

# *My True Love Story*

---

## *Love is a Beautiful Thing*

I grew up in a home where my Mom and Dad had both experienced a “bad marriage” and found each other later in life and started a new life together in Fort Wayne Indiana and then had me. I grew up as their only child and I always saw true love and respect within their new marriage.



Now that Nancy and I have just celebrated our two-year anniversary I realize more than ever that a good marriage is the most precious and valued treasure someone can ever hope to have in life. *(Of course after salvation and a personal relationship with Jesus.)*

And I also believe from the time a person is born they begin to learn what a family is. Therefore, my goal is to teach you how to plan ahead to have a great marriage that will then result in a great family.

Our love story is very special and valuable to us because we waited our whole life for true love. And it is our prayer that everyone who reads this booklet will experience their own “Romeo & Juliet” love story and share love with another person as we have shared each other’s love for the past two years.

## ***Pumped Up With Testosterone***

Though I was raised in a Christian family, I chose at the age of eleven to turn away from God and live an ungodly life. My experiences with girls were always very self-centered and self-gratifying.

I remember kissing a girl for the first time in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and then immediately “breaking up” with her because all I wanted was to tell my friends I had kissed a girl (she was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade). From that time on I was very mean and disrespectful toward girls.

I look back now and can see that I acted that way because I was a very insecure young boy. I was afraid to really let people know my true feelings and since I was “pumped up” with testosterone I had only one thing on mind with girls –SEX!!

And just like how I used a girl for my first kiss when I was only eleven, by the time I was fifteen I used a girl just to have sex with her. I was a freshman and she was a senior. A mutual friend told me that she liked me so we went out on our first date and had sex.

A date for me back then would usually consist of me taking the girl out for food, smoking weed (marijuana) in a park, and then going as far as they would let me go. Well, this date went according to plan, but instead of parking in a park, we parked in the parking lot of a big church and had sex in the back of her car.

My first time was a disaster in many ways: First, I had no idea what I was doing and neither did she, therefore it was extremely “awkward”. It was not a pleasurable experience in any way. Second, even though I had got what I wanted I felt terrible because I knew this was different from the previous times that I had used girls. I felt like a big jerk because not

only did she feel rejected, but I also had a very deep sense of regret and shame.

And lastly, the most important person I knew that I had hurt was God. Because as a little boy I remember promising Him not to have sex until I was married. I knew this selfish act was a big “no-no” in God’s eyes. Bottom line... it was HORRIBLE!!

Take a moment to read what Paul had to say about people like myself who sin sexually against their own body.

***1 Corinthians 6:9-20,***

9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.



12 "Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"—but I will not be mastered by anything. 13 "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it

is said, "The two will become one flesh." 17 But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. 19 Do you not know that your body is a temple 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 body.

Can you clearly see that not only was I not going to heaven, but also I was living a cursed life because of what I was doing with my body?

But that did not stop me, for the next three years I lived like a "dog". I had one-night stands and short-term relationships that would end either because the girl would not have sex with



me or because I would like another girl more. I was never cheated on because I never had a long enough relationship to be cheated on. But I cheated on many girls and cheated with many girls who I either knew they had boyfriends and I didn't care, or they never told me because I never asked. This of course led to fights and loss of friendships.

I do not write these things to you to "boast" because it was the most hurtful thing I could have ever done to myself. Living a sexually impure life led to many hurts and pains. I remember one time being in a hotel with two other guys and four girls for a "sex party". We had alcohol, drugs, and all the time we needed to do whatever we felt like doing.

I had just met the girls early that day and they wanted it just as much as we did. But this time it was different. I couldn't shake the "bad feelings" I was having in my gut. I knew this was wrong- very, very, wrong.

We were in Milwaukee and the friend I had traveled with was determined to stay all night and make the trip another story we would share with our friends back home. But the feelings got worse and worse. I look back now and can see that this was the Holy Spirit bringing me conviction and trying to spare me from making my life more miserable and painful.

I remember just looking at my friend and saying, "Man, I don't feel good. Lets head back home." The look he gave me makes me laugh just thinking about it. I can only imagine what he was thinking. But since this was a regularly thing for us he eventually gave in and agreed to leave. The girls were upset, but I didn't care, I just couldn't do it anymore.



From that point on I was never the same. God was using my conscience to help me see how wrong sex outside of marriage really is.

As a matter of fact bad relationships were one of the main problems that led to my "break down" and desperate need for salvation. When I did finally get saved at the age of 18, on November 5<sup>th</sup> 1995, the greatest thing that God did for me was forgive me of my wicked behavior and heal my broken heart.

### ***Isaiah 61:1-3,***

1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,

2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,

3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

## ***Jesus Healed My Broken Heart***

I can remember for weeks after I got saved all I would do is cry when I got in the presence of God. I cried because I could feel Jesus getting all the junk out of my heart and making me a new emotionally healed person.

Once I became a Christian I truly did not want to compromise and allow anything to get in my way of serving God- especially girls. I had to learn for the first time how to say “no” to sex and I had to learn how to fight the battle of lust in my mind.

After getting saved I did not date for over three years. I went to such an opposite extreme that while in Bible College even the Professors joked around and would say things like, “Joe is going to be the only single pastor who graduated from this school because he never is around the girls.”

Also, my other minister friends that were getting married in Bible College said that I was going to be a “Bachelor til’ the Rapture”. I thank God today that He had plans for me to get married, but it literally took me years to be totally healed and “re-programmed”.

That is one of the main reasons why I have wrote this booklet. First, so that people can avoid the hurt and the pain that I have gone through and learn from me that what the world offers with sex and relationships in not worth the price a person has to pay. And second, if someone has gone through a bad past God can still heal their heart and make everything new. God can still bring “true love” into their lives.

***Matthew 11:28-30,***

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

***Then Came Nancy!!***

By the time Nancy came into my life I was already healed of my past and had learned how to be a good man. The first time we meet I was twenty-three years old and she was eighteen. We both were in relationships at the time, but we can both remember having a sense of attraction to each other.

