

**Russell Kelfer**

# **God's Truth About Alliances: Dating**

**546-A**

**Series: The Beatitudes**



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Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

# God's Truth About Alliances: Dating

As we continue with the series on Satan's lies and God's truth about the basic issues of life, this is the third lesson dealing with Satan's lies and God's truths about alliances or relationships. The title is "How Can Two Walk Together Except They Be Agreed?" I want to review the previous two lessons for the benefit of the young people who read this lesson regarding dating.

There are three kinds of relationships into which Christians relate to non-Christians:

1- Peer relationships. This is a relationship such as we have with our classmates at school or with those we work with or with our neighbors. The goals of this kind of relationship are many. One goal may be to develop communication. Another goal may be for evangelism. We may be placed in a position next to those who need to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Sometimes our peers are put into our lives as heavenly sandpaper to bring character into our lives. Sometimes they are put into our lives to develop our testimony.

2- Authority relationships. This is a situation where two or more people are linked together in a system of order where one is over the other. In this case, it is a totally different set of Scriptural guidelines than with either a peer relationship or an alliance relationship. An authority relationship would be one between a boss and an employee. Another example is the relationship between a citizen and government. A child to parent relationship is also based on authority.

3- Alliance Relationships. This is a relationship where two or more people gather together to join in union with shared authority and shared responsibility. They have common objectives. There is assumed harmony. There is a mutual commitment along with a common bond and purpose. Marriage is the perfect illustration of an alliance relationship. Another illustration is that of a dating relationship. A business partnership is an alliance relationship. Another example is a church alliance or group. Nations who enter

into treaties with one another have an alliance relationship. An unholy alliance by this definition would be where two attempt to walk together without being spiritually agreed.

The purpose of this study is to focus particularly on Satan's lies where alliance relationships are concerned. This is the third lesson on this subject, and we realize that this lesson builds on the previous two lessons. So for those of you who have just joined us, it might appear that we are sharing practical principles without an adequate Scriptural base. We do not have time to completely reconstruct that base. I want to, therefore, review only the major principles and passages.

Here are some of the principles on which these lessons have been built. We will only consider 3 of them here.

Principle 1- Our God is a jealous God where relationships are concerned. We read extensively from Exodus 34, Deuteronomy 4, 5 and 6 that our God is a jealous God. By jealous we mean that He guards and protects His children in their relationships with the world and in particular with unbelievers. He guards them with a jealous kind of love. It is a parental kind of jealousy.

Principle 2- God, in Scripture, demands that believers make no alliances with unbelievers. Let's review what an alliance is. We learned in Deuteronomy 7 that there are detailed warnings about what God's children must and must not do where an unbeliever is concerned. In Amos the question was asked,

Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

(Amos 3:3 NKJV)

The answer is that they can't and was given to us in I Corinthians 6:14-17. There is no basis for believers and unbelievers to be unequally yoked together. Paul said that the reason is that there is no way you can take light and merge it with darkness. He asked if there was any way you could take perfect righteousness and perfect lawlessness and bring them together. It can't be done. It would be like trying to wed the Mafia with the church. Paul asked if there was any way to take the holy temple of God and put idols in it and not contaminate its holiness. Paul said that there was no way.

Paul went on to say that we need to know that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that He lives within us. We are not our own because we have been bought with a price. By means of that, anytime your body, your life or your soul comes into contact

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with an alliance relationship with an unbeliever, then you are joining the temple of God with idols. He goes one step further, which is the final blow. Paul asks how could you have a wedding ceremony in which Jesus Christ and Satan get married? We don't even like to think about that thought. Paul said that is the basis on which God demands that the believer make no unholy relationships with unbelievers.

Principle 3- Not only does God demand these things, but He also gives us a list of clear consequences if the principle is violated. These consequences are real. They will affect your spiritual growth. In Joshua 23, Joshua was giving his farewell address. As he said good-bye, he told the people that they were going to enter into a land that was filled with heathens. He told them to be careful not to intermarry with them. He told them if they did, five things would happen: 1) it would be a snare and a trap, 2) it would affect their walk with God, 3) it would be a pain in their side, 4) would affect their joy, 5) it would also be like thorns in their eyes. It would affect their perspective or vision.

