

DO'S AND DON'TS OF DATING
Carlton H. Oler, Ph.D., HSP, MAC, BCPC
Licensed Psychologist (PSY 20356)

Don'ts of Dating

1. Don't come on too strong. Sometimes out of desperation to have a girlfriend or boyfriend, or to get married, an individual may come on so strong in what she or he says or does while dating that the person they're dating is repulsed (pushed away) by her or him. The other individual may feel like you're not looking to have a relationship with her or him, but just desperate to have a relationship with anybody. Desperation for a relationship often stems from one trying to meet dire needs (e.g., loneliness, trying to rebound from a recent break up, comparing one's relationship life to others and feeling covetousness, to escape from one's family or life). As a result, one may be blind to the realities of the relationship (e.g., overlooking, minimizing, ignoring or denying someone's disrespect of your needs, verbal, emotional or physical abuse of you, cheating, using alcohol or other drugs).
2. Don't date the individual too often. Some individuals feel like they must see the person they're dating almost every day (it's no more healthy to see someone you care for none of the time, than to see her or him all of the time—pace the frequency and amount of time together). And don't stay up all hours of the night together either in one another's company, on the phone, or texting. Set an agreed upon time to end the evening that the Lord would approve of. Excessive time with her or him in any form can lead to premature emotional involvement, neglect of other life responsibilities, and/or the relationship becoming more of a burden than a pleasure (especially for males).
3. Avoid situations where you're inclined to engage in making out. Sexual stimulation through making out usually leads to greater sexual involvement. Be aware of when you're feeling aroused so that you can use it as a sign that it's time to back off (instead of getting more into it). For some individuals, it may be too stimulating to even hold hands. Let the relationship be stimulated by your personalities, character, and sharing in wholesome hobbies rather than by sexually provocative conversations and/or physical touch. The Holy Spirit will help you exercise self-control if you call on Him (I Cor. 10:13).
4. Avoid the syndrome where you fall for anyone who shows you a little attention because you're so lonely or love starved. Be discriminating about who you allow to keep company with you.
5. Don't share intimate information about yourself too soon. This often puts pressure on the other individual to do the same which may scare her or him off.
6. Don't say "I love you" before you really know that's what it is. Be wary when anyone who has known you only a short while and starts saying how much she or he cares about you or has fallen in love with you—she or he may be saying this for selfish motives, or may be confusing love with "I just really like you, enjoy being with you, you're exciting (I'm not bored when around you)," etc.
7. Don't consider marriage to a person just because you can tolerate her or him (set your standards reasonably high, and settle for nothing less than those standards demand). Commit to the one who you know God has approved of for you, the one you can't picture being without for the rest of your life as impressed by the Holy Spirit. However, if your relationship with this person becomes more important to you than your personal relationship with Christ, step back until you can get the relationship priorities right (no idolatry).

8. Don't stay with someone who you feel you have to put an act on for. Acting gets very tiresome. Usually you're not fooling anyone anyway. It's better to be accepted for who you really are than who you're not.
9. Don't accept "any ole thing" or crazy behavior. Do have standards. Look for the qualities in the other person that are important to you (and God). Some primary qualities should be faith and trust in God, seeking to do His will, self-controlled, responsible, respectful, and selfless. Remember, we're all growing (sanctification is a lifelong in process), so the individual you're dating may not have achieved these qualities just yet. However, there should be clear indications that she or he is desirous and moving in this direction.

Do's of Dating

10. Better to move too slow than too fast.
11. Better to date too little than too much. Set limits on how often the two of you get together if the frequency is getting out of hand (pace the frequency and amount of time you spend together).
12. While dating, ask tactfully about her or his previous relationships.
13. Where do you find potentially equally yoked mates? It can be a challenge in your home church, so one often must go to Christian gatherings, visit other places such as Christian churches, Christian educational institutions, Christian bookstores, look into Christian dating services, and listen to Christian radio to find out what Christian events are in the area.
14. Date only those who are on the same or similar spiritual wavelength as you are in order to avoid conflicts about what should and shouldn't be going on between the two of you—the assumption is that you are on a high spiritual plain.
15. Both must refrain from trying to be what the other wants you to be, and strive to be what God would have you both to be in the relationship. The Lord makes it clear how we should treat one another, and if it's good enough for Him, it should be good enough for the both of you.
16. If the two of you can't regularly pray and study the Word together, you can't stay together. How can your relationship survive until death do you part, or Jesus comes, if Jesus isn't involved and allowed to stay involved from the beginning? It is important to attend church together.
17. Respect one another. Both of you are God's creation—brother and sister in Christ, part of His family (and if you respect Him, you'll respect His family members). Don't think you can get around respecting the opposite sex by dating non-Christians. Respect all of God's creation.
18. Focus on being friends only (e.g., encouraging, supporting, and listening to each other, praying together, going to church and other wholesome events together). Talk, talk, talk to one another; not superficial talk, but meaningful, quality communication. Turn off the TV, videos/DVDs, avoid excessive use of social media, get out of the noisy restaurant, sporting event, movie theatre, night club, etc. and just sit down somewhere and talk seriously about important aspects of yourself, life, God, events happening in your community and around the world, your dreams, goals, etc.

19. Read a book on Christian dating together and agree to help each other to follow the guidelines: “We’ve Only Just Begun: A Guide to Successful Courtship” by Nancy Van Pelt is a good one.
20. Meet the family of the individual you’re dating. Observe how she or he interacts with family members. Try to get a sense of their family background because the person you’re dating is a product of that family. Also, see how respectful she or he is toward her or his parents.
21. Take stock of how well the person you’re dating takes care of her or his responsibilities. This will give you an indication of how well she or he is likely to manage home responsibilities. The best way to predict what someone will do in the future is to look at what she or he has done in the past and is doing in the present, despite what she or he may say.
22. Think about what your emotional needs are, and decide whether the person you’re dating can meet them. No individual can meet all of your needs (that’s God’s department), but think about what is essential for you to feel loved, appreciated, valued, and respected in a relationship, and see if this individual can and is willing to meet them. If your essentials cannot be met, are you able to accept this? (you shouldn’t if the essentials are reasonable). Don’t just say, “Seems like a good person, she or he is better than nothing at all, or I’m getting up in age, so better jump at this.” Is there a good fit. God wants us to use our common sense. For example, a match between someone who needs a lot of attention and someone who has little attention to give is likely to be dissatisfying.
23. Once you determine what your needs are, share them openly with the person you’re considering having a serious relationship with (i.e., marriage). That individual should also share their essentials with you. Discuss honestly if each of you can meet the other’s essentials. Also, determine which essentials won’t be met, and decide if that is something you can live with or make up for in other acceptable ways. One factor to consider in deciding who you might want to commit the rest of your life to is this: is this someone you can accept just the way she or he is, and can she or he accept you just the way you are? Hopefully, both of you are open to being as Jesus would have you to be.
24. Look for someone who is flexible and open to change, but won’t compromise on biblical principle.
25. Believe that anyone who truly loves and respects God, you, themselves, and your relationship, will encourage you and themselves to remain sexually pure until marriage. Accept no other “tunes.”
26. Learn and practice the skills that will help you work through the conflicts that will occur. Develop a good system for talking through and solving problems together. Have the attitude of viewing problems as opportunities to practice your communication and problem-solving skills.
27. Commit your life to Jesus and work on developing the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) so that when God introduces you to Mr. or Ms. Right, you will be ready.

Remember:

**“But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness;
And all these things shall be added unto you”
Matthew 6:33**

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