Nancy had just gotten saved and she was serious about God and was ready to be in ministry and she wanted a man of God that would help make her dreams come true. However, the person she was with did not share the same goals and dreams.



As for me, I was involved in my first serious relationship as a Christian, but it wasn't a good one. We fought all the time and eventually she cheated on me and we then broke up.

As the years passed Nancy and I would see each other at the Mardi Gras outreaches once a year and we began to realize that there was a connection.

But it wasn't until I moved to Chicago to work in her home church that we finally gave love a chance between us. When

we first dated Nancy knew that I was the one for her, but since I had been hurt in my last and only Christian relationship, I wasn't sure what I wanted. Therefore it took me a little bit longer. But my heart eventually opened up to her and I realized that she was the one God had for me.

The funny thing was that from the first time my Dad hugged Nancy, he knew she was the one for me because God spoke to him and told him that she was going to be my wife. And from the first time Nancy's Mom saw me, she heard God say to her, "That's your son!!" WOW!!

We then "dated" for three months and I asked her to marry me, and she said "YES!!" Our engagement only lasted four more months and then we were married on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2005.

Our story shows that God will make all things work together for His good. And He gives us all the things we need when choose to seek Him first. Nancy and I were both consumed with loving God and doing His will. Therefore, when it was God's timing He choose for our paths to cross and to begin to travel through life together.

The principles that you are going to learn are the same ones that Nancy and I followed and are the same that I have taught for many years and have seen many strong marriages built from them.

I believe no matter how old you are, you are never to young to start thinking about marriage. After choosing Jesus, marriage will be biggest decision of your life. Nancy and I pray that as you read this booklet you will be given the power of the Holy Spirit to live a whole life and have a great family and marriage.

***1 Corinthians 13:4-8,***

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails.

Enjoy this booklet and get ready to learn the “Seven Steps to Marriage!!”

Living in Christ’s Love,

Joe Wprostek  
Pastor of Metro Praise

# ***Table of Contents – Seven Steps***

---

<b>Introduction: Joe’s True Love</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Step 1: The Search</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Step 2: The Intro</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Step 3: The Taste Test</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Step 4: Love vs. Lust</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Step 5: Down for Life</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Step 6: The Engagement</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Step 7: The Joining</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Appendix A “Sexual Perversion”</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Appendix B “Homosexuality”</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Appendix C “Pornography &amp; Masturbation”</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Appendix D “Becoming a Virgin Again”</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Appendix F “Internet Dating”</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Appendix G “YourSpace or God’sSpace?”</b>	<b>96</b>

## Step 1

# *The Search*

---

## *What Are You Looking For?*

“The Search” is all about you looking for the type of person you want to spend the rest of your life with. This person has to be what God wants for you. He or she must be the best, so do not settle for anything less!!

Before you even start to date or look for a spouse, you must first know who God expects you to be and what He wants you to be looking for. Here are two important things to know to have a successful search for the right person.

1. God wants the man to be a godly man before he dates.
2. God wants the woman to be a godly woman before she dates.

## *2 Corinthians 6:14-15,*

14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

Paul is teaching in this verse that unbelievers should not be joined together with believers and this truth is especially true in marriage. I know dozens of stories of Christians who tried to date and be close with non-Christians and it ended with them falling away from God and doing ungodly things.

One such story is about a couple that met at youth group. The girl loved Jesus and was a virgin and wanted to wait to have

sex until marriage. The young man used to be a strong Christian but he got lukewarm and lived a sinful life.

The girl was warned by the youth pastor not to date the young man because he wasn't the same as when he was on fire for Jesus. But she did not listen and within six months she became pregnant. Now she is married to the man because she did not want to shame her family. And today they do not go church anymore because the husband just wants hang out on Sundays.



What a tragedy!! And it happens all the time. Of course I believe in forgiveness and restoration for people like that, but I would rather see them never fall and continue to live for Jesus and get married and have children the right way.

Today decide that you will be the person God wants you to be and that you will only look for the type of person God says is good.

Please pray this prayer before reading the attributes of a godly man and woman.

*Jesus,*

*I ask you today to show me who I really am. Help me to see the areas of my life that need to change. And help me to have wisdom to know what I should be looking for in a spouse. I do not want to compromise or settle for anything less than Your best! I love you and trust you with my life because You want what is best for me!!*

*Amen.*

## ***(1) The Attributes of a Godly Man***

Before a man should ever date He must become the type of man God designed Him to be. And before a woman accepts the friendship of a single man she must make sure that he is a godly man worthy of her time.

Read 1 Peter 5:5-9 & Titus 2:6-8 to see what a godly man looks like.

### ***1 Peter 5:5-9,***

5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

### ***Titus 2:6-8,***

6 Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. 7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness

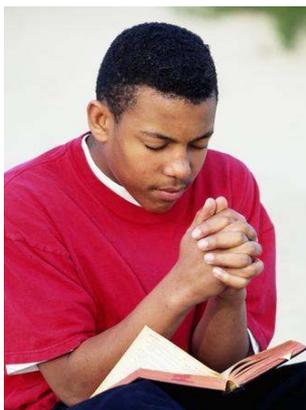
8 and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

Here is a list of things that make a man godly and make a man ready to be a good husband:

1. **He is humbly serving God and keeping His commands** – **1 Peter 5:6-8 & Titus 2:7.** This is important because unless a man loves and serves God he will never have a blessed family.

2. **He is humbly serving older men and helping in the church – 1 Peter 5:5 & Titus 2:8.** This is important because it shows that he can be a servant. If a man cannot be a servant, then he will never be a good leader.
3. **He is self-controlled – 1 Peter 5:8 & Titus 2:6.** He is in control of his emotions, he does not masturbate or look at pornography, and he is in control of his anger and he acts like Jesus.
4. **He is an example of a Christian in how he talks, in his integrity, and seriousness – Titus 2:7.** He is not a “goof off”, but rather he is a leader and people respect him. He does not curse or talk dirty, and he keeps his word because he does not tell lies or act deceitful.
5. **His pastor and leaders have nothing bad to say about him – Titus 2:8.** This is important because if he does not have a good reputation in church and with his family, then he is even worse when he is with his friends.