It would also affect their ability to have power over the enemy. When the enemy came down the mountain, the children of God who had intermarried with heathen and began to worship their gods, cried out to the Lord to be delivered, and they heard nothing from God.

It will affect God's umbrella of protection over you. We studied the incident of Pharaoh and the children of Israel. We saw how God protected them with an umbrella of protection as the children of the enemy were destroyed by plague after plague after plague.

It will affect your children either now or in the years to come; and it will affect your ability to have communication. Genesis 19:12-14 tells us this,

Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place!

For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it."

So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking. (Genesis 19:12-14 NKJV)

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The greatest single misconception in dating relationships is that a Christian can get involved with a non-Christian as a tool for evangelism. I believe that is not a Scriptural principle. Some people relay the story that they started dating an unbeliever while they were a strong Christian. They realized a few weeks later that they had begun to compromise. They don't understand this, because they claim the Scripture,

...because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.  
(I John 4:4 NKJV)

There are two reasons I don't believe that verse applies to this situation. It is true, "Greater is He that is in you", but it is also true that you yourself at any given time are not necessarily greater than "he that is in the world". Let me give you two illustrations.

Illustration 1- In the will of God there is power. The Christian in the will of God has the power to withstand the enemy. You must remember that when you enter into an alliance relationship with an unbeliever, you become unequally yoked together. You step out of the will of God, because you ignore the known will of God. You lose your power.

Illustration 2- Concerns people: one is a Christian and one is not. The Christian is magnetically drawn in his spirit to the Word and magnetically drawn to the world in the flesh. The unbeliever with whom he is holding hands is drawn magnetically to the world in the flesh only. I don't know how good your arithmetic is or how good your understanding of the law of gravity is, but simple arithmetic will tell us that there are two forces pulling against one. When you yoke those two together, the results are usually not good.

Principle 4- Unequal yoking creates the problem of no communication in the spirit realm. We can see the station W-O-R-D is broadcasting truth. This signal is being broadcast to whoever can hear it. The first house has Susie Smith living in it. She is a Christian and has received the Holy Spirit, and she can receive truth. She has made the Calvary Connection. It unscrambles the signal, and she can receive spiritual truth.

In the other house is Jimmy Jones. He is not a Christian. The only thing he gets when he receives spiritual truth is a scrambled, garbled picture. He doesn't understand what he is seeing. The Scripture says,

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But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

(I Corinthians 2:14 NKJV)

The third house is Jimmy Jones' and Susie Smith's after they get married. They are living together, hand in hand. The two of them have become one. Problems arise, and they need to resolve their problems. They need God's perspective. The problem is that Susie has an antennae, and Jimmy doesn't. The result is confusion, disharmony and compromise.

This will need to suffice for a quick review. In the last lesson, we applied these principles on a national level. We talked about our relationship to the nations who defy God. We talked about arming ourselves naturally. We discussed spies, entering into a treaty with our enemies and depending on God's enemies for our strength. In this lesson, I want to take a more practical look at the personal aspects of these principles, particularly where dating, marriage and parent-child relationships are concerned. I must admit that this is a really tough lesson to teach. We want to see this from a parent's perspective, and then we want to see it from a young person's perspective. Therefore, what we have to do is to look at it from God's perspective, because then there will be no conflict between the two.

I want to begin by saying that God has told us everything we will ever need to know about dating. He has told us everything we will ever need to know about marriage. He has also told us everything we will ever need to know about friendship. He has done all of this through the Scripture. You may say, "My Bible doesn't say anything about dating. I have looked in the concordance under 'D' and found nothing. Then I looked under 'B' for boyfriend, and I could find nothing." It is true that God doesn't give us a printed list of do's and don'ts. You can look under "C", and you won't find anything about curfews. You can look under "R", and you won't find anything concerning R-rated movies. These are cultural applications of Scriptural principles, but all of the principles necessary to make all of the decisions necessary that we will ever need to make about curfews, about R-rated movies, and about everything else we have to deal with are found in the Word of God.

