



Preparation

- When should you allow your student to begin dating?
 - Parents must make that call themselves. It's less about age and more about maturity.
- Encourage students to think through questions like, *Who do I want to spend the rest of my life with? What kind of person? Who am I compatible with for the long haul?*
- The purpose of dating is marriage.
 - This doesn't mean every high school boyfriend or girlfriend is necessarily the one, but parents should be prepared in case they are.
 - Would you feel comfortable with your student dating their future spouse right now?
- If no, consider delaying their dating life.
 - Is your student mature, ready?
 - Again it's less about being a certain age, and more about the maturity of your student.
- Encourage patience in dating. There's no need to try to rush all aspects of a relationship into a compact amount of time.
- For a young Christ-follower, we encourage students to date other Christ-followers. The Bible speaks to being *unequally yoked*.
 - Missionary dating, dating someone to try to convert them to Christianity, is a recipe for disaster.

- Help students differentiate between an ideal/dream and reality.
- How much should parents share with their students?
 - Be appropriately open/vulnerable.
 - We learn in failure. Share with your students so they may avoid going down the same path.

Boundaries

- Get to know the potential boyfriend/girlfriend.
 - Make them take you out first.
 - Not to grill them or intimidate them, but to get a read on them and communicate your expectations.
- Discover who they are, their intentions, their 5-year plan, etc.
- Have ongoing dialogue about boundaries.
 - Don't feel like those are set in stone
 - Revise, revisit to tighten up or give more freedom in accordance with how students have handled themselves.
 - Communicate expectations, otherwise you'll frustrate students by trying to hold them accountable to uncommunicated expectations.

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- Help students see that they shouldn't over-spiritualize their dating relationship.
 - Advise caution in spiritually intimate dating:
 - This can create false intimacy.
 - Students (and adults) shouldn't have their boyfriend or girlfriend as their accountability partner. Seek same sex accountability

RESOURCES

Interviewing Your Daughter's Date by Dennis Rainey.

When a dating relationship ends.

- Don't play the God card.
- It's ok for a relationship to end.
 - All dating relationships will end one of two ways: break up or marriage.
 - Try to help students understand that their identity is not tied up in their dating relationship.
 - That they shouldn't be callous and just throw people away when they're done with them.
 - Show empathy. It's not the end of the world, but it may feel that way to the student. Be patient.