If you are a man, then you are to be this type of man. You are



to live a god-like life. People around you must be able to tell the difference between you and the world. You should be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. If you are not consistently living a life like the list above then you are not ready to date. You must wait until God makes you like the man described in the Bible.

If you are a woman, then you should memorize this list and make sure whatever guy approaches you that he lives like this. If you see him slip or fail in any of these areas then he is not ready for

you. You must be patient and wait for only a man who lives like the Bible to be your “special friend”. If they still approach you tell them, “Go talk to my pastor and learn what type of man I am waiting!”

## ***(2) The Attributes of a Godly Woman***

To be honest most non-Christian men today only care about women’s looks. If she looks good, then she is “all good”. But the Bible describes a woman’s true beauty in a much different way. The Bible teaches that a woman must be a holy and pure woman to be considered a good wife.

The Bible also says that if she is impure and dirty in the way she dresses and acts then she is more like a pig and prostitute than a woman worthy of marriage.

### ***Proverbs 11:22,***

Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.

### ***Proverbs 5:22,***

3 For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; 4 but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword.

5 Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.  
6 She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths are crooked, but she knows it not.

There is nothing more beautiful than a godly woman who lives like Jesus. When I saw Nancy and how she worshipped God she literally took my breath away!! Take some time to read what Paul said made a woman breath taking and beautiful.

## **1 Timothy 2:9-15,**

9 I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, 10 but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

11 A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

15 But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Here are the attributes of a godly woman:

1. **A godly woman is full of faith, love, and holiness - 1 Timothy 2:15.** When a woman puts her faith in God she must show that life is not just about her, it's about God. She must love like Jesus loved and not be bitter or have a bad attitude. And she must have a life that is morally pure and holy.
2. **She must dress modestly - 1 Timothy 2:9.** If you see a woman dress dirty it is because she wants dirty men to look at her. But if she dresses nice and modest, then she wants people to see her heart, more than her breasts and butt.
3. **A godly woman must be able to be quiet and submissive.** Too many woman want to be loud and controlling. They think it shows that they are equal



with men. But really it shows that a woman does not respect God and the way he made her.

This does not mean she cannot be a successful businessperson or a leader, but in marriage she must show that she can follow the lead of God and her husband.

4. **She must be willing to be a good mother – 1 Timothy 2:15.** If a woman is not ready to be a good mother, then she is not ready to be a good wife and she have time to grow into the woman God made her to be.
5. **She must be a worshipper of God.** The way she worships God will determine the type of leader she will be in the home and in the world. She must show that she loves God more than her husband, family, and money. A godly woman is madly in love with Jesus.

If you are woman then ask God to make you the type of woman that is worthy to be called His daughter. If you still struggle in these areas, take time and allow the Holy Spirit to develop you into the beautiful person God has made you to be. Only then will a godly man pursue you and lay down his life for your love.

If you are a man then do not pursue the “booty” but rather pursue the “beauty” of a godly Christian woman. Look for the fruit of the Spirit in her life (Galatians 5:22) and let her inner beauty shine in your heart. Do not look at women like the world does; rather look at the beauty of a godly woman who loves God with all her heart and soul. Then you will be truly blessed with a “hot momma”!!

In closing, take a moment to read Proverbs 31 and see how King Solomon described the true beauty of a godly woman. This type of woman is known as a “Proverbs 31 Woman”!

## ***Let the Search Begin***

Now that you know what type of person you should be and what type of person to look for in the opposite sex, begin to ask God to direct your steps so that you will find or be found be the person He made for you.

Remember that your husband or wife is in God's hands, so seek Him first and when it is His time He will give you all that you need. And for those who may have to wait for months or even years, do not give up or settle for less, God's best is coming!!

### ***Matthew 6:33,***

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

### ***Proverbs 3:3-5,***

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

## **Questions:**

1. Have you ever dated the wrong way? What happened?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Names some qualities of a godly man.



## Step 2

# *The Intro*

---

## *How to Meet the Right Person*

“The Intro” is all about how to approach the person you think may be what you are looking for and how to start a good friendship with that person. This lesson will teach you how to make an introduction into someone’s life the right way and how to begin to build a strong godly relationship with that person.



To meet the right person you may marry one day you must first know the following truths:

1. God has chosen the man to find the woman.
2. God has a specific time when a person can date.
3. God has specific rules for “Christian dating”.

The first time I tried to get close to a girl I was interested in I did it all wrong. I probably made her think I was some kind of “stalker”. I wrote her a long letter telling her all my feelings and she just wrote back- “It was nice meeting you, but I am not ready to date.” We had only known each other for a week on a mission trip.

The reason I scared the girl away was because I did not learn how to be her friend first. The most important part about meeting your husband or wife is being their friend. I strongly

recommend everyone learn to be friends before anything romantic every starts!!

Read in Proverbs the secret of having friends.

***Proverbs 18:24 (KJV),***

“A man that has friends must show himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.”

What this verse is simply teaching is that to be a friend you must become a friend. As you learn the different rules about dating and meeting the right person, remember that friendship is the most important part of meeting someone.

***(1) God Has Chosen the Man to Search For the Woman***

The Bible gives clear instruction that the man is to pursue the woman. It may seem “old fashioned” and “outdated”, but God’s ways are eternal and they are the most successful.

***Proverbs 18:22,***

“He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.”

This verse teaches that a man must find his wife. That does not mean that the woman cannot have interest in a man, but she is to wait for the man to start the relationship. The reason is because once the man and woman are married God has



designed the man to be the “head” of the household. (More will be said about roles in the marriage in Step 7.)

Also, because the woman is viewed in the Bible like the Church, men are to be like Jesus and pursue the women and prove to them that they are worthy of their love. For a woman it may seem hard to wait, but if they take dating into their own hands and begin to pursue men, most of the time the men will take advantage of them and consider their love “cheap” and “easy”.

There is nothing more beautiful then to watch a man work hard at winning the attention of a woman he likes. Every woman should decide to make the man who likes her prove it by making the first move and showing that he is worthy of her time.

