a worthwhile person.

Someone else on this earth actually loves me, which is just, by the way, a disastrous way to start a relationship because you will start trying to please that person, start trying to make that person love you at all costs because you're too afraid of what the consequences might be if you break up because if you break up, which we ended up doing and I hadn't dealt with this problem that I had, that's a challenge to your worth.

That's a challenge to your person. And so when we did break up, I was very upset, very devastated.

I thought, man, I'm actually not cool anymore because this girl doesn't like me anymore. But thankfully, because we have a gracious God, he showed me that it's not, it's not, it's not, it's not who you date that makes you a valuable person, but it's the fact that God created you that makes you a valuable person.

It's the fact that God loves you so much that he sent his son to die for you that makes you be able to get up out of bed in the morning and keep, keep going.

[23 : 46] That is what makes you a valuable person. And so if you can grasp the love that God has for you, if you can know that, then I think you're ready to start dating someone.

Next big question. How do I get someone to go out with me? I think that's why Paul's come tonight. So, there are many things you could try, such as pick-up lines.

And, I'm going to try a few and see, see if anyone runs at me. I don't think these are offensive. They're not offensive to me, but if they're offensive to you, I apologise.

I can't even believe this one exists. I promise these are untested. Maybe I should have gone to the pub last night and given them a whirl.

Alright, here we go. I think I crapped my pants. Can I get into yours? How is that going to work? I don't know. That's gross. Is there an airport or is that just my heart taking off?

[25 : 07] Oh, get me a bucket. I've had quite a bit to drink and you're beginning to look pretty good. If anyone ever did that, I'd think that was hilarious.

Were you in Boy Scouts? Because you sure have tied my heart in a knot. And, here we go. I think this one works when you're in grade three.

If you were a booger, I'd pick you first. I don't think that they're going to work.

Maybe it's just because they're bad pick-up lines. But I think in general, just pick-up lines, they don't work. And if they do work, they're not going to work with the kind of person that you probably want to end up dating.

So, what else can you do if you want someone to go out with you? Well, you could just go into a quiet room or go to a monastery or something and just pray all day and all night that God would send the right person along.

[26 : 18] And he may do that. One day, he may send someone to the monastery and they might just say, hey, God told me to come here and marry you.

And you'll be like, wicked. But, I don't think that will work. It could work, but generally speaking, just like if you want to draw near to God, ultimately it's God who draws you to himself.

But you still need to spend time praying. You still need to spend time reading the Bible. I think much like that, you need to pray, you need to ask God, you know, is this girl right for me or give me some guidance, give me wisdom, bring someone along.

But, you also need to get out there, you know, move states and get to know people in an appropriate way who you might want to date.

A few other things about getting someone to go out with me. I think that guys generally speaking should take the lead.

[27 : 35] They should be the ones who call me old-fashioned, but, you know, they ought to, you know, say, hey, you're cool. And it'll probably go something like this, you know, hey, do you want to go out for lunch?

Sure. And then you won't say anything, and you're like, so, like, I think that, like, you're cool and stuff, and maybe you'd like to, like, hang out again or something.

Or you could be more bold than that, but you probably won't be. If you're me, you won't be.

And I think the other thing that if you want someone to go out with you, you need to avoid playing games. So you need to avoid doing things like, you know, I can't ring him tomorrow because I only rang him three days ago, and I'll look desperate if I do that, and, you know, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, there's all this kind of game playing that goes on in dating, and I think that we just want to be authentic, and we want to be honest, and we want to say, look, I like you, and I want to hang out with you lots.

If that's what you feel like, just tell them. Just don't play games. It's not cool, Chris says. All right. What kind of person should I go out with?

[29 : 04] The next question. I think you need to be careful about creating a super specific list. So, you know, you might have a list like, they must like maths.

I don't know why that would be on your list, but it could be. They must be, you know, X amount of years old. They must have this colour hair. They must have that colour eyes. They must be about that high, and they must like this sport, and they must hate that sport.

