

# Youth to pray: Dating, in or out?

Dating is important to all young people. It is a matter of urgency to us that we find the person we would like to get married to. It is still the deepest need of even those who just want to be in a relationship, want to 'enjoy' life and create the impression that they don't want to get married, to have a husband/wife for life, someone they can trust and who will be true to them.

## How should I as a young person think and pray about this?

- It is your privilege and responsibility to pray for your future husband/wife. Ask the Lord to show you the right person. Don't lose heart if he or she doesn't make an appearance within the first week. Carry on praying about it regularly. Over and above giving your heart to the Lord, your choice of a husband/wife is most likely the most important decision in your life.
- Ask your parents to pray for you about this matter as well. It is also important to listen to your parents. *Never* go out with someone or get married against your parents' wishes. If you differ on this matter, talk to them, ask why they are against it and pray until you and your parents have peace about who this person should be.
- Choose not to go steady with someone before you know this is your husband/wife. This is a choice one does not make easily. Do not be in a hurry. Many young people say, "But how will I know if I don't have a steady relationship with someone and make sure?" This is not the way to go. God will show you. You don't have to try to find out for yourself. God alone knows the hearts of people and He knows who the right person for you is.
- It is fine to have friendships. But keep these friendships at a healthy level. Stay in a group. Make sure that as far as possible, you are always in the company of more than just one person of the opposite sex. Don't form intimate relationships and start holding hands, kissing and going further before you know who your husband/wife for life is. Remember, if you have an intimate relationship with someone and that person might not become your husband/wife, you are in a relationship with another person's husband/wife!
- When you feel that you have found your husband/wife, do things together and get to know one another, but do this within the protective context of a circle of friends. When there are enough indications that this person might be your husband/wife, you can spend limited periods of time together, but within all the perimeters of a pure and clean relationship.
- When such a relationship develops, go to mentors who can help you. Allow these persons to ask you difficult questions: Are you mature enough for a relationship? Can they tell by what they see that you are suited to one another or do they see warning signs? Are you drawn to this person because of his or her appearance or is it about this person's character and that you and he or she will be able to have a deep relationship?

- Make sure your husband/wife is a Christian. Do you understand the consequences that this relationship is for life? Do your parents approve of the relationship? Are you satisfied that God approves of it and that it is His will, or are you trying to twist His arm so that He will give His permission? Search your heart prayerfully.
- Young people often confuse love with emotions and hormones. A person's sexual urge is particularly strong at a young age and it is easy to confuse these desires in your body with love. Make a determined decision not to become involved in an intimate relationship before you are married. I don't know of anybody who has regretted this, but there are literally hundreds of millions who regret not having waited.
- You always have a choice how you wish to handle this situation. It is so important that you make the right choice about how you will handle it. Your choice must always be in line with God's will, purity, respect for your own body and the body of the other person and for the person herself or himself. Know that your choice, whichever way it goes, has consequences. There is no middle-of-the-road here. Make a radical choice about this matter, no matter how difficult it is, or if your friends find it ridiculous. Don't become known as a cheap girl. Don't be a guy who destroys the lives of young girls, who breaks their hearts and even robs them of their virginity. Choose for sex within marriage. Sex outside the marriage bed is a sin in the eyes of God.
- Never make the mistake of thinking it's all right to marry an unsaved man or woman and once this person is married to you, you can lead him to the Lord. It hardly ever works out this way.
- Love is not the only condition for marriage. The condition is the will of God. If you marry for love you might think the marriage can break up if there is no love. In the eyes of the Lord marriage is a permanent institution. For a Christian, marriage lasts a lifetime, until one of you dies. God's intention with marriage is to bring forth a spiritual offspring (**Mal.3:15**). Most people in western culture get married because they love each other and do not understand that it is also God's intent that a spiritual offspring will be brought forth. Ask the Lord what this means and make sure the man/woman you marry, wishes to pursue and practice it as you do.