## ***(2) God Has A Specific Time for a Person to Date***

Single people always ask me, “When is it a good time to date?” There is not a set answer for every person because each person is at a different place both spiritual and emotionally.

Remember, I waited over three years after getting saved to date, so even if you meet all these requirements, wait until God gives you the release to date.

Here are some guidelines that I believe every person must meet before they even consider dating.

1. **Be a Christian for at least a year.** This will give you time to develop your relationship with God.
2. **First become the “type” of man or woman that God says makes a good husband or wife.** God wants you to be a godly person before you bring someone into your life.

3. **Make sure you have the permission of your parents.** Dating should involve your family so that they can help you see what God has for you.
4. **Talk to your Pastor or leader first to see if you're spiritually and emotionally ready.** Be accountable to a spiritual leader that can help you stay focused on Jesus even while dating.
5. **Make a list of the things you are looking for in marriage.** If you do not have a goal you will settle for anything. Make sure you have a certain type of person you are looking for so you do not fall for anyone.
6. **Pray and ask God for His permission.** If you have a good relationship with God, you will know when it is a good time to date because He will speak to your heart.
7. **Understand how to date like a Christian.** Remember, you are not going to date like the "world", but you are going to date like a Christian. Get your dating tips from the Bible, not "SEVENTEEN".

Always remember that God has a plan for your life and He wants to bless you. Begin to date when God says it is time



and you will always be happy you did. Because if you are not ready you may slip and fall, get hurt, or even have children outside of marriage and ruin God's plan for your family.

I wish I could have all the young people who did it their way come back to church and tell how much pain they have suffered because they could not wait, but even then, if you do not wait because you love God, not even their story will make you wait. Do it God's way, because you love and respect His commands.

### *Proverbs 16:25,*

There is a way that seems right to a man,  
but in the end it leads to death.

### *Proverbs 12:28,*

In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality.

## ***(3) God Has Specific Rules for Christian Dating***

First, let me start off by saying that the Bible does not teach, “dating” as the world currently does it. Dating like the world means a person sees someone they like and then they ask them for their number and they go out on a “date” and begin to get to know each other. This is the exact opposite of how God intends people to date.

Therefore, because “dating” is so wrong many pastors chose to use the word “court” or “special friendship” to describe how God wants men and woman to fall in love. But since I want to keep this booklet simple I will use the term “Christian Dating” to describe what it means, “to be romantic with the opposite sex.”

Now that you understand that God does not want you to date like the world. Here are His guidelines for “Christian Dating”:

1. **Never date a Non-Christian.** Make sure they have a relationship with God just like you. Do not settle for less, settling in dating leads to hardships in marriage. It is better to wait for God’s best then to be divorced in your twenties.
2. **Put friendship before romance.** Do not let your heart grow attached to someone until you have become their friend and really seen the type of person they really are.

3. **Spend time in groups and public places.** Do not go out by yourselves and be alone. Spend time with friends, family, and at church activities.
4. **Make God a priority.** Spend time praying together and talking about God. Read the Bible together and discuss your plans for the future. Make God the center of your relationship.
5. **The man should ask the parents permission to date their daughter.** Make sure to have both parents permission, but it is good character to have the man ask the woman's family first. He should simply ask if he could date their daughter.
6. **Guard Your Heart.** Do not let your emotions get out of control. Ask God for wisdom to know how much affection to show at different times.
7. **Stay pure.** Do not break God's commands. God warns against sexual immorality. Be sure to stay accountable to your parents and spiritual leaders so you do not fall into sin.

***Proverbs 4:23,***

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

***Galatians 5:16-21***

16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality...and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

## ***Go out and make new friends!!***



Now that you have a good understanding of how God wants you to meet the person you are interested in- Go out and make new friends!! If the person does not feel the same way and does not desire to be your friend than “shake it off” and know

that person is not God’s best for you.

And after making friends with someone and you know that they are not for you to marry than just simply stay their friend, because friendship does not need to be lost.

But when romance has entered picture, you probably will not be able to be that person’s friend anymore, because past romantic feelings will get in the way. So decide to keep your heart in control and just be someone’s friend first!! It is always good have a friend!

### ***Questions:***

1. When is the right time to date?
2. What are some things that every person should do before they date?



## Step 3

# *The Taste Test*

---

## *Friend or Marriage Partner*

“The Taste Test” is the step where you begin to search and see if your new friend is a potential marriage partner or just a friend. A great benefit of dating like a Christian is that even when you do not sense God leading you to grow closer to your “friend” you still can be good friends.

However, when you date like the world, you share intimate feelings and open up your heart so much that if it doesn’t work out, a “normal” friendship after the dating relationship is practically impossible and very awkward.



The “Taste Test” is all about getting to know the person you feel attracted to and finding out what God’s will is concerning your relationship. Do not try to get to know a person by getting into a relationship with them. But rather, start a relationship with someone you already have built a friendship with.

Here are some verses that teach to be prudent. Prudent means to be “wise and understanding in what you do”. Prudence is a trait you want to have when you are deciding if a person is a marriage partner or just a friend.

### *Proverbs 14:8 (NLT),*

The prudent understand where they are going, but fools deceive themselves.

### ***Proverbs 14:15,***

A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps.

### ***Proverbs 19:14,***

Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.

## ***Friendship Then Love***

When Nancy I first met I was a pastor in New Orleans and she was a student leader in her youth group in Chicago. We both felt some attraction and really loved each other's heart for God, but we did not know each other very well and we were not in a place to get to know each other more.

Over the next three years we would see each other at the Mardi Gras Outreach that my friend hosted. At the outreach we were partners and had the chance to spend a lot of time together. During those times we were able to talk and get to know each other more.

By the time I came to work as the youth pastor at Nancy's church she knew that I was the right man for her. But I still was not sure. So I began to spend more time with her in groups and ask her questions. After a few months I was ready to ask her out for dinner. Of course we had our parents and pastor's permission, but we also had already built a close friendship.

If either one of us doubted we were God's best for each other, we would never had even gone out on one date. We would have just remained friends. But since we waited and did it the right way we could begin to fall in love, because we were already good friends.