What do I mean by principles? A principle is the heart of God as revealed through the Word of God, thus giving the Christian

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the mind of God. Principles are general concepts that are designed, when they are understood, to allow the Christian to make specific choices. For this reason, Scripture does not need to get into cultural situations. The Scripture does not need to tell us what time our children ought to be in at night. It would be easy if it said, "Thou shalt have thy son or daughter in by 11:25!" All our problems would be solved. We would wave the Bible at our children and say, "Come in at 11:25!" It is not quite that simple. But, through parables, through proverbs, through the way God deals with Israel and through the illustrations of Scripture we have repetition, repetition, repetition. We will find the principles of Scripture emerge to give us a clear-cut vision of the mind of God. Therefore, there is no doubt about what God wants us to do about dating and marriage. Let me give 8 more principles that will help us to see the mind of God.

Parental Responsibility- parents are responsible to train up a child in God's way in every detail of his life. It is from one end of Scripture to the other.

Unequal Yoking- a believer and an unbeliever can make no alliance together without dire consequences.

Testing God- a Christian has no right to put God in a corner by going as far as he can and then saying, "Help, Lord!" Satan tried to do that with Jesus in the wilderness. Satan said, "Why don't you jump off of that building over there so that we can see what God will do." Jesus answered,

"It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"  
(Luke 4:12 NKJV)

Sovereignty of God

Role of Men and Women

Preparation

Moral Purity

Spiritual Priority- if you seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, God will provide for your needs, even your dates and even your children's needs.

If you apply what you know of these principles through this lesson, you will know the will of God where dating, marriage, partnerships and so forth are concerned.

We learned in a previous lesson that God saw a progression of behavior in the children of Israel each time they were brought into



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close contact with the heathen. Here is the way the progression went:

1- The children of God would make friends with the heathen. They would enjoy their fellowship, their standards and their culture.

2- The children of God would begin to date the unbelievers. The Scripture says that the parents were allowing it and sometimes even encouraging it.

3- This would lead to intermarriage between God's children and those who were not God's children. This would invoke the wrath of God.

4- The children of God would begin to yield to the idolatry of their unbelieving mates. The gods of the world became the gods of God's children.

5- The nation always came under the judgment of God.

The process began in the area of friendships. The principle of parental responsibility says that parenthood is a God-given gift. But, it also carries with it God-given responsibilities and accountabilities. Oh how we know that. The world encourages us to throw up our hands and say, "What can I do? They have to live their own lives, and the pressures are so great." Granted, the pressures are greater than they ever have been, and that is all the more reason to be more involved in your child's life. It is a wrong premise to have limited involvement in your child's life. Parents are to teach their children about God's perspective of life in every facet of the child's development, especially where relationships are concerned. The Scripture says we are to teach line upon line. This means every word needs to be emphasized over and over and over. We are to teach our children precept by precept. This means we are to teach them principles over principles over principles that are applied and applied and applied.

The Bible tells us to teach our children when they rise up in the morning. It tells us to teach them when they go to bed at night. We are to teach our children when they sit in the house and when they walk by the way. These are visual reminders to punctuate the principles as we place them on the doorposts and on the gates like frontlets between our eyes. A good place to begin is with their friendships. I have nine ways that parents can help their children build the right kinds of friendships.

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1- Set yourself from the beginning as God's authority where friendships are concerned. It is not a "right" that your children give you to control their friendships. It is a responsibility God gave you as a parent. Little children in the neighborhood who are unfavorable influences on your child as a little tot have to be dealt with. They can become bad influences. We must not reject the child, but we must reject the child's behavior.

