**Intentional Relationships: When the Dating Relationship Doesn't Work**

*Portions of the content taken from* [*Intentional Relationships For Singles*](http://www.intentionalrelationshipsolutions.org/)*, Chapter 11: by Kris Swiatocho and Dan Houk*

No one enters a Christian dating relationship with the hopes it will fail. While some singles might date without marriage in mind (and shouldn't; they should just be friends or be intentional about dating for marriage), you are not dating so that they can eventually break your heart. Even friendship, work, and neighbor relationships are sought after with the hopes of getting along. However, just a glance at a reel off the internet, and you will see the catastrophic results when relationships fail. When that fun neighbor calls the cops on you because they believe you are 2 inches over their property line, your best friend is found flirting with your significant other, or when you find out your cubicle mate is secretly trying to get your job by making up lies about you.

So, what happens when your dating relationship doesn't work out, whether you are the one who broke up or they did? When you think your heart will be broken forever. You want to start crying when your favorite song comes on the radio. When family or friends don't know you broke up, asking you are both doing. Or worse, have you set the date? When your dreams of marriage and a family seem to be gone. How do you not only deal with the breakup but have hope for the future?

• If you believe it is best to end the relationship, do it wisely. This ensures that both of you are treated respectfully and provides the greatest opportunity to demonstrate Christlikeness and remain friends. One note of caution: you may be vulnerable now, so it is wise to take time to heal, learn from the breakup, and not jump quickly into another dating relationship.
 *Matthew 7: 12 "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

• Express yourself honestly if you are ending the relationship. The "why" is less important than the "what," although you may want to tell them why. That is up to you. And in reverse, you can ask "why" as well, especially to learn more about yourself.

*2 Corinthians 8:21 For we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man.*

• Understand their feelings. They may want to tell you all the reasons you're wrong. That is normal. But if you feel God has led you to this point, stay firm in your decision.

*Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.*

• Allow them to be angry and hurt. Don't try to tell them they are wrong for feeling so. God cares about you and will comfort you as you transition from a dating relationship.

*2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

• Be humble and compassionate.

*Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

• There are times when it is extremely difficult to run into someone you were previously dating. While it can be hard to see them at church or out, it is essential to avoid all contact, if possible, until you have healed. It may take months, but if you have built a good friendship, an Intentional Friendship™, it is possible it can resume over time the way it was.

*John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*

• Leave, learn, and live. Learn from your relationship and move on. What would you do differently? Did you get ahead of God? Were there red or yellow flags while you were friends or dating? Did you have accountability for close friendships? What was their perspective? Did you have realistic expectations in the relationship? Did you get too close too soon, not allowing God to be at the center? Remember, until you say I do, you can say I don't. In time, things will get better, and you can start over.

*Proverbs 18:15 An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.*

*"If you can't fly, then run; if you can't run, then walk; if you can't walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward." — Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

*For more information on Kris Swiatocho and Dan Houk and the* [*Intentional Relationships For Singles*](http://www.intentionalrelationshipsolutions.org/)*, please go to www.IntentionalRelationshipSolutions.org*