Ecclesiastes 3:8 says there is a “time to love”, make sure you are falling in love the right way and at the right time!

### ***Blinded by Romance***

I think that too many teenagers find someone they like and immediately they want to go on a romantic date with them before they even have a chance to get to know the other person. And as a result they end up sinning and breaking each other’s heart because they never took the time to really love the person, they just loved the feeling of being in love.



It is almost impossible to truly get to know a person after you have already made the relationship romantic. Because after your feelings and romance get involved you do not clearly see the person for who they are, all you see is your strong feelings for the other person. And that is why many people never experience true love, because they only know how to base love on their feelings, instead of who the other person really is.

I fell in love with who Nancy was, not just because I thought she was a “hot momma” (though she is!! 😊). And even now, the more I get to know her, the more I fall in love with her.

Today many marriages end in divorce, because they thought they really loved the other person, but really all they loved was the feeling of romance (hugs, kisses, sex, etc). They never really spent time getting to know the details of the other person’s life; they just “jumped” into a serious relationship and then “jumped” into bed before the foundation of friendship was ever laid. And when the feelings went away, they just “jumped”

out of the relationship and they began to look for another relationship to “jump” into.

Here are two statements to remember: “First comes friendship, then comes marriage, then comes babies in the baby carriage!!” And, “Friendship in marriage makes true love last.”

### ***Proverbs 17:17a,***

“A friend loves at all times...”

## ***Brothers & Sisters***

Before you get serious in a relationship and pass this stage, you are to treat each other just like brothers and sisters. Do you give long open mouth kisses to your brother? Do you sit alone for hours laying your head in your sister’s lap? OF COURSE NOT!!! Then do not do it in your friendship with the opposite sex!!



Read how Paul taught Timothy to treat young ladies.

### ***1Timothy 5:1a-2***

Treat younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

Paul taught Timothy to treat woman with “absolute purity”. That means Timothy could not be involved in any type of sexual immorality with woman. He had to treat them like sisters.

The same is true for you today as you begin to build friendships with the opposite sex. Whether you are a male or female you are to treat the opposite sex like a sibling.

Stay friends without any romance until you know that God has spoken to you, to the other person, and to both your families. Do not be in a hurry to fall in love. Realize that if sex were all couples needed to be happy, then there would never be a divorce. Sex is great when it done the right way with the right person, other wise it is sin and it will lead to deep hurt and frustration.

Also, I believe that if the person you are being romantic with is not God's choice for you to marry then you are being intimate with someone else's spouse. Think about that, God has another person for them to marry and you are stealing their first love, their first kiss, etc. Be sure to make friendship the only step you stay on until you know that he or she is the one for you to marry!!

## ***Spending Time Together***

Here are some helpful things to do with your friend:

1. **Do group activities.** Go shopping with friends, go to the beach, find hobbies you both enjoy and have fun together
2. **Spend time talking and listening to each other.** Use the phone, myspace, texting, etc. Talk about these type of subjects:
  - a. How was your day?
  - b. What do you want to do after you graduate school?
  - c. What do you like most about your family? What do you like least? Why?
  - d. What are your dreams for the future?
  - e. What are your favorites music groups? Why?
  - f. How did you become a Christian?
  - g. Who are your best friends? Why?

- h. What type of family do you want one day?
3. **Spend time at each other's house with family.** Be around each other's family and do things together. Watch how they treat their parents.

Men will never treat their wife better than their mom. And women will never listen to their husband better than their dad.

4. **Spend time in church activities.** Go to small groups together, mission trips, etc.

### ***What Not to Do:***

Here are some things NOT TO DO!!

1. **Do not get physical with each other.** Long hugs, kissing, etc.
2. **Do not talk about your feelings.** Spend time getting to know who the other person really is. You cannot do that focusing on your feelings. Remember, it is not all about YOUR feelings; it is all about what GOD'S perfect will is.
3. **Do not be alone.** Always try to be around other people. Being alone opens the doors to many temptations.
4. **Do not make commitments or promises.** Wait until you hear God speak before you make any commitments.

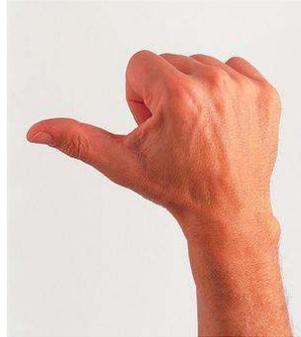
## ***Yay or Nay***

After being friends with a person you will know in your heart whether they are just a friend or “THE ONE”. Because there is only one person in the whole world you will marry, everyone else will just be your friend. Therefore, do not go around “falling in love” with all your friends!!

Your goal should be the following: **“I will only fall in love with the person God wants me to marry”.**

Do not be discouraged if you have messed up in the past. God is the God of new beginnings. You can start over the right way. And if you have been in a relationship where you did everything right and it still ended in heartbreak, do not get discouraged, God’s best is on the way.

Stay close to Jesus and do not give up. I waited nine years after becoming a Christian to get married- I was 28. If you had the choice of (a) Have a lot of relationships that ended in heartbreak and confusion or (b) One relationships that resulted in true love that lasted your life. Which would you choose? And would you be willing to wait as long as it took for God to bring you the best?



Choose to wait on God and you will not regret it. You may see others going on dates and “falling in and out of love”, but do not be like them. Be very choosy and picky when it comes to your dates, make sure the person you are interested in passes the “Taste Test” and when they do, you will be one step closer to TRUE LOVE!!

***Questions:***

1. What is the “Taste Test”? Explain why it is important.
2. How do most people go about “falling in love”? Why is it wrong in God’s eyes?
3. Name the four things you should do to build a closer friendship with the opposite sex.
4. What are the four things you should not do with someone you are attracted to?
5. How can someone “steal romance”?
6. How many dates have you gone on? Describe two of them.
7. Are you willing to take “Taste Test”? Explain why it is important to you.

## Step 4

# *Love vs. Lust*

---

### *True Love*

Most people today do not know what true love really is. That is why so many marriages and relationships fail and end in heartbreak. True love is more than just a physical attraction or “good feeling”. God defines true love best in the Bible as “unconditional and self-sacrificing”. Therefore, to truly experience love you must first have God in your life.