They must be an astronaut, or a fireman, or whatever it might be. That's a bad list, because you're never going to find someone who matches.

The more specific your list, the less chance you're going to have of finding someone. But I do think you should have a list. I do think you should have some standards by which to work out what kind of person you want to go with.

And so, I'm going to tell you what my list is, and one other thing that I'd have on my list if I were a girl. And, and it's not, his name should be Chris Maldich.

[30 : 16] So, here it is. Here's my list. The person that you are looking to date should have a passionate love for God.

They should have a desire to serve him above all else. And, they should probably have some sort, they should be showing that in some way. So, maybe they're involved in doing some sort of ministry in their church context.

They should have a desire and a shown ability for God's word to rule all of their life. I don't think you want to go around getting involved with someone who thinks that they know better than what God does.

They should have a healthy respect for their parents if that's, if it's appropriate. So, clearly if their parents don't deserve any respect, then, then, that's obviously going to be negotiable that, that list or that, that one.

But, generally speaking, and particularly here in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, I think most people's parents are going to be worthy of some respect. We're, you know, we're, most people here come from Christian families so, they should respect their parents.

[31 : 30] You should respect your parents. Yeah. Not a flirt. You don't want someone who's like, really flirty. Yeah. And, maybe they'll be flirty to you and, in fact, it's probably helpful if they are a little bit, otherwise you're probably never going to notice that, that they like you.

But, you need to probably watch them and see if they flirt with every single, uh, person that they ever meet. And if they do, well, maybe you might want to think twice about going there.

Modesty. Uh, this is a big one for me. They should be modest. If, if, if they wear lots of inappropriate clothes, long neck tops, short little skirts, uh, then it's, it's not cool for me.

Not a turn on. Uh, I was in the pub last night, there was this girl, she pretty much was just wearing a coat. Uh, and it was not cool. Uh, and she got treated like a piece of meat, which is how she dressed.

Uh, there were boys trying to get all over her and it's just not cool. So, if you're a girl, just be modest and all the nice Christian boys like me will come after you. Uh, all right.

[32 : 46] And if I was a girl, if I was a girl, uh, I would be looking for a man who's willing to take the lead, uh, who's willing to initiate things, who's willing to, uh, stand up, uh, and be counted.

Uh, and that's my list. Now for you who, uh, those of you who are in a dating relationship, who are going out with someone or who are thinking about entering that, I want to talk about how you should behave.

I'm going to start with the physical thing because that's the big question. The question, how far is too far? You can remember before I talked about purity, uh, and God, he calls us to a high standard.

He calls us to flee sexual immorality. Uh, so, the question, how far is too far, needs to be answered in that light. And, in some ways, this, the way you answer this question, the way you set up your physical boundaries in a dating relationship, depends on, uh, your weaknesses.

Uh, but I'm going to just put it out there and say that if you're a male, uh, or if you're going to go out with a male, oh, that's everyone, uh, then, you need to have good, clear boundaries.

- [34 : 05] You need to have boundaries that are going to help you avoid getting into situations where the devil is going to try and bring you down. Uh, and so, you need to talk with your partner and you need to work out, uh, what you, talk about your shared struggles, work out what your boundaries are going to be, uh, and set them.

Joshua Harris, who wrote, *I Kiss Dating Goodbye and Boy Meets Girl*, says this, the longer your no big deal list is before marriage, the shorter your very special list will be after marriage.

And so, what he means by this is, if you've kissed a thousand times before you get married, then when you kiss after marriage, maybe it's not as big a deal as once you get married. Now, I don't know because I'm not married, but, uh, I can see where he's coming from.

Whether or not you should kiss in a dating relationship is completely up to you, uh, and your partner to work out. I can see good reasons why you might choose not to. I can see good reasons why you might choose to.

