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MARRIAGE & FAMILY

VOLUME 2



SINGLE *AND* SEARCHING...

DATING, COURTSHIP & SINGLEHOOD

TOPIC SERIES

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MARRIAGE
&
FAMILY

VOLUME TWO

SINGLE AND
SEARCHING

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MARRIAGE & FAMILY – Volume 2

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INTRODUCTION

When a person is single it is important to understand such issues as the difference between love and infatuation.

It is also important to understand the difference between dating and courtship.

Volume Two of this TOPIC SERIES focuses on the single person and briefly equips and prepares a single person pertaining to what he/she needs to know before entering marriage.

The Difference Between Love & Infatuation

Have you ever been in a relationship where you thought you loved someone and you thought you were going to spend your whole life together, but only to be heartbroken?

Have you ever been in a relationship where you thought you married a perfect loving person but only to discover that your loving relationship was not as “perfect” as you think? The person you once loved has become the person you hate or desire to break-up with.

It’s amazing that one of the most misunderstood words when it comes to the subject of relationships is the word “love”.

Many people want to be loved and many people want to be in love. However, it seems as if very few people understand the true meaning of love. Furthermore, few people are able to differentiate between love and infatuation.

What is Infatuation?

Infatuation is defined as *an intense but short-lived passion or admiration for someone or something*.

- Therefore infatuation doesn’t last long; it happens instantly and quickly.

- Infatuation is driven and fueled by lust; it is all about sex pleasure and physical affections
- Infatuation believes that your partner or the person you desire is “perfect”; it makes you believe that you are in love with a someone who can do no wrong when realistically none of us are perfect
- Infatuation makes you feel like you know everything about your partner but yet you have known your partner for a short time and most certainly may know very little about him.
- Infatuation is interested in self-gratification or self-satisfaction; your passions are not about what you can give or contribute to the relationship – but your passions are about what you can get from the relationship
- Infatuation can consist of pure intense feelings and very little volitional or rational thought. Therefore decisions are made purely out of feelings and emotions rather than rational reasoning.
- Infatuation is therefore like a roller-coaster; One minute the relationship is great and the next minute the relationship is bad and then later its great again
- Infatuation makes one overly jealous and over protective; it desires control but also fears loss
- Infatuation cannot be satisfied; it usually wants more and if it does not get what it wants, it will

look elsewhere which results in broken relationships.

What is Love?

Love is exactly the opposite of infatuation. Love is more than just feelings and emotions – but love is also about actions and principles.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 says the following about the subject of love:

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

The truth is that all kinds of relationships will face tests and trials. There is no loving relationship that is immune to challenges and problems. The thing that binds relationships together is true love.

Any relationship that is bound by infatuation alone will never last.

However, love is what binds people together especially through trials and challenges in life. True love remains faithful through all situations. True love sees the flaws of others but still loves them regardless.

True love will always help to ensure that you try to do the right thing within your relationship. True love gives;

it is not self-centred. It respects others and does not look for its own personal gain but it focuses on others.

Therefore understanding the difference between love and infatuation is one of the most important things in any relationship.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. What problems and issues can one experience in a relationship when a couple does not understand the difference between love and infatuation?
2. Would there be a reduction in the divorce rate if people understood the difference between love and infatuation? Why or why not?
3. Why is it important in life for people to not just rely or live by feelings alone?

What Does The Bible Say About Dating & Courtship?

The words “dating” or “courtship” are not found in the Bible. However, practically if any person desires to seek a meaningful and loving relationship with the opposite sex, then a form of dating or courtship is necessary. The decision to choose a spouse cannot be made instantly or irrationally. Choosing a future husband or future wife is one of the most important life decisions that anyone can ever make.

Dating is meant to seek out someone who you think could be a potential spouse. It is an activity of discovering each other’s personalities and background and there is no commitment to marriage.

The person you are dating might be the right person or he/she might actually be the wrong person for you. However, the aim of dating is to find out whether the person you like could become more than just a friend, but potentially be the one whom you could spend the rest of your life with.

Courtship however is more serious and reflects more commitment than dating. Courtship is meant to show the one you love that he/she is your true love and you have the genuine intention to marry. Courtship reveals that you have found the one whom you want to spend the

rest of your life with and you are making practical life steps to get married to that person in the future.

Dating & Courtship Must Be Biblical

It is important to understand that the way the world views dating and courtship is totally different from how Christians should view dating or courtship.

Romans 12:2 says that we should not be conformed to the standards or patterns of this world.

Therefore the world may believe in ungodly principles such as premarital sex or adultery. The world may also believe in dating or courting more than one person at the same time.

However, the Christian / Biblical principles regarding dating or courtship are opposite to the standards of the world.