How can you expect someone to truly love you, when they do not know how to truly love God first? And how do you expect to truly love someone with all your heart, when you still love yourself more than anyone else?

One of the best definitions of love is “sacrifice”. Most people love themselves more than they love anyone else and they do not know how to be “self-LESS”, because they are so “SELf-ish”. Especially with most teenagers, they only know how to think about themselves ALL THE TIME. They act as if the whole world revolves around them!! That is why it is important to only date those who really love God, because they have learned to love God more than themselves.

If there is true love, than there is something called “false love”. I like to call “false love”- “LUST”. Lust is to want something for your own selfish desires. When it comes to relationships lust can be the desire to have sex and intimacy without commitment, sacrifice, and godliness. And it can also be the

desire to want a partner only to gratify your own emotional needs. Lust is selfish, while true love is selfless.

In this lesson you will learn the Biblical definition of love and learn how to tell the difference between love and lust. But first take a moment to read a story about a woman that thought her fiancé loved her, but really all he had was lust.

### ***Until Death Do We Part***

Bob and Cindy were high school sweethearts from the time they first met at 16. He was an athletic young man who loved to play sports and surf at the beach and she was a very attractive girl that had the chance to be a model after she finished high school.

The got married in their early twenties and began a life together believing they were both truly in love. Cindy was starting to make good money as a model and Bob was ready to go to law school and become a lawyer. But one day as Cindy was riding in a car with her friend she go into a horrible accident. A semi truck hit her on the highway and caused her car to turn over and flip many times and catch on fire.



Bob rushed to the hospital to find out what happened to his high school sweetheart. When he got to the emergency room Cindy was in a coma and the doctor said she may never come out. Bob was also told that Cindy had lost her arm and one eye in the accident and had a lot of deep cuts all over her body and face. She had also many broken bones and suffered major head trauma.

Bob then was told that if Cindy were to live and come out of the coma that it would take at least 1-2 years of intensive therapy to bring her back to health. Bob grew very sad and left the hospital in tears.

A few days later Cindy came out of the coma and asked where Bob was. She was then given a letter from her mom that Bob had brought by. The letter read,

*"I am sorry but I can no longer be with you, here is the ring you gave me. I am afraid our lives have taken two very different paths so because of the accident I am now filing for a divorce. I wish you all the best."*

*Sincerely,  
Bob*

Bob had only married Cindy because he had selfish desires that she meet for him. When Cindy was not "good enough" for him, he just left and started over with another woman. Therefore, when he got married and promised to be with Cindy and said, "for richer or for poorer, for better or for worse, for sickness and in health, til' death do we part", he was really just saying, "I will only love you as long as you make me feel good and make my life better."

## ***Eros, Philo, and Agape***

The New Testament was originally written in the Greek language. The Greek language is more descriptive than the English language. For example there is only one word for love in the English language, "love". Sometimes people will say, "I love my dog." Or, "I love pizza" and "I love you baby." But they use the same word for all situations- "love".

The Greek language has three different words for love - "Eros", "Philo", and "Agape". "Eros" means to love someone sexually. Eros is where we get our word "erotic". God

obviously wants you to love someone for more than just sexual things.

“Philo” means to love someone like a brother or sister, “Philo” is where we get the word “Philadelphia”, which means “brotherly love”. God wants you to love your spouse even more than a brother or sister.

And last word for love is “Agape” which means “unconditional self-sacrificing love”. This is the word for love found in **John 3:16, “For God so loved (*agape*) the world that He gave His only Son”.**

God wants you love your spouse with unconditional self-sacrificing love at all times. This is the definition of true love. So when you begin to spend time with the opposite sex and sense that your heart is growing in feelings toward them, make sure you are truly in “agape” love with them before you use the phrase, “I love you.” Because agape love will last a lifetime no matter what!

### ***God’s In-Depth Definition of Love***

When you begin to read the in-depth definition of love found in 1 Corinthians 13 remember that the word for “love” is “agape”, which means, “unconditional self-sacrificing love”.

Also, keep in mind, that God not only wants you to learn how to love your husband or wife with unconditional love, he also wants you to learn to love your neighbor with “agape” love as well.

Prayerfully read **1 Corinthians 13:1-13**,

1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I

am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

## ***True Love Test***

Before you say those words “I love you” to your special friend make sure that you have passed the true love test. And when someone you are in a relationship with says they love you, take time to examine their actions and see if they are just saying the words, but really are lusting after you, or they truly have unconditional self-sacrificing love for you that will last a lifetime.

**Note:** *Ask these questions about the person you are in a relationship with and or answer them for yourself.*

1. **Love is patient. Lust is fast paced.** Is the person willing to wait to have sex until marriage? Are they willing to wait until your parents say it is a good time? Are they willing to wait for God’s approval?

If the person is not patient in all their ways, then they do not have true love, all they have is lust. Because lust is self-centered and only looks out for its own personal benefit. True love is willing to wait.

2. **Love is kind. Lust is rude.** Are they a nice person? Do they speak words of life or death? How do they interact with their parents and pastor? How do they act in a disagreement?



Kindness should always be evident in the words a person speaks and how they act. Marriage is the closest relationship you will ever have with someone, if they act mean now, imagine what they will be like everyday! True love is sweeter than honey.

3. **Love does not envy. Lust is jealous.** Do they help you succeed or fail? Are they your biggest fan? Are they supportive of you getting more attention than them, or do they always have to be the center of attention?

Jealousy in marriage is when a person does not want their spouse to be better than them in a certain area. A man may get jealous if his wife makes more money, or a woman may get jealous if her husband is always the life of the party. Be sure to find someone who supports you and helps you succeed. True love desires the best for the other person.

4. **Love does not boast. Lust is boastful.** Do they always talk about themselves? How do they act when they succeed, do they share the credit or is it all about them?

Boasting makes the person who is boasting look big and everyone else look small. True love makes others look big and then others boast about them in a big way.

