

# Dating Commitment

<young lady> & <young man>

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# Dating Commitment

## Summary / Statement of Purpose

Why are we dating? To determine if marriage to one another is the wisest course of action / best way to glorify God.

What does a godly marriage look like?

1. A picture of Christ's love for the church (Ephesians 5:22-33).
2. A relationship that points to Christ and encourages spiritual growth in one another (Colossians 3:1-4, 12-17; Proverbs 27:17).
3. A relationship where two individuals are more useful in the Kingdom of God together as a couple than they would be alone (Matthew 6:33; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

We commit to pursue these things and consider whether or not this relationship will indeed lead to a godly marriage.

## Centering the Relationship on Christ

Christ is our first love, and Christ is enough. We desire to continue to grow in godliness and draw one another closer to our Savior. Attachment to one another *is* a natural result of relationships but needs to be kept in its proper place so that it is a driving force of spiritual growth instead of a distraction from the Lord. We desire to have undivided devotion to the Lord as individuals, bearing fruit that is characteristic of a mature believer, and to encourage this devotion in one another.

### ***1 Corinthians 7:32-35 (ESV)***

*“I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your **undivided devotion to the Lord.**”*

### ***1 Timothy 6:11-12 (ESV)***

*“But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”*

Practical Applications (to which we commit individually and in which we will encourage one another):

1. We will maintain a daily tradition of growing in knowledge of / love for the Lord by:
  - a. Spending time in Scripture.
  - b. Fostering a healthy / godly prayer life.
  - c. Committing to attend corporate worship.
  - d. Memorizing Scripture.
  - e. Fellowshiping with, investing in, and serving those in our respective churches.
2. We will seek to have such an outpouring of love for God that we enthusiastically pursue others in love by sharing the gospel; we want to “overflow in love for God that we will overflow in love for our fellow men and so find it an easy and natural and joyful thing to share with them the good news of Christ” (Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, p. 78).
3. We will be faithful in our day-to-day lives / responsibilities by:
  - a. Being a faithful employee.
  - b. Getting to bed on time.
  - c. Being fully present with others when in their company.
4. We will continue to seek discipleship and prioritize building / maintaining godly, profitable relationships with others (family, friends, church family).
5. We will endeavor to spend free time in profitable activities.
6. We will bring our hearts to the Lord and examine ourselves by:
  - a. Asking ourselves who we love more: the Lord, or one another.
  - b. Prioritizing prayer in order to:
    - i. Focus our hearts on the Lord.
    - ii. Guard our hearts against idolatry.
7. We will include / prioritize the following activities in our time together:
  - a. Studying Scripture.
  - b. Praying with one another for others.
  - c. Praying for one another.
  - d. Memorizing Scripture.
  - e. Reading profitable books.

## Communication

In all of our communication, the desire of our hearts and the aim of our conversation (especially in the midst of difficult discussions) will be to honor Christ and glorify God.

### ***Ephesians 4:29 (ESV)***

*“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”*

### ***Proverbs 27:6 (ESV)***

*“Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.”*

### **Colossians 3:8-10, 12-14 (ESV)**

*“But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”*

#### **Practical Applications:**

1. When dealing with conflict / disagreement, we will:
  - a. Prayerfully discern whether to cover an offense in love or to bring it to light in loving, gentle correction.
  - b. Be willing to correct / receive correction when needed, striving for graciousness whether correcting or being corrected.
  - c. Battle against the temptation to withdraw / avoid conflict.
  - d. Give the benefit of the doubt to one another, not twisting one another’s words (or Scripture) against one another.
  - e. Endeavor to focus on glorifying God more than merely being heard, being understood, or being right.
  - f. Be mindful first and foremost of the attitude of our hearts, and also of our method of communication (volume, tone, and word choice).
2. When speaking about one another to others, we will:
  - a. Speak graciously of one another.
  - b. Refrain from complaining / gossiping about one another (which we acknowledge is different than seeking counsel / clarification / help).
3. When speaking to one another, we will:
  - a. Encourage one another, build one another up, and speak kindly and graciously.
  - b. Be honest, open, and trustworthy.
  - c. Be intentional to include conversation that is edifying, useful, and profitable.
  - d. Carefully choose words that are reflective of the reality of our level of commitment to one another. (Carefully consider when is it appropriate to use words like “love,” “forever,” “perfect fit,” “only one for me,” etc.)
  - e. Not make the relationship a dumping ground for our problems.

## **Physical Boundaries**

We think that it is important to set boundaries for (at least) four reasons: 1) too much attachment can be quite unhelpful, 2) we are called to act in a way that is above reproach, 3) we are to flee from sin, not play with it, and 4) physical intimacy is so precious that our purity should be guarded with a jealous reverence.

## **Too Much Attachment Can Be Quite Unhelpful**

### ***1 Corinthians 7:36-38 (ESV)***

*“If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.”*

Physical affection can create attachment that makes it difficult to clearly evaluate whether or not it is wise for the relationship to continue toward marriage.

