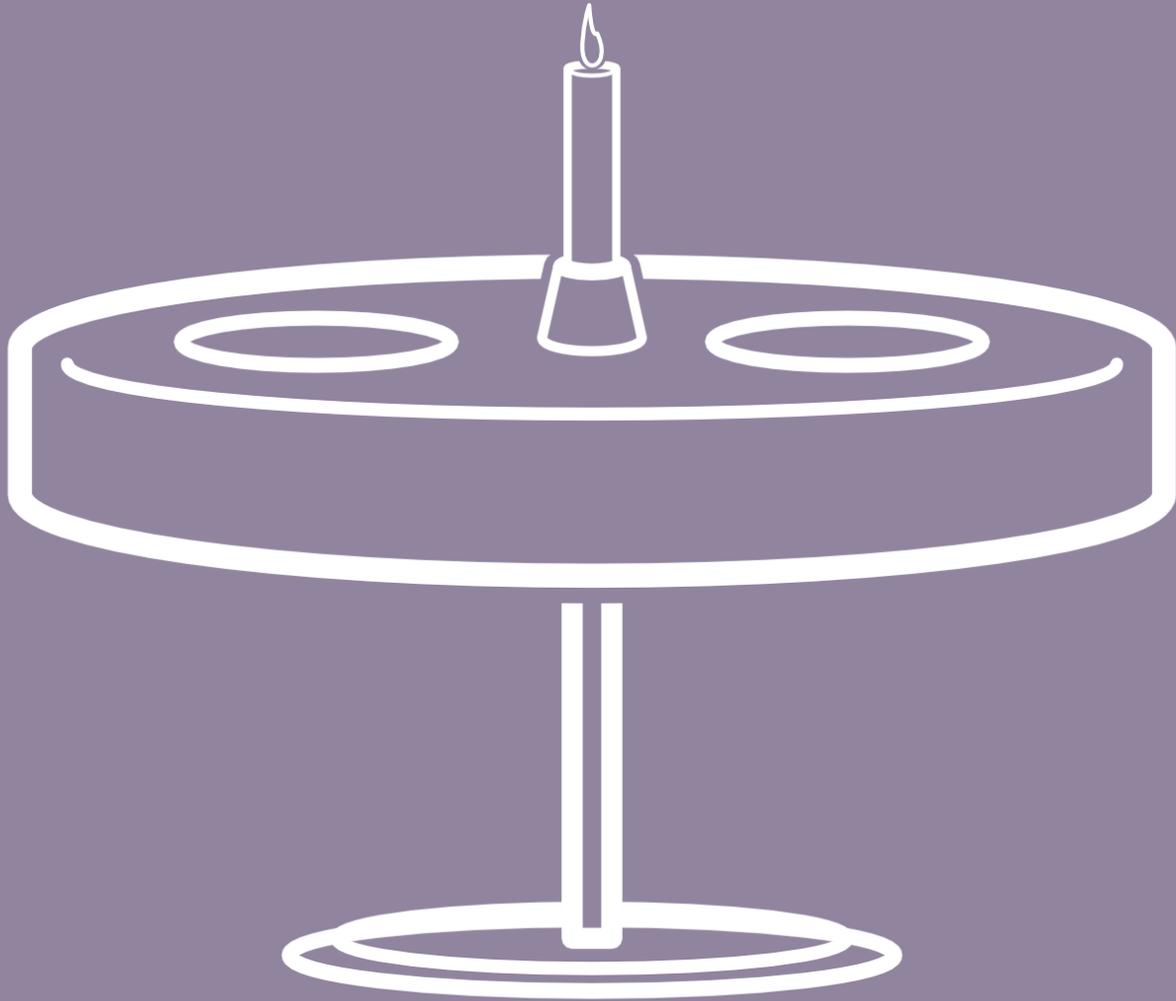


Dating Relationships



Dating

I'm curious about Dating. Great! You have the right piece of paper in your hands. We have taken the time to put this together so you can understand what God thinks about dating. You'll also have a chance to dig into the Bible for yourself!

God Created Relationships

In the beginning, God created Adam and Eve because it was not good for Adam to be alone. We were designed to be in relationships with each other and with God.

There are all kinds of relationships: acquaintances, friendships, family, and marriage (to name a few). Typically, dating is a relationship in which two people are trying to figure out if they will eventually get married.

A Plan for Success

Dating is complicated, because you're constantly learning new things about yourself and the other person. It's smart to put together a plan so you can help yourself succeed.

A quick aside: success isn't necessarily, "staying together." Sometimes the best thing to do is end a relationship. It's painful now, but the longer you wait, the worse the pain will get.

Determine your expectations. Ask yourself, "What do I want from this relationship?" Every relationship is filled with expectations, and usually they go unsaid until there is a conflict. Take the time to examine what you want from the person you're dating. Healthy people do this often; so get started!

Once you know your expectations, it's time for the hard question: are these expectations fair, right, or healthy? No one person can give us everything we need. Sometimes we want things we shouldn't.

Communicate your expectations, when the time is right. You can't talk about your wants and needs all of the time! Be an excellent listener and learn about the other person's expectations. The more you know about the other person, the more you'll know how to respond.

Examine what they want, and ask yourself another hard question, "Is what they want healthy?"

The best relationships—friendships, family, marriage, and dating—are based on humility and servanthood:

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus..." (Philippians 2:3-5)

Dating isn't simple, and all of these steps don't happen in a nice orderly way. This stuff is ongoing, but if you put some time into thinking and praying about your dating, you'll be headed for success.

In addition to the questions we've already listed, here are a few others to get you thinking:

- >Why do I want to start a dating relationship?
- >Is my faith solid enough that I'm ready to be dating?
- >Is the person I'm dating committed to Jesus?
(Check out 2 Corinthians 6:14)
- >Will this person help or hinder my spiritual life?
- >Has dating become the biggest focus in my life?
(Check out Matthew 6:33)

It's a big mistake to jump into dating too soon. Some people run from relationship to relationship rather than dealing with their emotional issues. It may be better to stick to hanging out with groups of friends so a friendship can develop first. Dating isn't easy because developing a meaningful friendship isn't easy. If you ever want to talk, CSM is here to help.

Going Deeper

Read and reflect on the Fruits of the Spirit as laid out in Galatians 5:22-23. If you're in a relationship, how do you and your boyfriend or girlfriend exemplify these qualities? If you're not in a relationship, how do these qualities relate to the kind of boyfriend or girlfriend you're looking for?

A great book to check out about dating relationships is *Datable* by Justin Lookadoo and Hayley DiMarco.