**10 ESSENTIALS
FOR CHRISTIAN DATING**

**Live With A Single Purpose**

 Christian Single Adults face choices and temptations on a regular basis. Am I going to follow Christian principles and obey God’s Word or simply go with the flow and succumb to peer pressure? This chapter addresses men and women who have decided to “Follow Jesus” with their whole heart. It is for Christians who live their lives with the single purpose of pleasing and honoring Christ and integrating Biblical values into their entire life.

Colossians 2:6-7 offers a stern warning against giving in to social pressure: *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forcesof this world rather than on Christ.*

Luke 6:49 points to where the world’s values lead: *But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.*
1 Thessalonians 4:7-8 identifies the Christian Single’s calling: *For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.*

**Two value systems offer opposing plans for building a marriage:

The Worlds System God’s Plan**

1. Meet 1. Meet
2. Have sex 2. Build a friendship

3. Move in together 3. Commit to one another

4. Commit to one another 4. Marry

5. Marry 5. Have sex

6. Repeat step 1-5 6. Stay together

**The 10 Essentials**

1. **Get your own house in order …FIRST!**

1 Corinthians 2:14 *The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments. Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ.*

 “Become the kind of person you are looking for, be proactive about it through church attendance, taking helpful classes, and getting some counseling if that would help.

*I had a list of qualities I was looking for in a gal, then God said, “That would be an
excellent place to start on for yourself!” …* Paul Aldrich

1. **Only date committed Christians.**

2 Corinthians 6:14 *Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light
have with darkness?*

Deuteronomy 22:10 *Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together.*

 The ox and donkey pull at different speeds and strides, working in conflict with every step. This conflict illustrates the tension in a marriage between a believer and nonbeliever when life issues such as church attendance, Christian education or even giving to the church are discussed. Some people ask: “Isn’t church a safe place to find a mate?” Being a Christian doesn’t necessarily equal being a committed believer.

A normal church population contains:

* **Ministry Leaders** - Who lead by example and should be a safe person
* **Faithful Christian Servants** - Are servants who offer a glimpse of their
character through their faithful service
* **Regular Church Attendees** - Their attendance gives some opportunity
to know them
* **Irregular Church Guests** - Sporadic attendance gives little opportunity to
know someone and without a network of common friendships and experiences
dating them may be a gamble.
* **Social Butterflies and Unknown Visitors** - These people may be interesting
and fun but dating them is risky.

There are no guarantees that any person, Christian or not, is a mature individual and would make a good spouse. And, meeting a person at church doesn’t tell where on the list of 1-5 they are. Time and shared experiences after you meet someone combined with common friends provide your best insurance policy that a person’s life is indeed what they present themselves to be.

1. **Wait for God’s green light.**

Proverbs 11:14 *For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory
 sure*.

### Acts 16:7 *When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.*

###  One person said two people who are not fully ready for dating are like *“two one legged people propping each other up.”* Considerations when asking, *“Am I ready to date?”*

### Legal - *Is my divorce final, could I marry today?*

### Emotional - *Have I healed from a broken relationship or marriage?*

### Spiritual - *Am I a new or recommitting Christian? Do I need time to grow spiritually and understand my relationship with Jesus?*

### Financial - *Can I really afford to marry at this time?*

**4. Keep your eyes, ears and heart open to counsel.**

Proverbs 15:31 *He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the
 wise.* It is dangerous to avoid counsel when your heart begins to attach itself to
 someone; unfortunately, this is what many people do and live to regret it.

**5. Serve together.**

Mark 10:43*…whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.* More is seen about one’s character by their reactions than actions and volunteer
 service offers a great opportunity to show your character.

