

Preacher's Pen points

Never on the first date?



(Editor's note: The subject of human sexuality is a sensitive topic. I have tried to address it with respect for the sensibilities of those unused to such discussions, but with enough frankness to be clear. Please read with this in mind.)

Dubious Advice

Sometimes the advice we get in the media is just plain wrong! In anticipation of Valentine's Day, last week's USA Weekend featured an article by Dennie Hughes called "Dennie's 8 Simple Rules for Dating". Though there was some practical wisdom in many of the recommendations, I was shocked by rule #3—"Never have sex on the first date...ever". Dennie went on to observe that "having sex on the first date doesn't make you a bad person" but that it would ultimately make those who had no further dates "feel like one".

I would be the first to urge those who date to refrain from sexual relationships; but not merely for the pragmatic reasons that Dennie suggests. Yes, it is dangerous to become so intimate with someone you barely know! Yes, you will feel used if you never see that person again! And yes, your date will lose respect for you if you so easily yield to sexual impulses. However, I would suggest a different reason—it's wrong, pure and simple!

God's Plan for Marriage & Sexual Expression

Since God is the creator of marriage and sexuality, He alone reserves the right to say what is proper and improper in relationships between the sexes (Gen. 1:26). From the beginning He has reserved sexual expression for the marriage bed. The Hebrew writer wrote, "*Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will*

judge" (Heb. 13:4). Sexual relationships outside of a divinely-approved marriage have been forbidden by God and are commonly condemned in Biblical catalogues of immoral behavior. Paul wrote, "*Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*" (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Though a person may not like the characterization, fornication does indeed make one "a bad person"!

Incentives

The incentives to moral purity, though not always evident to those seeking a relationship, are numerous. Refraining from a sexual relationship outside of marriage enables a dating couple to build a relationship on character rather than "chemistry". It prevents the kind of shame to which Hughes alludes when the relationship doesn't work out. It reserves sexual intimacy as a special gift for the person with whom you intend to spend the rest of your life. It protects against unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

God's "Advice"

God's advice, or shall we say command, to the unmarried is quite clear. "*Flee fornication*" (1 Cor. 6:18). A God who has nothing but love for us would never forbid what is innocent or harmless. We must learn to trust both His love and His wisdom in human relationships. Had His word been consulted on dating, rule three might have read this way, "Never have sex on the first date ever...or on any other date before the marriage ceremony!" —Johnny Felker (www.truthchasers.com)