2- Teach your children to discern character. It is not just that Johnny had a temper tantrum, it is that Johnny has an impatient spirit. What is the source of an impatient spirit? What is the solution to an impatient spirit? In other words, teach character to your children.

3- Teach your children to pray for right friendships. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth a whole bunch as the literal translation tells us. The key is that if we ask, we receive. If we seek, we find. So often our children are put in positions that if they have to stand alone, they don't have the kind of friendships that they need. This gives God an opportunity to meet their needs in answer to prayer.

4- Teach your child what makes a good friend. Scripture is filled with instances of what makes a good friend. A good friend is one who keeps a confidence. We see this in Proverbs 11:13. A good friend is one who overlooks mistakes as we see in Proverbs 17:9. A good friend is one who stands by you when you are in trouble according to Proverbs 17:17. A good friend is not short-tempered as we see in Proverbs 22:24. A good friend is honest with you and tells it like it is. Proverbs 27:6 tells us this. A good friend helps you when you are down. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 describes this trait. A good friend is one who is in harmony with you spiritually as we see in Amos 3:3.

5- Show your children by your friendships how it is supposed to work. They are going to watch you. They are going to pay more attention to what you do than what you say. What kind of friends do you have? How faithful are you to your friendships?

6- As your children mature, turn loose gradually and relinquish control but only relative to their discernment. The parable of the good steward can be referred to here. If they can handle a little, you can give them more freedom. If they can't handle a little, then you take away the responsibility they have until they can handle little responsibilities. You don't dump the

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whole 9 yards on them at once. Responsibility is a reward for the ability to respond correctly. It is a gift in answer to your child's responses, but it is not a right.

7- Make your home a center for your children's activities, so that you can have input in their friendships.

8- Consider Christian educational alternatives. This is not for everyone, but for some it is a good idea. Remember that it is the parent's choice, not the child's.

9- Become a clearinghouse for your children's dates. We want to ask nine questions about the dates. We need to remember by principle that the Bible answers every question we have about dating. Your parents should meet every person that you go out with before you go out. Every date is a family affair. God plans to use your parents, Christians or not, as a screen to protect you from dangers and to give you insights.

I want to preface this portion of the study with two statements:

1- Based on Scripture, it is never the perfect will of God for a Christian to marry a non-Christian. Be careful not to misunderstand this statement. By the perfect will of God, I mean that to choose beforehand to yoke a believer with an unbeliever is to unite the body of Christ in adultery with the body of Satan. It is never God's first choice. This does not mean that the person is not God's first choice, but they cannot be God's first choice, until they become a Christian.

If you are already married and one person in that union becomes a Christian, or if you have violated this principle either knowingly or unknowingly, you are to remain together and by love serve one another for the rest of your lives. The God of grace is designed to work all things together for His glory and for your good. That is a promise. It is now the permissible will of God, but the consequences remain.

If you are widowed, Paul tells us that you are free to remarry only if you remarry a Christian. It is never the perfect will of God for a Christian to marry a non-Christian.

2- Dating is basically a means to an end. The end is marriage. By dating, I mean one male and one female agreeing together to accompany each other for a prescribed period of time for fellowship. Dating can best be understood in the light of God's courting the Church.

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How does God court the Church?

1- His goal in courting the Church is not to tease us. His goal is to bring us to Himself to take a bride for Himself. That is His goal.

2- He initiates the relationship. You have not chosen Me, He said, but I have chosen you.

3- Create a permanent relationship. He said,

I will never leave you nor forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5)

4- If someone rejects the Father God, then Jesus will reject them also. This does not mean that you will marry each person that you date. It does mean that your standards for dating will ultimately be your standards for marriage.

The position that I am taking here is based upon a study of all of the principles that we have talked about. It has also been confirmed by personal experience through counseling again and again and again with teenagers, with young married couples and with parents who are both perplexed and pleased. The message is very clear. There are certain Scriptural principles that when obeyed result in unbelievable blessings. When these principles are compromised, unbelievable problems result. The pattern does not deviate.