Therefore during courtship or dating, it is important that a couple abstain from sex until they are married. There are many verses in the Bible that declare sex before marriage to be a sin. For example, **Galatians 5:19**, **Ephesians 5:3**, **Mark 7:21** and **Colossians 3:5**.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 says: *For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;*

Therefore sex was created by God in order to be enjoyed

only within the confines of marriage and Christians are not to follow the path of the world.

One should date or court a person who is genuinely single and not married. It is adultery for a married person to be in a “courtship” or “dating” relationship with a person who is not his/her spouse (**Deuteronomy 5:18**).

God says that we should not covet or desire another man’s spouse (**Deuteronomy 5:21**).

Therefore courtship and dating must be among two people who are genuinely single.

A Christian must date or court another Christian believer. There is a principle reflected within the scriptures that Christians should avoid getting married to people who are unbelievers in order to avoid being corrupted or deceived by a partner who does not believe in the Christian faith.

2 Corinthians 6:14 says: *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

1 Corinthians 15:33 says “*Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character’.*”

Therefore when a Christian dates or courts a non-Christian, this could eventually lead to future problems within the relationship or marriage due to a difference of values and beliefs.

Involve God Regarding Dating & Courtship

Biblical dating and courtship requires godly wisdom. It is important to always be prayerful and involve God in every relationship decision that you make. Without God it can be impossible to make the right decisions regarding specifically who you should or should not marry.

Proverbs 16:1 says *“To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the reply of the tongue”*.

Proverbs 16:3 says *“Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed”*.

Therefore God is able to choose the right person for you to marry but it is important that we trust Him and involve Him in all of our plans and decision making. Furthermore, our commitment to loving God is very crucial and important in our life. We must love God more than we love others (**Matthew 10:37**).

When we love God above others, then we will learn to love others with the love of God and we will live our life according to God’s principles and values. Jesus said that if we love Him, then we will obey His commandments (**John 14:15**).

Therefore courtship and dating must be Biblical because we are motivated by the love of God.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. What criteria would you use to select the right marriage partner?
2. How would you involve God in your search and selection of a future spouse?
3. What safeguards would you apply to ensure that your dating relationship with your partner is Biblical?

Should A Christian Date Or Marry A Non-Christian?

Should a Christian date or marry a non-Christian?

2 Corinthians 6:14 says: *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

2 Corinthians 6:14 gives an important principle about what all Christians should heed when it comes to having any type of binding partnership with a non-Christian. Dating and marriage is a binding partnership that involves intimate feelings, emotions, thoughts and physical bonding. Marriage especially is not just a physical contract but it is a spiritual covenant which God ordained.

Therefore it's important to make the correct Biblical choices when it comes to the issue of dating and marriage.

1 Corinthians 15:33 says *"Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character'".*

According to **1 Corinthians 15:33** it is a deception to believe that a Christian can be in a binding relationship with an unbeliever and not be affected.

When a Christian dates or marries an unbeliever the results might likely become negative.

When a Christian has an intimate relationship with an unbeliever, this can lead to a hindrance in the Christian's spiritual growth.

For example, if you're dating a non-Christian, the temptation to have premarital sex may become stronger than if you were dating a Christian believer who has Biblical values about sex.

Therefore when a Christian dates or marries a non-Christian there can be cultural and spiritual friction and contrasts in the relationship which could eventually lead to detrimental problems.

When 2 people who have directly opposite value systems and beliefs get married or start dating, the relationship will have problems and issues that are based on those opposing value systems.

One of the main objectives of marriage is that both husband and wife cleave to each other.

Ephesians 5:31 says *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."*

The only way for a husband and wife to cleave or be united is if their core values and beliefs are similar. Therefore if a Christian is dating an atheist or a Buddhist then they will both have opposing value systems that can affect various areas of the relationship.

What are the Benefits if a Christian Dates or Marries another Christian?

1. You share the same value systems and you believe in the same God.
 2. A married couple where both spouses are Christians can easily cleave and bond
 3. It is easier to sharpen each other's spirits. Therefore you can encourage and pray for each other and grow spiritually together
 4. You are likely to fight less than if you were dating an unbeliever. You can become united in mind and spirit when attempting to deal with life challenges together.
 5. As Christians you are able to put God at the centre of your relationship and marriage. A marriage with God at the centre will always succeed even in the face of challenges.
- It's therefore wise and beneficial for a Christian to date or marry another Christian.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. Outline the spiritual, social and marital problems that can occur when a Christian dates or marries a non-christian.
2. What qualities should one look for in a future spouse?

3. What examples do we have in the Bible where a believer or Jew married someone who worshipped other gods? What were the consequences?

