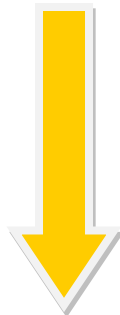


In the book *Religion Saves: And 9 Other Misconceptions*, Mark Driscoll gives some principles for Christian dating. These are some great things for singles to keep in mind as you contemplate relationships and eventually marriage:

1. **Maximize your singleness for God.** Accept that you're in a season of life that affords some freedoms and benefits you will not have if and when you marry. It is a good season to finish your education, increase your theological knowledge, travel to serve in missions, give time to your church, work long hours to establish your career, and pay off any debt you may have accrued. In short, invest your single years in a way that they later pay a great return. Do not waste them.
2. **Do not pursue a serious relationship until you are ready to marry.** There are many reasons why people should, for a season, devote their energies to something other than finding a spouse. Getting biblical counseling to overcome a habitual sin such as pornography or substance abuse, maturing as a Christian if they are a new or immature convert, or simply moving out of their parents' home and taking on adult responsibilities are all good reasons to delay a serious relationship until a better season of life. Basically, until people are mature enough to marry, they should not be in a serious romantic relationship but should use their energies to mature.
3. **Be reasonable.** Do not set your expectations too high or too low. If you set your expectations too low, you may marry and be miserable, having made the biggest mistake of your life. If you set your expectations too high, you may never marry, or you may marry the person you think you want but who may not be the one God would consider best for you. I discourage Christian singles from having too long a list of what they are looking for in a spouse. The truth is that most of these lists are simply idolatrous because they are comprised of the seekers' resume and what they like and do, as if the goal of marriage is to find someone just like them rather than someone different from them so that together they can learn to love and serve one another.



*Last week we examined three principles for Christian dating. Below are some additional recommendations taken from the book **Religion Saves: And 9 Other Misconceptions** by Mark Driscoll.*

4. **Do not have any romantic relationship with someone who is a non-Christian.** The reasons here are almost limitless. Since Jesus is at the center of your life, a non-Christian will not even understand who you are. Because you submit to Scripture and unbelievers do not, your relationship with one has no court of arbitration in which to resolve your differences. An unbeliever is not in covenant with Jesus, so he or she has no covenantal framework for any relationship with you. If he or she is not a Christian, you have no means of dealing with sin that will come between the two of you, because you do not both believe in the gospel of Jesus' death for sin. Indeed, you can have non-romantic evangelistic relationships with non-Christians. It is usually best to introduce the non-Christians to your Christian friends of the opposite gender so that an evangelistic relationship can form.

5. **You should be in a romantic relationship with only one person at a time.** Ultimately, the goal of a Christian not called to singleness is not to have a boyfriend or girlfriend but to have a spouse. It is cruel to date multiple people at one time, having them compete for your affections. Furthermore, it is better preparation for adultery than it is for covenant marriage.

6. **He should initiate and she should respond.** Because the Bible repeatedly states that the husband is to be the loving and leading head of the family, any romantic relationship should begin with the man taking initiative to kindly and respectfully request an opportunity to get to know the woman better. Too many Christian men are too timid and need to have more courage to risk rejection in their pursuit of a wife. Any woman who is not interested in, say, a group outing or a cup of coffee need simply say no, and the man should respect that answer.