Parents, whether you like it or not, it is your responsibility to control who your children date. Young people, it is their responsibility to be involved, and it is your responsibility to submit to their leadership. Here are nine questions parents ought to ask about the people your children are interested in dating.

Question 1- Is this person a Christian? Has this person personally received Jesus Christ? What fellowship does light have with darkness? Either they are or they are not a Christian. If they are not, there is no basis for a date.

Question 2- Is this person growing spiritually? In II Corinthians 3:18 we read,

...in ever-increasing splendor from one degree of glory to another. (II Corinthians 3:18)

This is the purpose of the Christian life. If this date is not a growing Christian, then they have nothing to offer your child. Sometimes there are as many dangers in dating a carnal Christian, or one who is not in the Scriptures and not growing, as there

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are in dating a non-Christian. Do they have common spiritual objectives, even as Christians? Can you discern an impure spirit?

Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

(Matthew 5:8)

This is what the Scripture says, but it also tells us in I John that the more we see Christ, the more like Him we become. Look at the way the date dresses. Listen to the conversations that take place with this person. Look at the habits of the date and pay close attention to whether or not you discern an impure spirit. Is the boy more mature than the girl is? We see in Ephesians 5 that it is the man's role in marriage to lead the wife spiritually. Dating is to prepare for marriage. Does the date show both you and your child the proper respect? I can just see a lot of you scratching names of dates off of your list.

Children obey your parents that it may be well with you,  
that you may prosper in the land and that you may have  
success.

(Ephesians 6:1-3 paraphrased)

Does your date show proper respect to you and to his own family? Will a young man guard his date against evil influences? What are the date's tastes in music and entertainment? Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The date may talk spiritual, but what are they drawn to?

Question 3- Can you visualize your teenager's date as a future son-in-law or daughter-in-law? This is a tough one.

How do you interview a perspective date? Suppose your daughter, Greta Goodshoes, wants to go out with Bobby Bashful. She tells Bobby that he must meet her father. He says, "What?" She replies, "You need to meet my father, Gerry Goodshoes." Let's suppose that Bobby does show up to meet Greta's dad. These are the things Gerry needs to do.

1- Establish your purpose to get better acquainted. Gerry could say, "Bobby, we wanted you to come over before you went out with Greta so that we could get to know you."

2- Establish your authority. Gerry could say, "Bobby, we wanted to get better acquainted because our daughter is very special to us as you must be to your parents. Therefore, we assume the responsibility of guiding her in establishing certain relationships."

3- Establish God's authority. Gerry could say, "Bobby,

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because of the importance God puts on right dating relationships, we wanted to get to know you.”

4- Establish basic information. You need to find out where he lives, how many brothers and sisters he may have. The objective here is to put him at ease as much as possible. Ask him how much he enjoys school. You can learn a lot from this question.

5- Lead up to establishing his spiritual condition. Gerry could say, “Bobby, how did God first become real in your life?” He could say, “I’ve always gone to church.” Gerry could reply, “How did God first become real in your life.” He may say, “My parents are Christians.” Gerry could reply, “That’s great, mine are too. But how did God first become real in your own personal life?” If you can’t get a clear answer, try to discern with other probing questions to ascertain if he realizes the one thing that is most important in his life. Maybe God brought him into your home and into your life so that you can introduce him to the One real friend he needs for all eternity.

There are some other questions that you can ask him after you revive him. You could ask, “What steps are you taking in your life to get to know God better?” A young man who is not in the Word is really not a strong candidate. You could ask, “Do you have some ideas that could help my daughter grow as a Christian?” Unless he is a real loser, let them go out once. He has shown some courage to come to your home for the first date to be interviewed. Even then, establish your rules concerning movies, drinking, curfews or any other subjects you deem necessary.

Daughters, you should be proud if your father does this for you for at least three reasons:

1- It expresses love. If your parents are willing to face the music, listen to all of your complaining and handle their own bashful spirit to do this, it means they love you very much.