6 Men That Single Women Should Avoid

Are you dating? Are you considering marriage? Choosing a spouse is the third most important decision you will ever make. The first most important decision in your life is becoming a born again Christian and the second is choosing the right church.

Therefore if you're single and if you're looking for the right person to live with for the rest of your life, what warning signs should you look for before you consider a serious relationship with a man?

Below are a 6 types of men that single women should avoid

(1) An Unbeliever

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 – *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?*

The Bible is clear that in the context of binding relationships such as marriage, a Christian does not have anything in common with a non-Christian or unbeliever. A marriage can last when both partners have God involved in their individual lives and are willing to involve God to be at the centre of their

marriage.

Therefore it's important for single women to pray to God to discover a Christian man who genuinely loves the Lord.

(2) A Man Who Dislikes Children

There are millions of single mothers around the world who raise their children alone because many men have abandoned the responsibility of fatherhood. Why do men abandon fatherhood? Most of them are ill-equipped, lack responsibility and dislike children. A man who loves children will not abandon the kids whom he has brought into the world irrespective of the sexual choices he has made.

Proverbs 13:22 – *A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, But the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.*

It's important for a single woman to find out if her man is somebody who genuinely loves children and will not dump her the moment she becomes pregnant.

(3) A Violent & Abusive Man

If a man is abusive and violent before you get married – it's most likely that such a man will continue this abuse in the marriage. Single women should avoid getting involved with men who are violent and abusive. Instead they should seek men who will nourish and cherish them.

Ephesians 5:28-29 – *So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.*

(4) A Man Without A Plan

A woman generally looks for security within a man. When a man has no direction or purpose in his life it could be a problem in the long run. God's principle in a marriage is that the husband is to lead the home and if a husband has no vision or plan, he will fail to lead his family.

Ephesians 5:23 – *For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.*

(5) An Unfaithful Man

Unfaithfulness in a relationship will lead to anger, pain, mistrust and ultimately a broken relationship. Unfaithfulness is always a warning sign that a woman should heed before she gets married as adultery is the cause of many broken marriages around the world.

Hebrews 13:4 – *Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*

Fornication is when an unmarried person is sexually active. Adultery is when a married person is sexually active with another person who is not his spouse.

God does not agree with fornication and adultery because these practices destroy the faithfulness of a person and whilst it may appear pleasurable to engage in sex outside of marriage, the effects are negative and damaging to long term relationships.

(6) A Man Who Abuses Substances

Constant or addictive abuse of drugs and alcohol can come many relationship issues such as: Physical abuse, financial issues, communication breakdown; sexual & infidelity issues and also spiritual issues. Therefore a man who is addicted to drugs or alcohol will end up causing these kind of issues in a relationship.

Ephesians 5:18 – *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,*

The best man that single women can find, is a godly man who loves God and has genuine Christian values. Are you looking for the right husband? Pray and seek the mind of God and search His word regarding the qualities of a godly person.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. What are the consequences of dating a person who has a reputation for being unfaithful?

2. What are your personal indicators or relationship warning signs that you might be dating the wrong person?
3. What is the reason why there is a high rate of single mothers in the world today?

Is Abstinence Before Marriage Realistic? 7 Ways To Abstain

Is abstinence before marriage a realistic choice in our modern culture? Should our modern culture continue to encourage premarital sex or protected sex instead of abstinence? What practical steps can a person take to successfully abstain until marriage?

Various studies reflect that only 29 percent of people in the United States consider the act of having sex before marriage as being morally wrong, while 97 percent of people in a country like Indonesia believe that premarital sex is unacceptable. In Europe, the majority of Europeans believe that premarital sex is acceptable. The same studies also says that in religions such as Catholicism and Islam, having sex before marriage is morally unacceptable. In African countries, there are also strong cultural beliefs that sex before marriage is morally wrong.

Therefore, people's perception of abstinence and premarital sex depends on 3 major factors which are – geographical location, one's culture and one's religious beliefs.

However, what does the Bible say about abstinence? Is abstinence a realistic option especially in the 21st century culture? What practical steps can a person take to ensure

that he/she successfully abstains from sex until he/she gets married?

There are many verses in the Bible that declare sex before marriage to be a sin.

For example, **1 Thessalonians 4:3, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 5:3, Mark 7:21 and Colossians 3:5.**

Therefore sex was created by God in order to be enjoyed only within the confines of marriage.

Is abstinence realistic? Yes it is. A spiritual understanding of sex and spiritual conviction plays a big role in helping one to practically abstain.

So what are the practical steps that you can take to abstain from sex before marriage?

