



# LOOK AT THE FRUIT

## CHRISTIAN DATING

### Introduction

If you were to go to your fridge and grab a rotten fruit, would you eat it? Of course not! Similarly, when considering dating, you should not be in a close relationship with someone with rotten fruits (attributes/character) in their life. Now, there is no such thing as a perfect person. Romans 3:10, as well as your own struggles, testify to that truth. However, when considering dating someone, the Bible gives examples of spiritual fruits you should see in the life of someone who is connected to Jesus and the dangers of partnering with someone who is not.

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?" Yoked is a term used to describe two oxen joined by a wooden bar to complete a task. If one ox is weaker than the other, the job will either be more difficult for the stronger one or unfinished. While there is nothing better than knowing Jesus, following Him can be challenging, so you want to be yoked with someone moving in the same direction as you towards Christ and who will not make your faith journey harder.

In the letter to the Galatian church, Paul begins his message by reminding believers of the gospel (Galatians 1:3-5). Spiritual fruit is only possible through a spiritual rebirth when you place your faith in Jesus. The first thing you should note in your dating relationship is: does the person believe the gospel? Next, you will want to examine the fruits they are producing and whether they will help you move forward with Christ or hold you back.

### GALATIANS 5:13–26

13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.



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### Questions

1. What's Paul's point in verses 13 and 14?
2. Give examples of what loving your neighbor as yourself would look like in a dating relationship. What is challenging about this command? How do you overcome those challenges?
3. What are the works of the flesh (v. 19-21)? What is dangerous about these works?
4. What are the works of the Spirit (v. 22-23)?
5. Verse 17 says that the Spirit and flesh oppose one another. Why is that? How do these opposites connect to the topic of being unequally yoked in a dating relationship?
6. Can a non-Christian produce spiritual fruit (v. 24)? Why or why not?
7. What complications could arise in a relationship that is not equally yoked (spiritually)? What benefits are there in a relationship equally yoked?
8. Paul makes statements like "walk by the Spirit" (v. 16) and "keep in step with the Spirit" (v. 25). While works are not required for salvation (Eph. 2:8-10), Paul is indicating that there are actions that increase your spiritual fruit and keep you from sinning. What are practical ways for someone to "walk by the Spirit?" Why is this important for both you and the person you are considering dating?

### NON-NEGOTIABLES

Take some time and prayerfully create a list of non-negotiable traits you will look for in a person before dating them. Think through ways you will recognize these traits.



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### Boundaries

Creating boundaries in your dating life will help protect you and your partner's heart and can be one way you live out the command to "love your neighbor as yourself." Below are some ideas to help you remain pure and honor Christ in your dating relationships. *Note: It is easiest to set these boundaries before beginning a relationship, but it is never too late to have these conversations.*

- Stick to group dates.
- Spend time with each other's families.
- Maintain your friendships outside of your dating relationship.
- Take things slowly - Make sure you trust them before sharing the most personal details of your life.
- Decide and make known specific physical boundaries you will keep.
- Set a curfew for your phone time.
- Wait to date until you are ready for marriage.

### MY BOUNDARIES

Use the space below to record the boundaries you will keep in your dating relationship. Make sure to share these with the person you date.

### RED FLAGS

- Rushing you
- Forcing you to do something you don't want to do
- Different beliefs (especially if they go against the Bible)
- Showing any signs of control, abuse or manipulation
- Pressuring you (especially if it comes to anything sexual)
- Saying that "God told me you are the one for me"
- Disrespecting you and your boundaries
- Not showing any kind of support or care
- Not caring about your faith, and relationship with God
- Steering you away from the faith

### HONOR MARRIAGE

#### HEBREWS 13:4

"Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."

Every gift God has given us is good when used in the way He designed. Sex in marriage is one of those gifts. When you set physical boundaries, you are stating that you trust the way God created marriage and regard it with great value.

For those who have believed in Jesus as their Savior, the judgment Paul speaks of in Hebrews 13 will not result in final condemnation (Rom. 8:1), but there are disciplinary consequences for sin on this earth. God is not withholding goodness from you as Eve believed. Instead, He loves you and wants you to enjoy His blessings. As believers, we need to trust in the goodness of God and His plan and value marriage by keeping ourselves pure.