5. **Love is not proud. Lust is proud.** Can they admit when they are wrong? How do they receive correction? Are they willing to change? Can they admit their faults and shortcomings?

"I" is the center letter of pride, and proud people want to always be the center of everyone's attention. They cannot admit when they are wrong, but they always love to point out other people's faults. The opposite of pride is humility. True love is humble and is teachable. True love is always willing to change and become a better person.

6. **Love is not rude. Lust is rude.** *(See #2 "Love is Kind")*
7. **Love seeks others. Lust is self-seeking.** Are they the most important person in their life? How do they treat others compared to how they treat themselves? Do they always talk themselves up? Are they willing to help you and others even if it causes discomfort?

Selfishness is a cancer to any relationship and it is especially deadly in a marriage. Marriage partners have to put the other person's needs above their own. And parents have to be willing to seek the benefit of their children before their own comfort. True love always seeks the other first.

8. **Love is not easily angered. Lust gets angry easily.** Do they get angry easily? Do you have to walk on eggshells when they are having a bad day? How do they treat you when they get angry? Do they say it is always your fault that they are angry?

Upsetting things may happen in life, but that does not mean that people have to be angry and upset all the time.

Do not accept excuses for bad tempers, they will only get worse in marriage. True love is always in control its emotions, especially anger.

9. **Love forgives. Lust keeps records of wrongs.** Do they really forgive you when they accept your apology, or do you have to keep saying you are sorry? Do they bring up the past? Do they say words like, “you always”, “you never”, and “whenever you”, to show that they add up all your mistakes?

When a person makes you apologize twice, it means they did not truly forgive you the first time. True love forgives the first time. When a person says “you always \_\_\_\_\_”, “you never \_\_\_\_\_”, and “whenever you \_\_\_\_\_” it means they are still focused on your past mistakes rather than your efforts to change. True love remembers the good and forgives the bad.

10. **Love rejoices in the truth. Lust delights in evil.** Do they want to be more like Jesus or do they make excuses for their sins? Do they eagerly pursue God or do they live in compromise? Are they an honest person in all areas of their life?



When a person makes excuses for their sins, they will never change, but when they delight in the truth, the truth of God’s Word will set them free!! (John 8:32) Love is built stronger over time and each person must be willing to change and become a more Christ-like-person. True love wants the truth about how to live more like Jesus.

11. **Love always protects. Lust lets bad things happen to others.** Are they willing to lay down their life for you? Will

the do without so that you could have good things in life?  
Do they protect you against sin?

Make sure you find someone who is willing to protect you against the sin and harm of this world. Woman should protect men against pornography and men should protect woman against low self-esteem. True love is willing to lay down its life for another.

12. **Love always trusts. Lust is never trust worthy.** Can you trust them with the opposite sex? Do they keep their word?

If you see that they stare at other people with lust when you are around, what they do when you are not around is even worse. You must find someone you can trust with your life. This will be the person you spend the rest of your life with. Make sure that you can trust them with your life and marriage.

13. **Love always hopes. Lust is hopeless.** Do they have a plan for the future? Do they have a calling in the ministry for God? Do they have a good attitude about raising a family?

Life is full of trouble, but God is able to give you hope and strength to overcome ever obstacle you face. True loves places it's hope in God and walks by faith, not by sight! [2 Corinthians 5:7]

14. **Love always perseveres. Lust always gives up.** Do they work out problems or just walk away? Are they willing to stay with you even when they get tuff?

Jesus never gives up on people. And people who are like Jesus never give up on a marriage in hard times. True love is willing to walk through the valleys of life.

## **15. Love never fails. Lust always fails.**

Love conquers fears, failures, and every trouble that life can throw it. Love never cheats or commits adultery. True love lasts from the honeymoon until the last breath. True love will never fail in times of sickness, heartache, family trouble, poverty, arguments, and weakness. True love never, ever, no never, never, never, fails.

### ***Baby, I Love You!***

When you find yourself in a Christian relationship and your heart is starting to begin to open up and “fall in love”, stop and



ask yourself, “Am I truly in love or do I just have lust for this person?” If what you are experiencing is true love, than hold on for the ride of your life because true love is greatest journey you will ever take!!

But do not let your emotions cloud your judgment. Because lust can deceive your heart and bring much pain. It is better to wait for true love, than to settle for lust and experience a broken heart.

So ask God today for His guidance and when you begin to sense love in your heart say “I love you” with the right heart. Because true love is always better than lust.

### ***Questions:***

1. How does Hollywood portray love?



## Step 5

# *Down For Life*

---

## *The One*

I once asked my friend's Dad, "How will I know when I have found 'THE ONE?'" He answered back, "When you don't have to ask if she is the one!" He was 100% right!

It doesn't matter whether you are 16 or 106, when you have done all the other steps right, you will know whether a person is "THE ONE"!!



"Down for Life" is the step where you begin to get serious about the future and the idea of marriage. Here is where you ask all your questions and find a confidence in the will of God that the person you love is going to be your soul mate for the rest of your life.

This is the person God had picked out for you in eternity and chose for you to meet at just the time and He has guided you along through every step. It is at this step that you are so thankful to God that you waited for God's best and didn't settle for anything less!

Read how King Solomon describes what it feels like to be in love in his poetic love story. (Song of Songs is a love story in the Bible.)

### ***Song of Solomon 3:4,***

“When I found the one my heart loves. I held him and would not let him go till I had brought him to my mother's house, to the room of the one who conceived me.”

### ***Song of Songs 4:9-10,***

9 You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride; you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace.

10 How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much more pleasing is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your perfume than any spice!

### ***Review***

At this point it is good to review the past steps and lessons so that you can be sure you are on the right path. Here is a checklist of the things that you should have already done.

- You became the person God wants you to be
- You have found someone that God calls a godly person
- You have spent time together building a good solid friendship
- You have sought God's will concerning the friendship
- You have dated and acted like a Christian
- You have the approval of both parents and your pastor

- You have fallen in love and desire to only do what please God and the other person

### ***The Hardest Fall is the One You Don't See Coming!***

So many times I meet couples that make it to this step in their relationship and they truly believe they are God's best for each other. But instead of stopping and taking time to make sure, they just keep speeding ahead and sometimes it all falls apart and ends in a great big crash. I know because it happened to me.