1. Don't put yourself in situations where you might be tempted to compromise your sexual purity or values.
2. Have boundaries and uphold the boundaries. Date a person who has the same beliefs about abstinence as you do. If both of you have the same convictions about waiting before marriage then you are likely to be successful.
3. Avoid material such as pornography or any entertainment which have heavy messages on promoting premarital sex. Such material is bound to progressively lead you into temptation by polluting your mind.

4. Make yourself accountable to someone or to people you can trust and who uphold the same values that you have about abstaining until marriage.
5. Always remember that God's word is the ultimate authority. Abstaining from sex until marriage is God's will and through obedience, we are expressing Christ's nature and character in our life.
6. Always remember that God designed sex to be enjoyed – but only within the confines of marriage. Therefore you and your partner will reap the long-term benefits of obeying God's word in this area.
7. Always involve God when it comes to your feelings, temptations and relationship. Never remove God from the equation in your relationship. Ask Him to always give you the strength to abstain and keep you from being tempted into premarital sex.

Abstinence prevents some of the following problems

1. It prevents abortions or unwanted pregnancies
2. It prevents sexually transmitted infections
3. It prevents teenage pregnancies
4. It prevents mistrust caused by previous sexual relationships
5. It prevents the chance of children who grow up with

single mothers

6. It may even prevent you from marrying the wrong person

Have You Already Had Premarital Sex?

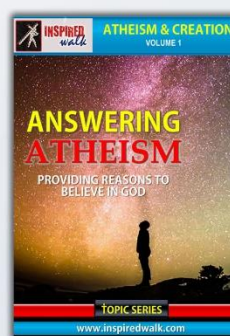
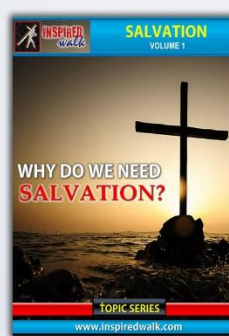
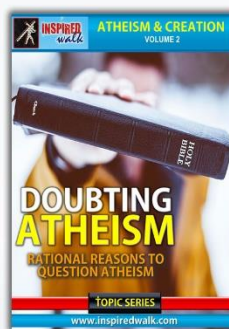
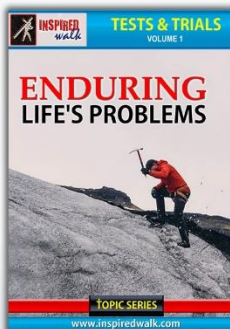
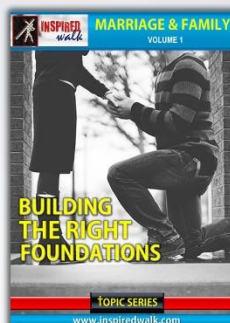
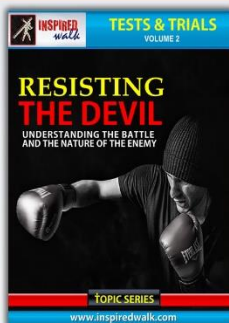
If you already had sex before marriage, the Bible says that there is God's forgiveness which is always available. If we confess our sins, God is just and faithful to forgive us of every sin – including sex before marriage (**1 John 1:9**).

Therefore, even if a person has had premarital sex, that person still has an opportunity to repent and start focusing on obeying the word of God in that area.

LIFE QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the reasons why people engage in premarital sex?
2. How has the culture of premarital sex generally corrupted relationships, families and society?
3. Is abstinence a realistic solution? Why or why not?

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April 23



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December 5

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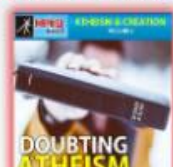
Bible Verse of the Day

Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!
Psalm 25:6-7

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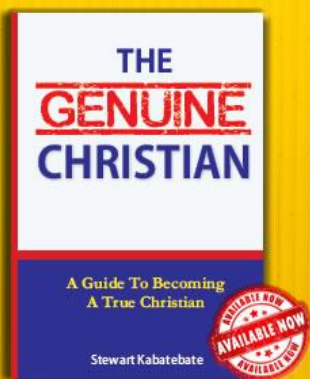


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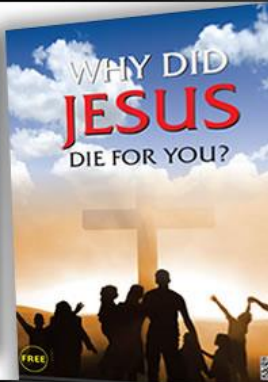
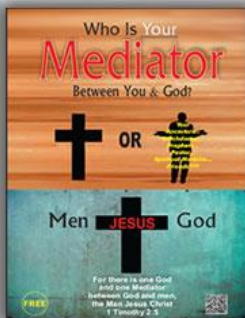
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