## **We Are Called to Act In a Way That Is Above Reproach**

### ***Titus 2:7-8 (ESV)***

*“Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.”*

### ***Colossians 1:21-23 (ESV)***

*“And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.”*

As believers, we have a new nature and are representatives of Christ and His people. Bearing this in mind, we should then strive to act in a way that is consistent with the change that Christ has worked in our hearts and is above reproach so as not to destroy our witness before others.

## **We Are to Flee From Sin, Not Play with It**

### ***2 Timothy 2:22 (ESV)***

*“Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”*

### ***1 Corinthians 6:18 (ESV)***

*“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.”*

### ***1 Corinthians 10:23 (ESV)***

*“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.*

***Romans 13:13-14 (ESV)***

*“Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”*

We are to carefully guard ourselves against sin, apply caution to prevent sinning, and actively avoid situations and interactions that could lead to temptation / compromise.

**Physical Intimacy Is So Precious that Our Purity Should Be Guarded with a Jealous Reverence**

***Song of Solomon 2:7 (ESV)***

*“I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases.”*

A couple should not prematurely steal what only belongs within marriage, nor should they come anywhere close to it. It would be unloving to rob one another of something so wonderful and deserving of protection. If we are really striving to love one another in a God-honoring way, we must be good stewards of one another’s hearts and guard one another’s purity.

**Practical Applications:**

1. We will live in the light!
  - a. Any behavior that wouldn’t be appropriate before a godly audience shouldn’t be practiced at any time.
  - b. Doors will remain open at all times to allow anyone to enter the room unannounced at any time.
2. In our time spent alone, our motivation will be to honor the Lord by proactively avoiding dangerous or compromising situations.
3. We will not intentionally place ourselves in a house where others are not present.
  - a. When visiting each other’s families, we will do our best to make ourselves aware of their schedules and plan activities outside the house when they are out of the house.
  - b. If we are unexpectedly placed in a situation where we are alone:
    - i. We will do our best to find a public activity / place to be (walking / driving / etc.) when feasible (not raining / snowing / unbearably hot or cold, etc.)
    - ii. When it is not feasible to do these activities, we will stay on the first floor, occupy our time with something productive (music-making, playing a board game, cooking / baking), and avoid prolonged closeness (sitting next to one another watching a movie, etc.)

Kissing (on the lips) will be reserved for marriage.

## The Parachute Clause

A couple is not married until they are actually married. Therefore, we must be able / willing to agree to end the relationship if it is not leading to marriage. It requires due diligence to answer that question. In order to determine whether or not the relationship should end, we need to seek counsel from those we trust and ask and answer the tough questions with honesty.

### ***1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (ESV)***

*“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”*

1. In deciding whether to continue or end the relationship, we will:
  - a. Deal with the tough questions / will not shy away from sensitive topics.
  - b. Keep our eyes open for red flags.
  - c. Seek counsel.
2. If we see a red flag, we will:
  - a. Verify with trusted counselors that this is indeed a red flag.
  - b. Be honest and open with one another about the red flags we see.
  - c. Seek counsel from others as to whether this is a red flag that can / should be worked through, or if it is a dealbreaker.
3. If we determine the relationship should end:
  - a. It should end quickly and graciously.
  - b. It shouldn't be a complete surprise to the other.
  - c. Explanation, clarification, and closure should be given to the other.
  - d. We will trust that if the decision is made, that it was done responsibly; there is no need to seek ongoing explanation.

## Including the Counsel of Others

In order to help us hold to the standards detailed in this document and to guide us as we seek to glorify the Lord in our relationship and discern whether or not it is leading / should lead toward marriage, we welcome accountability and counsel from godly and trustworthy people in our lives.

### ***Proverbs 15:22 (NKJV)***

*“Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established.”*

### ***Proverbs 12:15 (ESV)***

*“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.”*

## Practical Applications

1. We will schedule regular (monthly) check-ins with Pastor Matt to ask the following questions:
  - a. Are we in a good place / working toward marriage?
  - b. Are we moving at the right pace?
  - c. Are we asking the right questions?
  - d. Are there other things we should consider / be aware of?
2. To ensure that we earnestly endeavor to distance ourselves from sin, we will seek immediate accountability in the event of failure to hold to the boundaries established in this document.
3. We will be diligent to seek out the following people to hold us accountable:
  - a. Together: Pastor Matt
  - b. <young lady>:
    1. Godly couple: Pat / Randy
    2. Pastor Camden and wife Erica
    3. Parents
  - c. <young man>:
    1. Godly couple: Jason / Janet
    2. Pastor Jim and wife Tracy
    3. Parents

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## Closing Thoughts

The contents of this document summarize how we intend to honor the Lord and one another while in a dating relationship. Our aim is to ensure that our relationship is not a distraction from godliness, but an encouragement to our walks with the Lord. Having already endeavored to establish good habits to this end, we commit to continue keeping our focus on Christ, distancing ourselves from sin, faithfully progressing in a way that is honoring to the Lord, and living in a way that is obedient to Scripture.

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