

Christian Dating

LOOK AT THE FRUIT

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Single Lesson · For Individual or Group Use

As you explore what the Bible teaches about dating and relationships, you'll discover that who you choose to walk closely with matters deeply to your faith. Through Galatians 5 and the principle of being equally yoked, you'll be challenged to look honestly at the fruit in your own life — and in the lives of those you consider dating.

LOOK AT THE FRUIT

Galatians 5:13–26 · 2 Corinthians 6:14 · Hebrews 13:4

INTRODUCTION

If you were to go to your fridge and grab a rotten piece of fruit, would you eat it? Of course not! Similarly, when considering dating, you should not pursue a close relationship with someone whose life shows rotten fruit — that is, poor character and choices. There is no such thing as a perfect person (Romans 3:10), but the Bible gives examples of spiritual fruit you should look for in someone who is connected to Jesus, and warns about 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?” The word “yoked” describes two oxen joined by a wooden bar to complete a task together. If one ox is weaker than the other, the job will either be more difficult for the stronger one or left unfinished. Following Jesus is challenging enough — you want to be yoked with someone moving in the same direction toward Christ, someone who will strengthen rather than strain your faith.

In his letter to the Galatian church, Paul begins by reminding believers of the gospel (Galatians 1:3–5). Spiritual fruit is only possible through spiritual rebirth when you place your faith in Jesus. The first thing to look for in someone you’re dating is whether they genuinely believe the gospel. Then examine the fruit their life is producing — and whether that fruit will help you move forward with Christ, or hold you back.

SCRIPTURE

GALATIANS 5:13–26

“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. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 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. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 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. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”

BOUNDARIES

Creating boundaries in your dating life will help protect you and your partner's heart, and is one practical way to live out the command to "love your neighbor as yourself." The ideas below can 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 the 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.

RED FLAGS

Be cautious of anyone who shows these warning signs:

- Rushing you or pressuring you — especially sexually
- Forcing you to do something you don't want to do
- Holding beliefs that contradict the Bible
- Showing signs of control, abuse, or manipulation
- Saying "God told me you are the one for me"
- Disrespecting you and your boundaries
- Showing no genuine support or care for you
- Showing no care for your faith or relationship with God
- Steering you away from your 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 declaring that you trust the way God created marriage and regard it as something of great value.

For those who have believed in Jesus as their Savior, the judgment spoken of in Hebrews 13 will not result in final condemnation (Romans 8:1), but there are real consequences for sin in this life. God is not withholding goodness from you, as Eve mistakenly believed. He loves you and wants you to enjoy His blessings. As believers, we are called to trust in the goodness of God's plan and honor marriage by keeping ourselves pure.

