

## Intro

-“Dating” is a loaded term. What is a biblical perspective on spouse choosing?

### What is dating about?

1) Dating/the choosing process is an opportunity to bless someone through godliness.

*Dating has not failed when you choose not to get married. Dating fails when you do it sinfully and selfishly rather than as an expression of godly zeal for the immediate and long term good of the person you are dating.*

2) Dating is about choosing as Christ chose his bride

-Christ did not choose his bride because of a list of wonderful qualities (Deut 7:6–9). He delights in her because he chooses to. We are precious to him (Heb 12:2–3; Psalm 87; 1 Pet 2:9–10).

-Dating is not a test drive. It’s more like a college application process.

-NO: try out the features, see if you like it.

-YES: Get information. Go visit. Soul searching.

-3 Suggestions

-Don’t rush into dating. Be friends in groups. Date people you know reasonably well.

-Don’t date forever. Get engaged. Be intentional.

-Don’t date without the title. Call it what it is, or do the hard work of pulling back.

3) Dating is about mutual ministry and mutual delight that reflects the Trinity

-Mutual ministry and enjoyment is what the Trinity IS and what the Trinity DOES!

### Mutual ministry

1) You each need to point each other to Christ

-Is your relationship one where Christ is a natural topic of conversation?

-Ladies, don’t settle here! If he can’t minister to you, why are you pursuing this?

2) Look at yourself: Dating first and foremost asks if you are ready to marry. Focus on your character.

a) Are you ready to date *anyone at all*?

-Are you growing in the Lord? Any areas you aren't addressing? Do you solve problems biblically? Gift of singleness? Are you at the right stage of life, financial stability, etc.?

b) Are you ready to date *this person in particular*?

Are you well equipped to:

-Minister to *this person's* particular weaknesses?

-Delight in *this person's* particular strengths?

3) Physical purity. The 6 best admonitions I know

-Principle: Are you as hungry for the person's spiritual growth as you are for physical intimacy?

1) If you're asking, "How far is too far?" then you're already too far.

2) Avoid arousal

3) Treat him/her like a sibling/grandparent

4) He/she will be someone's spouse. How do you want your wife/husband treated?

5) Guys: lead the parade.

6) Boundary crossings break trust. Crossing boundaries is always selfish.

## Mutual delight

1) Be Christ to each other

-Is this person experiencing Christ through the way I treat him or her?

-Am I enjoying this person expressing the love of Christ to me?

2) Nurture beauty through delight

-Delight not only responds to beauty but also nurtures it.

3) 5 ways to evaluate your delighting:

1) Invite him/her into your regular life. Don't drop your regular life to make the person your life.

2) Minister together.

3) How does the person treat his/her family?

4) Are you walking gladly in the same direction?

5) Have the hard conversations.

### **Appendix: Resources for Further Study**

#### *Articles*

“Seven Habits of Highly Defective Dating” by Joshua Harris in the *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, Vol. 16:2.

#### *Audio*

*Personal Relationships* by Bill Smith, available at CCEF.org

#### *Books*

*I Kissed Dating Goodbye* by Joshua Harris.

*Sex, Dating and Relationships: A Fresh Approach* by Gerald Heistand and Jay Thomas.

#### *Mini-Books*

*Pre-Engagement: Five Questions to Ask Yourself* by David Powlison and John Yenchko.