

JACK'S CORNER Part 1

QUESTION: My 12-year-old daughter is “boy crazy”. She’s constantly on the phone talking about boys or to boys. She says that she is “going with” some boy in her class. What should I do with her?

ANSWER: What an **opportunity** for you and your husband to grow closer to your daughter and instill biblical values and goals!

1. **Dad, don't let this opportunity pass you by!** Your daughter will be drawn to boys who are in some way (good or bad) a reflection of you. Treat her in a way that will make her settle for nothing less than a man like her godly father.
2. **Dad,** (I stress “Dad” because moms are generally more prone to have these kinds of conversations automatically.) have a **continuing dialogue** with your daughter about relationships, sexuality, and your present and future vision for her based on biblical principles. Wouldn't it be wonderful for you to search the Scriptures with your daughter at your side! Let her see God's commands in print!
3. **Dad,** have “dates” with your daughter modeling how a good relationship with a man should be. Also, model with your wife how a godly man treats a woman.
4. Parents, pray often with her and without her regarding her present and future relationships with boys. This will both unleash the power of God in her life and make you more cognizant and vigilant in your awareness of situations.
5. Don't let her date until she is sixteen or older. Research shows girls who start one-on-one dating after sixteen have 5 to 6 times **less** occurrences of pregnancies, sexual abuse in dating relationships, and emotional scarring. Until sixteen, only supervised group activities should be allowed.
6. **Dad,** uncompromisingly **guard your family** against the filth promoted by many of the movie, TV, Internet, and music industries.
7. I believe Christians should not enter into such an intimate relationship as dating with a non-believer (2 COR. 6:14-16). Loneliness is a powerful force. Too often girls are willing to compromise or even abandon their faith for a relationship with a boy. (I'll address this issue further in the next *Jack's Corner*.) **Dad, make your faith so attractive to your daughter that she will not consider compromise.**
Although dating is not mentioned in the Bible (It's a modern creation.), the Bible does speak often about how we are to treat others in relationship. Enjoy searching the Scriptures as a family. What blessings await you!

JACK'S CORNER Part II

QUESTION: Our daughter is so excited because a boy has taken an interest in her. He has asked her on a date. She is 14 and he is not a Christian. At this age, what do you think our role as parents should be?

ANSWER: Your role will be difficult and will require great faith and conviction in the midst of your fear...and I hope there is an element of fear. **Prepare yourselves;** most parents let dating “sorta happen.” This is a time in your daughter’s life when she believes the romantic fantasies she has cultivated over the years might come true. Through stories, movies, music and magazines, she has been primed and brainwashed into many false ideas of dating and romance:

1. Sex is a part of dating and always brings people closer. 2. Sex is always wonderful. 3. Sex is irresistible. 4. Everyone is having sex. 5. To be beautiful, grownup, fun, with it, you must have sex. 6. There are no negative consequences of having sex. 7. Sex equals love. 8. There are no good reasons not to have sex if it’s available. 9. It doesn’t really matter who you date as long as you like each other.

Now, it’s finally her turn; a boy has taken an interest in her. This attention is often so flattering, so titillating, so much like a dream come true, that her reasoning and faith conviction will go out the window. That is why I believe it is essential that parents have an **on-going dialogue** with their teens about relationships and dating (see last week’s *Jack’s Corner*), and that they set standards for dating. Consider the following ideas:

1. **No one-on-one dating until 16.** (See last week’s article.)
2. **Date only practicing Christians.** I believe that 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 applies to dating relationships. St. Paul talks about not being “unequally yoked” with an unbeliever. Dating is a “yoking” relationship. Someone will compromise morals and values in order to move in the same direction (Like yoked animals). That person is almost always the Christian girl. Rather than endure hurt and loneliness, many Christian girls have given in to pressures from boys. (Obviously, dating Christian boys is not risk free, but at least there is common moral and spiritual ground.)
3. **Have prospective dates over to your home for an interview.** If the boy is really interested in your daughter, he’ll be willing.
4. **Dating activities should be approved in advance;** rarely should there be last minute changes.
5. **Group dating should be encouraged.** There is less chance of compromising situations.
6. **No parking or meeting at someone’s home without adults present.** A recent survey reported that most teens lose their virginity in their own homes.
7. **No overt public displays of affection.** This will protect your teen’s reputation. Also, touch means different things to males and females.

8. **Petting, necking, and caressing are saved for the marriage.** Behaviors, which inside of marriage are foreplay, simply lead to frustration and a desire for more in a dating relationship.
9. **Pray with and for your daughter** about the man she will someday marry, and the gift of her virginity she might give him.
10. **Help your daughter plan in advance** how to verbalize her standards, how to say “No”, how she to protect her erogenous zone, and how she to avoid compromising situations.

If these suggestions sound too difficult and unrealistic, you too have bought into the morality of the world at large. For literally thousands of years, these ideas were generally accepted and generally worked. Dating, as we know it, is a modern invention. So much heartache could be avoided if we didn't believe we have to live like Hollywood. God wants to provide good things for us, and protect us from the bad. Ultimately, the kind of relationship you have with your daughter, and the kind of relationship she has with Christ, will determine the success of implementing these ideas. Prepare for battle!

Jack Lipski, M.A.
SOTHCS Counselor
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