

Dating

Serious Relationship Checklist:

Here are some questions to help you evaluate if you and your dating partner are ready to move on to the next level of a serious relationship headed towards marriage.

-Are you content in your relationship with Jesus, or are you going deeper in your dating relationship to try to fill up something that is missing?

-Are you solid and mature in your relationship with Jesus so that you can love someone else unselfishly, with his/her best interests at heart?

-What is your motivation for a serious relationship? Are you motivated primarily to have your needs and wants satisfied? Is your boyfriend/girlfriend motivated primarily to have his/her needs and wants satisfied? Or are you motivated by common goals and by fulfilling God's purposes together?)

-Have you set physical and emotional boundaries that maintain purity, written them down, and are you consistently abiding by them? Is your boyfriend/girlfriend helping you to keep them?

-What do your parents, church leaders, and friends say about your readiness for a serious relationship with this person? Are you listening to their hesitations, if any?

-Do you have the time and energy right now that a serious relationship will require? What will you have to spend less time focusing on in order to devote your time to the relationship?

-Can you accept this person the way he/she is right now? Or are there areas in the person's life that you wish you could change? If so, what are those issues? Could you contentedly live with this person the rest of your life if these things never change?

-Do you enjoy his/her friends? Do you appreciate the influence that these friends have on him/her?

-How does he/she treat her parents? How do you treat yours? If someone treats his/her parents with respect and dignity even when he/she doesn't agree with them, it is a good indication that he/she will treat you that way in a marriage. The converse is also true.

-Does this person handle frustration and anger in healthy ways? Do you? When the two of you disagree, how do you resolve it?

-Would you like to become more like this person? Spiritually? In attitude? In character and personal habits? In the way he/she is with people? You will tend to become more like the person you date seriously, and especially the person you marry.

And if you feel called to ministry/the mission field:

-Have you discussed your calling with him/her? What was their reaction? Realize that if your mate is not also called, they will not support your calling, and you will have to choose whom you will listen to - your spouse, or God.

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Six Steps to Great Dating

Many of the troubles, concerns, and problems found in dating relationships can be avoided by following these steps:

1. Date Only Committed Christians

-You will marry *someone* that you date! Why date anyone that you wouldn't consider marrying?

-2 Corinthians 6:14 - "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers" - can be taken even further - *do not be with anyone who isn't as committed to Christ or to ministry as you are.*

-the key to finding someone who could be right for you is to build opposite-sex friendships with other committed Christians who have a vision and a passion for following Christ.

2. Plan Your Dates in Advance

-beware of falling into the American dating trap - acting married before you are married. (i.e. spending all of your free time together, mostly alone.)

-be creative and plan actual dates. When they are over, each of you should go home!

3. Save Yourself for Marriage

-Heb 13:4 "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."

-the degree to which a couple is sexually intimate before marriage is generally in proportion to the degree to which they lack sexual satisfaction after marriage.

4. Work on Communication

-spend much less time kissing and more time talking! Learn how to ask good questions, how to share facts and feelings, and how to listen.

-looks fade and gravity takes its toll, but a relationship built on a deep bond of friendship will outlast a relationship built on temporal physical attraction.

5. Throw out Expectations

- beware of one person or the other always trying to "define" the relationship. This leads to and fosters jealousy and possessiveness.

-refuse to allow others around you and/or society as a whole to pressure you into a dating pattern or relationship that you are uncomfortable with - take your time and don't force things.

6. Focus on Becoming the Right Person

-rather than focusing on finding the right person, focus on becoming the right person.

-Matt 6:33-34

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."