

Dating and Friendship Guide

I. Introduction

Some of the most important decisions that we make are who we have as our friends and companions, and whom we choose to date and eventually marry. The Bible has much to say about this subject:

- Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. Ps 1:1
- Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for "bad company corrupts good character." 1 Cor 15:33
- I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people. 1 Cor 5:11
- Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. II Cor 6:14-17
- My child, if sinners entice you, turn your back on them! My child, don't go along with them! Stay far away from their paths. Prov 1:10, 15
- Don't do as the wicked do, and don't follow the path of evildoers. Prov 4:14
- Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble. Prov 13:20
- Don't befriend angry people or associate with hot-tempered people, or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul. Prov 22:24-25
- And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people. Rom 16:17-18
- And now, dear brothers and sisters, we give you this command in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Stay away from all believers who live idle lives and don't follow the tradition they received from us. II Thes 3:6
- Take note of those who refuse to obey what we say in this letter. Stay away from them so they will be ashamed. II Thes 3:14
- If people are causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with them. Titus 3:10
- If anyone comes to your meeting and does not teach the truth about Christ, don't invite that person into your home or give any kind of encouragement. Anyone who encourages such people becomes a partner in their evil work. II Jo 1:10-11

II. Why God Cares

God understands the important role that associates play in forming us. His commands are not to restrict us, but to free us to choose good companions and to protect us from the influences that could harm us.

III. Friend Selection

When I use the word *friends*, I don't mean those people whom we come into contact with due to forces beyond our control, such as school mates and fellow employees (1 Cor 5:11). I am referring to companions: those people with whom we choose to spend our time. They are the ones who will play a major role in forming our morals, attitudes, and goals (Gal 5:9; 1 Cor 15:33).

According to II Cor 6:14-18 and Ps 1:1, our companions should be Christians other than for the purpose of evangelism and ministry. We should love all men, but becoming a companion of unbelievers will corrupt our morals and require us to compromise God's Word. Selecting Christian friends will give us strength to overcome the pressures of the world (Ecc 4:9-12; Mat 18:19). We are also to avoid other Christians who lead an unruly life (II Thes 3:6, 14; II Tim 3:5).

IV. Dating

Dating is a procedure that our society uses for selecting a marriage partner and this should never be taken too lightly. We should never date anyone whom we do not feel would be a suitable mate, because emotional bonds do develop.

The progression for selecting a person to date includes these two requirements for selecting a companion: They must be a Christian; They must have a growing relationship with the Lord. Additionally, they must meet these basic requirements:

A. General questions should be asked

1. Do they listen and communicate well? Are they able to share their hurts, desires, feelings, and opinions? (Eph 4:15, 25)
2. Do they have good relationships with friends and family? (Eph 6:2; Eph 5:21)
3. Do they control their emotions, or are they given to anger, jealousy, or envy? Do feelings rule their lives? (Gal 5:19-21)
4. Are they forgiving of others, and can they accept you and others as you are? (Rom 14:4)
5. Are they good stewards of their time, money, and possessions? (Tit 1:7; Eph 5:5-7; Eph 5:15-17)
6. Do they exercise self-control and wisdom with technology and social media? (1 Cor 6:12)
7. Do they have a good reputation? (Eph 5:3; 1 Tim 3:7)
8. Do they care for their body? (1 Cor 3:16-17)
9. Will they be a good role model for your children? (1 Cor 11:1)

B. As a man selects a date or a mate, additional questions that should be considered are

1. Does she dress modestly and care for her appearance? (1 Pet 3:3)
2. Does she relate well with children and know how to care for them? (Prov 31:10-31)
3. Is she submissive to authority – her father, employer, teachers, etc., or does she rebel, gossip, and degrade them? (Rom 13:1; Eph 5:22)
4. Does she have a gentle and quiet spirit? (1 Pet 3:4)

C. Some additional questions that a woman should ask about a prospective date

1. Is he someone I can respect? (Eph 5:22, 33)
2. Does he have the ability to be an adequate provider? (1 Tim 5:8)
3. Does he consider my feelings and desires in his decision making? (1 Pet 3:7)
4. Is he in submission to authority? (Rom 13:1)
5. Does he have control over his lust? (Gal 5:19-22)
6. Does he respect me? (1 Pet 3:7)
7. Does he relate well with children and know how to care for them? (Eph 6:4)

V. Summary

Selection of the proper companions, dates and mates may be a long process as God brings His best. We are often tempted to rush by "helping God". Often, the results of our help are very damaging to our walk with the Lord, and to others whom we try to help. We cannot allow ourselves to be led by circumstances or by our heart, because Satan is the prince of this world, and can arrange circumstances to get us to disobey God's clear commands (Eph 2:2). We must seek God and His righteousness, thus making us an acceptable companion, date or mate for others, and these other things will be added unto us (Mat 6:33).