2- It relieves you from the pressure of responsibility in a subjective area where your emotions often take over. So often in dating relationships, when the heart goes out, the mind goes on vacation.

3- It confirms God’s principles of protection under authority.

The question is often asked, “What do I do if my parents are not Christians?”

1- A parental-child relationship is not a yoking relationship.

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You are under their control, so God is over them. He is responsible for what they do. You are only responsible to submit to their leadership. Children obey your parents even if they are unjust. This is the situation you must remember. They are yours by divine design. The Scripture tells us that God knit you together in your mother's womb. He chose your mother. He selected you. He knit you together in her womb. They are an important part of your life message.

2- Your witness may well be submission to them. I Peter 2 and 3 teach us, as with the wife to the husband, sometimes the strongest testimony you give is the graciousness with which you respond.

3- Never condescend. Let each esteem others as better than themselves. Don't come on as Johnny Spiritual.

4- Don't use spiritual language. This is what Paul meant when he said in I Corinthians 9:19-23, "I am a Jew to the Jews and a Greek to the Greek." (paraphrased)

This didn't mean that he compromised his convictions, but he re-shaped his communication.

5- Don't go waving all of your new spiritual lingo to your parents and then wonder why they don't have confidence in your submission.

6- Don't argue theology, elevate the Lord Jesus Christ. The natural man can't receive the things of the Spirit. Your responsibility is to do what Jesus said to do, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to Myself." Remember that your parents desire two things from you, love and respect. You can give them both.

7- Remember that you are God's reward to your parents. You may think, "Wow, they got a loser." No, they didn't. The Scripture says,

Children are a heritage of the Lord, and they are His reward.  
(Psalm 127:3 paraphrased)

Your parents will view God's favor to their life through your response to them. If necessary, be willing to have others verbalize the message while you live your life. Your prayers may well be the key to their salvation.

Parents and young people need to pay close attention because this may be the most important facet of this lesson. Establish the principle of prayer in dating relationships. I believe that every parent and child ought to pray together before their children go

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on a date. The parents need to pray the whole time they are gone. How many of you young people pray on every date?

When you go out on a date, at the beginning of each date, make it a practice to begin in prayer. Give the date and your relationship to the Lord. It is not up to the girl to suggest to the boy that they ought to pray, it is up to the dad to tell the boy or the boy to suggest the prayer time. When temptation comes, and you are tempted to violate a curfew or go where you should not go, the Scripture says that there is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. The Scripture also tells us that we must not test God. You need to stop at this point and ask God to give you the victory and the vision and discernment to know what to do.

The same thing is true when decisions about your relationship come. Should you continue to see each other? You need to seek your parents' counsel. You need to pray with each other.

At the end of each date you can pray, "Lord, bless what we did, bless where we went and bless what we thought." You may say, "I'm not sure if God can bless where we went and what we thought." That is the purpose of praying. In other words, prayer ought to have an important part in your dating relationships.

Here are some additional and important questions to ask.

Is a pre-marital, physical relationship ever acceptable to God?

Answer: never. We spent a whole lesson on just this topic a few weeks ago in this class. The male-female relationship is a picture of God's relationship to the church. The physical relationship without the commitment of marriage says that you can have intimacy with God without the commitment of a relationship to Jesus Christ. This is a lie.

Is a homosexual relationship ever acceptable to God? Answer: never.

Is marriage designed to be a permanent relationship? Answer: yes. As permanent as salvation was designed to be eternal, so is marriage. It is a picture of the eternal security of marriage. The oneness, the completeness, the finished result of our relationship with Christ is mirrored in marriage.

When is a child old enough to date? When they are old enough to understand marriage from God's perspective, they are old enough to date. Another aspect is when he or she has



demonstrated faithfulness in tested areas of responsibility. You may say, "My little girl may be 20 before she is able to date." Whatever it takes.