How's that for uncontroversial? Um, and, and, and it applies, maybe you want to go further than kissing, uh, but I think generally speaking the Bible says flee from sexual immorality, uh, and if, I really can't see how anything more than kissing your girlfriend for not very long in situations where you're not going to be tempted to go further is appropriate.

- [35 : 39] I cannot, I would, you would have to make a good case to me to tell me why you thought it was alright to go into your bedroom, shut the door, and make out for three hours.

Uh, I don't think that is living according to the Bible, uh, and I think that you should repent if you're doing that and change your behaviour. And I think you'll be able to do that if you have a high view of the sanctity of marriage.

Uh, if you believe that sex is best in a marriage, like the Bible says, then I think, uh, you're going to want to have good, high boundaries boundaries that protect your marriage bed.

Because at the end of the day, you don't want to have to get married, uh, and, and have it compromised. That's just not, that's, that's not cool.

And I think also that if you have a healthy, good, healthy respect for God's holiness, uh, and your, and your future marriage, then you'll want very, very conservative, clear boundaries.

- [36 : 47] Uh, and as they say, uh, making a mistake, uh, or when you do something physical, uh, it's a bit like, uh, driving along the Eastern Freeway, uh, not turning off at Springvale Road.

Now you're on the, uh, the East Link, so you've got to pay about four or five bucks before you get off, and you can't get off till you get to Ringwood, uh, which is a long way away from Doncaster, if that's where you were trying to get to, uh, and, and sexual, uh, intimacy can work the same way.

You know, once you start, uh, holding hands, then you want to, you know, do the next thing, and then you want to kiss, and then after you've kissed, you want to do the next thing, and so on and so forth.

Uh, and before you know it, without good, clear boundaries, uh, you end up probably in Frankston, maybe, uh, if you're on, if you're on Eastlink.

Uh, so no one wants to go there. Um, so I'm told. Uh, right, a few other things that you need to do if you're dating someone, in my, uh, view.

- [38 : 06] Uh, whilst, uh, physical attraction is going to be a big part of your relationship, uh, you need to make sure you're getting to know the person on other levels.

So you need to, uh, be spending appropriate amounts of time with the person socially. Uh, you need to probably not spend too much time one-on-one, one because it's going to lead you to perhaps fall in the area of physical, uh, boundary setting, uh, and two because, uh, one-on-one time together tends to accelerate, uh, your relationship beyond the point where it might actually be.

Uh, so you should try if you can to get to know someone, uh, in as many group settings as possible. Uh, but also you do need one-on-one time to talk about things that, uh, it's just not going to be inappropriate, that it's going to be, that it's going to be inappropriate to talk about when, uh, you get married.

So, uh, you don't want to probably, you know, let's go to the pancake parlor gang. Okay, cool. Uh, so, girl, tell me, what do you think about, you know, getting married?

It's going to be awkward. Uh, so, do it one-on-one, uh, but, do both. And the other thing you can see is how they relate to others, uh, how they relate to you in a group setting.

[39 : 34] If they just bag you out all the time in a group setting, uh, or if they ignore you in a group setting, then you probably want to dump them. Uh, because they're not worth it.

You're, you're better than that. All right. Uh, spiritual. I think you need to, uh, talk about spiritual things. You probably should do a Bible study with your girlfriend or boyfriend.

You should talk about your theology. You should work out if, you know, she's a Christian or he's a Christian, uh, not just because he's going to church, but you should actually ask, you know, what do you think about Jesus?

And is he the only way to God? Has he died for you? Uh, do you have a relationship with him? All those kind of questions. You may also, want to talk about, um, what someone thinks about, uh, the role of men and the role of women, uh, because I imagine, uh, as one of you's a man and one of you's a woman, that that's going to be probably a point of contention if you have significantly different views.

Uh, many other things. Not everything, I would say, if you disagree theologically, is a breakup point, but there are probably some things, and you can work out, uh, for yourself what are your must-have core, uh, theologies and what aren't.

