

Quick Backdrop

It's inevitable. Maybe it's already happened. You're going to have a first date. For some it comes sooner. For some it comes later—even after high school. There's a good chance your family has a "first date" age in mind for you. No matter when you go on your first date, one thing is certain when it happens: you are entering a new era of life, an era that you want to be emotionally and spiritually ready for.

1 Digging In (God, Show Me!)

As you might expect, the Bible doesn't have a "dating" chapter. But it does have a lot to say about two issues that are a key part of dating: 1) How we treat others; 2) Physical attraction.

First, let's look at the issue of how we treat others. As you read the passages below from Philippians 2 and Colossians 3 (you may want to print out these verses or paste them into an e-doc), look for these things:

1. Underline any instructions you see on how we are to treat others.
2. Circle any traits that we should possess in interacting with others.



Philippians 2:3-4

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Colossians 3:12

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

2 Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)

The passages from Philippians 2 and Colossians 3 contain world-class instructions on how to treat people and they give us a list of Christ-like traits that should describe us. Take a minute to apply these instructions and traits to the setting of a first date. For every instruction or trait, write out a statement of resolve. Here are a couple examples.

I will do nothing out of selfish ambition. Nothing.

I will show compassion and kindness by doing more listening than talking.

Now to the issue of physical attraction. Read the passage from 1 Corinthians 6. Again, you may want print out these verses. As you read, underline any references to sexuality. After you've read the passage, re-write these instructions as if they were written to you personally. Especially since, well, they *were* written to you personally.



1 Corinthians 6:18-20

¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

3 Seal the Deal (God, Change Me!)

Here is the most important question, which you may have already asked:

What do the Philippians 2 and Colossians 3 passages have to do with the verses in 1 Corinthians 6?

At first glance these passages may seem unrelated. But the truth is, they couldn't be more connected. Spend a few minutes meditating on this connection. Ask God to show you how the instructions and traits of Philippians 2 and Colossians 3 are related to the teaching in 1 Corinthians 6. Journal your thoughts as you pray and meditate.

Here's a thought (after you've journaled your thoughts): When we treat other people, including our "date," in a manner fitting of Philippians 2 and Colossians 3—keeping our selfish ambitions at bay, honoring his/her interests, interacting out of kindness and patience—we are in a strong position to *want* to keep our physical desires under control. Obeying Philippians 2 and Colossians 3 makes it easier to obey 1 Corinthians 6.

The final question: How will you put these verses into practice? Here are some ideas, but we know you can improve on these ideas:

1. Create an image (a phrase, sketch, picture) that represents the gist of these verses. Put this where you'll see it every day, i.e., phone wallpaper (e-version), dresser (printed version).
2. Create a "Dating Code to Live By," three or four bullet-point statements of resolve. Copy your statements on a card and keep it in your wallet or purse. Read it before a date.
3. Ask a group of friends to create a dating accountability group. Share the info from these passages (or share this devo) and hold each other accountable as you move into the dating era.