

“Boundaries In Dating, Part 2” ‘Whom Should I Date?’

Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend, Boundaries In Dating (Zondervan 2000)

Don’t Repeat the Past...

“It is important to set a boundary with your past, ...deal with your old dating patterns as something that you are not destined to continue.” Id. at 77

2 Corinthians 5:17 “*Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new.*” (CEV)

To avoid repeating past mistakes look for patterns that hinder emotional or spiritual growth, for example:

- Moving too quickly in the relationship
- Allowing the relationship to dominate your life
- Becoming what the other person wants you to be, rather than being yourself
- Avoiding dealing with your past
- Letting anger and bitterness from past relationships control your behavior

1John 4:20-21 “*If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar;”*(NKJ)

Avoid isolation

We all need people in our lives. The bible tells us to fellowship with one another and to be in relationship with God.

- Get connected to a good church.
- Ask for support from close friends to help you grow.
- Get the support of a pastor or counselor if needed.
- Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal our weaknesses and help us to heal emotionally from our past hurts and disappointments.

1 John 1:8“*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*”(NKJ)

Don’t fall in love with someone you wouldn’t be best friends with. Cp. 7

A very common mistake among singles is that you can be very attracted to someone physically, but have little else in common with him or her.

- Longing and chemistry don’t necessarily mean love.
- The person you have these feelings for can have very destructive personality traits, they can be deceptive, controlling, critical, insensitive, and the list goes on.
- Don’t be ruled by your feelings and emotions, use wisdom.

Proverbs 2:6-8 “*For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of good sense to the godly. He is their shield, protecting those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of justice and protects those who are faithful to him.*” (NLT)

- Put chemistry aside and ask yourself if you truly enjoy spending time with this person.

Romanticizing

“If you have a tendency to romanticize, then you might have a tendency to live in a world of fantasized relationship.” Id. at 116

Proverbs 4:23 “Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do.” (NLT)

- Fantasies can be used as a defense against disappointments and past hurts.
- Romance must be based on character not fantasy.

“The best boundary that you can have in your dating life is to begin every relationship with an eye toward friendship.” Id. at 118

- Do not rush into romance because of self imposed time constraints, such as, I want to be married by the time I’m ---

Psalms 39:5 “...And my age is as nothing before you.”

- “Keep your boundaries, physically, emotionally and otherwise.” Id. at 118

Isaiah 26:3 “You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.” (NKJ)

- “Spend time getting to know the person in nonromantic ways.
- Spend time in groups with your friends.
- How well do you fit in with their friends?” Id. at 118
- Don’t Ruin a Friendship Out of Loneliness Cp. 8

Jeremiah 17:9 “The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?” (NLT)

Beware when Opposites Attract Cp. 9

Often we date and want ‘opposite’ people because:

- We do not want to do the work of developing for ourselves what the other person does well.” Id. at 137 Example: the compliant person will often be attracted to the controlling or domineering person.
- Our fear of looking at our own character flaws. Self-exploration and change can be scary.” Id. at 139 Personal growth can be painful and difficult. Acknowledge your shortcomings and commit to working on changing.
- We are spiritually and emotionally lazy, which is a sign of immaturity. We become reliant upon others to do for us what we don’t want to do for ourselves.

“Reserve your dating life for people actively involved in the growth process.

Be in the growth process yourself.

Set boundaries on your tendencies to rescue each other from your character deficits.” Id. at 146

Adapt Now Pay Later ch. 10

- Don’t become a chameleon, adapting to your surroundings to the point where you lose your identity.
- We must always be truthful, starting with ourselves. Desire truth and reality in all relationships.

Psalms 51:6 “But you want complete honesty, so teach me true wisdom.” (CEV)

Too Much Too Fast Ch. 11

“Relationships grow in a healthy manner only as they undergo experiences, and there is no shortcut to experiences.” Id. at 161 Take your time!

- “There is no microwave dating that makes any sense.
- Go through the seasons of life with the person you believe might be the one God has meant for you.” Id. at 162
- Build a strong foundation on faith and prayer.

Look at some of the significant aspects of marriage: Id. at 163

- A lifelong commitment to loving one person only
- Forsaking all other opportunities for romantic love other than that person
- Solving conflict in ways that do not involve leaving the relationship
- Staying in the relationship even if the other person changes for the worse
- Being called to sacrifice many individual preferences for the sake of the relationship

Questions:

1 a. Name some dating patterns that should be avoided?

b. What can you do to break negative dating patterns so that you do not continue to repeat past mistakes?

2 a. Explain how you can know whether or not your ‘romantic feelings’ and ‘chemistry’ for the person you are dating are based on true friendship with potential for marriage, versus neediness and loneliness?

b. What steps can you take to prevent yourself from falling in love too quickly?

3 a. Discuss some problems the “hopeless romantic” will face in dating.

b. Explain how fantasies can be used as a defense against disappointments and past hurts

4 a. What are some positive and negative consequences of relationships based on “opposite attraction”?

b. How can you set boundaries on your tendency to rescue each other from character deficits?