[40 : 55] There are a few other things that I want to say about having a godly dating relationship. You need to have accountability. accountability. Uh, it's, it's all, uh, good to be accountable with your mates, but I think that, uh, if you're taking accountability seriously, if you're taking your relationship, uh, with your girlfriend or boyfriend seriously, then you need to be accountable to people who are going to hold you to account, who you're kind of not scared of, but who you really don't want them to think badly of you so that they're going to motivate you to live wholly good uncompromised lives.

Um, you want people who aren't going to say when you say I stuffed up, oh, it's all right. Um, you want them to say that's not good enough, get your act together, uh, or I'm going to punch you.

Um, uh, all right. Uh, but seriously accountability, it's a must have for a relationship. If you're in a relationship and you don't have people keeping you accountable and keeping your partner accountable, uh, both separately and perhaps even together, then, uh, go get them now.

Uh, just wait till I finish talking. Um, if you live at home or if your parents still play a significant role in your life, uh, if, and if your parents are Christians, I think that you've got to get your parents involved.

Um, they know you probably the best, uh, and they'll be able to help you make judgments about people. They'll be able to pray for you. They'll be able to, uh, help you.

[42 : 41] Uh, they'll be able to invite the person over for dinner and, uh, hold a shotgun and scare him. Uh, uh, and so get your parents involved.

Uh, if you, if you don't talk to your parents about this kind of stuff, start, I didn't talk to my parents about this kind of stuff for a while, uh, and then one day I just filled them in on like the last three years of my life and it was awesome.

Uh, like, and now I can talk to them about anything, uh, pretty much when it comes to females. Uh, and my mum, she's cool. She like hugs me if things go badly.

Oh, oh, not at the moment because I don't live near her, but last year she. Uh, all right, to conclude, dating is not an ungodly thing to do, uh, but it has its dangers and I want to encourage all of us to be mature and sensible about the way we date.

Even if you're, you know, 15 or 16 or 30, uh, if you say that you love Jesus, uh, if you committed, if you sold out the following Jesus, then, uh, you need to date in a way that honors and respects God.

[43 : 51] In 1 Timothy 4, 12, we read, let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. So, those of us who are young who think, oh, I'm just in high school, it doesn't really matter how I date, everyone dates in high school, it doesn't matter, makes mistakes, the Bible says, nah, it matters.

You've got to date in a way that gives honor and glory to God. You've got to live your whole of your life and set an example to those who are older.

I'd love for people in the youth group to come up to me and say, hey, Chris, I'm dating better than you, get your act together. That'd be awesome. not awesome in the sense that I wouldn't be dating very well, probably, but good in the sense that you would be dating well.

I think the other thing we need to realize is that at the end of the day, dating, having a girlfriend, having a boyfriend, being married, that's not the end.

The goal of life is not to get married. The goal of life is not to have a girlfriend or a boyfriend. The goal of life, of our lives as Christians, is to become more like Jesus day after day.

[45 : 08] And so, all of us are on that journey. If you're in a relationship, a dating relationship, that makes you less like Jesus, that causes you to sin, then that has to end.

No questions asked. It might be able to start again, but for now, it has to end. But, if you're in a relationship that helps you, that encourages you to grow, encourages you to become more like Jesus, then I'd want to say, stick to it, keep going, get married, start the next journey.

And that is all I have to say about dating. So, let's pray. God, I just ask that you would help all of us who find ourselves single to date well when we do date.

Lord, I pray for those of us who are in relationships, Lord, I pray that they would be God-honoring things, that they would be helping us to come nearer to you. And God, for those of us who have already dated or who are planning never to date, Lord, we ask that you would help us to give good and godly advice to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who are involved in this tricky time of life that is dating.

Lord, we pray that you would protect all of us from the devil, from his attacks, and Lord, we pray that those of us who are dating would be safe, would have clear boundaries, and would not fall because of a lack of self-control.

[46 : 54] in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.