Should dating ever become the dominant theme in a Christian's life? Answer: no. The dominant theme in a Christian's life should be the will of God as we see in Matthew 6:33. Dating is a means to an end in finding the will of God in one area of a Christian experience. If that is all you think about, you may be trying to satisfy an insecure spirit in the wrong way. My suggestion is to stop dating altogether until you get it all together with the Lord.

Is it necessary to date many and to date often to find God's choice for your life? Answer: no. If it is, all the great marriages of Scripture missed the mark. Some of the strongest marriages I have encountered have been between two Christians who dated little, who were strong in the Lord and waited for God's choice to come. Some of the worst marriages I have seen have been the most popular kids in town with too many pressures and too much experience and too much focus on themselves in getting rather than giving. Remember that the least handled gems become the most polished jewels.

I think that it is important to remember that parents are a big part of the problem. The parents may be saying, "Aren't you going out? Don't you have a date?" We put our children in second-class citizenship if they don't have an active dating life. We seem to ask with the inference that if they don't date often there is something wrong with them. The reverse might be true. If they don't date often, maybe something is right. It depends on the individual.

So often, peer pressure causes a girl to go with a guy she doesn't like, to a place she doesn't want to go, to do things she doesn't want to do, so that she can tell her friends and family what a good time she had. The dating life a person has is a very short part of the total existence of his life. It is almost an infinitesimal part when you look at it in the light of eternity.

I would like to come to some conclusions. A parent's responsibility regarding their children's dating is to know and to approve who they date, where they go, who they go with, what they do, when they come home and how often they date. The child's responsibility is to agree with their parents.

I would like to caution the young people as we close that the crossroads between conviction and compromise are the

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teen years. This is when so often as you begin to be given independence, and you begin to relate that the real temptation and compromise begins and is readily available. You have two choices. You can take the road of establishing convictions, and you will end up knowing Christ in all of His fullness. You could get off on the access road of compromise and find yourself taking all sorts of detours. You will find yourself having wrong standards of friendships, wrong dating relationships, and moral impurity ultimately ending up in wrong marriages.

Parents, your children need a plan, a road map. They need stop signs. They need green lights. The young people see a lot of flashing lights and glitter and apparent excitement down the detour, but it is always a dead end.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. (Proverbs 16:25 NKJV)

These are the issues and these are the principles.

1- As parents, we are accountable to lead our children in the development of right relationships.

2- Young people are accountable to submit to God's leading through their parents.

3- As a church, we are accountable and responsible to pray for our young people. We need to encourage our young people and expect of them to see life and to live life from God's perspective.

I want to challenge the young people to consider that you may need to go home today and get alone with God. Take a piece of paper and a pencil to write a letter to God about your friendships, your dating relationships, and God's will for marriage as you see it. Once and for all, date it, sign it and tell God that no matter the cost, you are going to follow His convictions because you know the consequences. You know that He has a plan for your life that is richer and better than man could ever conceive of. After you sign it, put it in a special place so that you can look at it again when the storms of life begin to test you.

I would encourage you to approach your parents in humility and ask their forgiveness for any rebellious spirit where relationships are concerned. Place yourself by an act of your choosing, more perfectly under their direction. Seek your parent's wisdom and abide by it where people are concerned, where places are concerned, where practices are concerned and

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where pressures are concerned. Ask them to help you to begin a character quality study on the things that you need in your life to keep you rightly related in these areas.

Parents, some of us need to go home today and get together with our children to talk this out. Maybe we have abdicated our responsibility. We need to ask their forgiveness and in love start all over. We need to talk out the ground rules and discuss the reasons behind them. Next, pray together that God will work new miracles in our homes.

As devastatingly clear as the issues are, there are some underlying spiritual issues that are even clearer that will be discussed in the next lesson. I do believe that our goals are clear. God has called us to avoid wrong friendships, to establish godly dating patterns and to prepare for a godly marriage so that we might fulfill our life's message, create our life's ministry and bring glory to God in every phase of our lives. When it gets right down to it, how can two walk together, except they be agreed? This is God's truth concerning dating and marriage.

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