**6. Go real slow - time is your ally!**

Psalm 1:1 *Blessed is the one… whose delight is in the law of the LORD, that person
is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.*

**72 CRITICAL HOURS

PLAN A**

**72 HOURS - 1 WEEKEND TOGETHER**

**PLAN B**

**1ST Month - 3 HOURS X 4 WEEKS = 12 HOURS**

**2nd Month - 6 HOURS X 4 WEEKS = 24 HOURS**

**3RD Month - 9 HOURS X 4 WEEKS = 36 HOURS
 TOTAL= 72 HOURS**

**We suggest that you spread 72 hours of dating over three months. This will build a stronger foundation for marriage than one hot and heavy weekend.**

**7. Keep it pure!** 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 *It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should
 avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own bodyin a
 way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not
 know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a
 brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told
 you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy
 life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being
 but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.*

Commit to purity before times of passion. If you wait to say “no” to passion while in the heat of the moment, you will always give in to it.

Having Pre-Marital Sex Will Affect Your Future Marital Happiness and Could Lead to Divorce

LAUMANN, GAGNON, MICHAEL AND MICHAELS, 1994

This study found a marked connection between pre-marital sex and elevated risk of divorce. The authors explain: “For both genders, we find that virgins have dramatically more stable first marriages....” “The finding confirms the results reported by Kahn and London ... those who are virgins at marriage have much lower rates of separation and divorce.” Additionally, “those who marry as non-virgins are also more likely - all other things being equal - to be unfaithful over the remainder of their life compared with those spouses who do marry as virgins” while “those who are virgins at marriage are those who go to greater lengths to avoid divorce.”

Essentially, non-virgins typically appear to do more to harm their marriages and virgins do more to strengthen them. HEATON, 2002

In a study looking at factors impacting increased marital stability, Brigham Young sociologist Tim Heaton examined how pre-marital sexual experience, pre-marital child-bearing, cohabitation and marrying someone of a different religious faith were all associated with greater risk of divorce. Heaton explained, “Dissolution rates are substantially higher among those who initiate sexual activity before marriage.” Heaton asserts that divorce is more likely among the sexually active and cohabiters because they have established their life together on “relatively unstable sexual relationships.”

1. **Resolve that marriage is “a forever commitment”.**

Mark 10:9*Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”*

Malachi 2:16 *“The man who hates and divorces his wife,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “does violence to the one he should protect,” says the LORD Almighty. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.*

God hates divorce because of the pain it causes. Many people spend more energy and thought in selecting a house, a car, or even a career. Others focus more energy and money on the wedding than on pre-marital counseling and preparation for life together. If we value the marriage commitment, we will invest in it appropriately.

**9. Implement God’s formula for lasting love.**

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

***The room was full of pregnant women with their partners.*** *The class was in full swing. The instructor was teaching the women how to breathe properly and was telling the men how to give the necessary assurance to their partners at this stage of the pregnancy.
She said “Ladies, remember that exercise is good for you. Walking is especially beneficial. It strengthens the pelvic muscles and will make delivery that much easier; just make several stops and stay on a soft surface like grass or a path.” She looked at the men in the room, “and Gentlemen, remember - You’re in this together - It wouldn’t hurt you to go walking
with her”. The room suddenly got very quiet as the men absorbed this information. Then a man at the back of the room slowly raised his hand. “Yes”, answered the instructor, “I was just wondering if it would be all right if she carries a golf bag while we walk?”*

God’s formula is not two people giving 50% each but both giving 100%.It is a husband’s self-sacrificial love that considers his wife’s needs above his own. This loving sacrifice will captivate his wife’s heart and love.

***Mutual submission + sacrificial love = lasting relationship.***

Ephesians 5:21 *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

Ephesians 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church
and gave himself up for her.*

**10. Yield your rights for any relationship to God.** Genesis 22:12 *“Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to
 him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your
 son, your only son.”*

Once you recognize that a relationship is a privilege and not a right and you are able to yield that privilege to the Lord, God says: *“Now I know that you fear me, now I know you are ready for a relationship.”* This does not mean God will bring someone your way but that you will experience peace and contentment in life whether single or married. God’s peace is a wonderful thing!