I was twenty-four years old and a successful young pastor. I had waited for God to bring me His very best. I had gone on a few dates, but I had never started a relationship until I met "Cindy". (I will hide her name for privacy reasons.)

Cindy was a young girl that had come down to work with my church in the summer and go back to Bible Collage in the fall. One day as I was praying I heard God say to me, "Cindy is going to be your wife."

From that point on I began to look at her different, until finally I couldn't take it anymore, I had to tell her. So I called my pastor and asked him what should I do? He told me to bring her into my office and share my feelings with her and then allow her time to process the information and if she was willing to take it further then we should both go slow and find out God's perfect will.

Slow?!?! Well, I brought her into my office and she was a little shocked, but she was definitely up for it, so that night we went out on our first date- so much for slow! (Note: We had

already spent two summers together and we knew each other very well- still no excuse.)

Well, to make a long story short we dated for 8 months, most of which was in a long distance relationship. I was in New Orleans and she lived very far up north. Remembering the word that God had spoken to my heart I decided to fly up to see her and surprise her on her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Once there I was going to ask her to marry me and find a ring together.

But when I showed up she looked very sad. I asked her what was wrong and she began to tell me that she had been waiting to talk to me but could not find the right time. So I told her that now she could share with me whatever was on her heart.

She started to cry and with tears coming down her eyes and her hands shaking with fear, she began to tell that she had kissed another guy at a party while she was drinking. "WHAT!?!?" I thought she was kidding, but I could tell by the tears and her trembling voice that she was serious. "WHAT!?!?!"

I thought to myself, "How could this be?" I never was in a relationship longer than a month before I was a Christian, and now I am a pastor of a church in my first serious relationship, and I am about ready to marry this girl, and here she is telling me she has a drinking problem and that she kissed another guy!!! "WHAT!?!?!"

I had no other choice but to break up with her and let her get the help that she needed and I knew she needed to do it without any distractions. I later found out that she had always lived a double life and she never knew how to real with people. After a few years in an intensive Bible program she got better and now she is strong Christian and happily married.

But at that time I was so confused. I remember going back to my friend's house, and all I could say to myself was, "How in

the world did that just happen?” I had felt so strongly that she was “THE ONE”. I mean, I had literally written the book on “Seven Steps to Marriage” and we had passed every step. I knew we were ready to be engaged.

I had the word from God; the approval of both parents and pastors, we kept the relationship pure, and I loved her with a pure heart. I just could not figure out what had gone wrong. Then one day in prayer a few years later, yes, a few years later. The Lord told me that we never really looked seriously at whether or not we could be “Down for Life”.

Let me explain, Cindy and I loved each other and really loved God [at least I thought she did], but we were not a good team together. We used to fight all the time. And many times in



our fights we would go to bed angry and not talk for days. And instead of slowing down and working on our issues we kept getting closer and closer, until we had so much of each others heart and feelings running through our bodies that we did not think clearly, at least I know I didn't.

Looking back now I can realize that I had missed God in the beginning, but that wasn't the worst part, because we all make mistakes, the worst mistake was that I didn't really answer the tough questions about our future.

The reason I shared this story wasn't to make you doubt if you had heard from God or to make you feel that the person you love could be cheating on you, but the reason I told this story is so that you can learn from my past mistakes.

Even though at this step your heart may be so full of love for the person you are with that you think it is cute even when they sneeze, but be careful to examine your relationship and be

sure that this is the one God chose for you to spend the rest of your life with.

***Proverbs 20:6,***

“Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?”

***The Final Test***

Here is a list of questions that you want to ask yourself before you pass this step and move on to being engaged.

**1. Am I ready to be engaged and married?**

It is okay to not be ready, just make sure you do not keep moving forward until you are. It is better to take more time to grow closer to God and to each other than to rush into a marriage that you do not have the faith to handle.

**2. Do I see myself 50 years down the road still happy with this person just the way they are right now?**

Never plan on people changing once you get married. Marriage does not change the bad into good; rather it makes the bad even worse. Make sure that you are totally satisfied with the way the person is now. And truthfully examine the way you get along with each other now.

**3. Am I being honest with the other person about who I really am?**

Do not put on a mask with the other person hoping that they will never find out. Treat others like you want to be treated. You expect honesty from them so be honest and

reveal any hidden secrets that may expose who you really are.

Here is a list of questions that you should go over with together. They make for good discussion and soul searching.

**1. Has God spoken to you and confirmed that I am “THE ONE” for you?**

Listen carefully to their heart and listen for a response that is real and genuine. Make sure God has confirmed it to you and to your parents/pastor.

**2. Are you being honest with me in all areas of your life?**

If you have any doubts, ask them to clarify. And do not overlook any obvious lies or uneasy feelings. Sometimes the Lord uses your common sense to give you a “gut check”.

**3. Are you happy with the way things are in our relationship?**

Be sure to be open about any unsolved problems that you have faced in the past, because they will come up again but even worse. It is better to go slow and work through different issues than to bury them and hope they will just go away. Whatever you bury is always brought back up worse than it was before. ]

### ***Trust & Commitment***

Now that you have passed the final test you both should have 100% trust and commitment in each other. Along with your confidence in each other you should have 100%

assurance that you are in God's perfect will and that both of you are "THE ONE" for each other.

When Jesus talked about marriage, divorce was never a part of the plan. As a matter of fact Jesus intends every true marriage to last until death. Be sure to spend time in prayer and in open discussion to build trust and commitment between each other and to have surety of God's perfect will for your lives. Reach for the best and don't settle for any of the rest!



### ***Mark 10:6-9***

6 "But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female.' 7 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, 8 and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

### ***Questions:***

1. What is meant by the term, "THE ONE"?
2. Why is "Down for Life" such an important step? Why is it easy to overlook?



## Step 6

# *The Engagement*

---

## *Are You Ready?*

The first question that you want to answer before you get engaged is “Are you ready to be married?” Though I strongly believe in the institution of marriage, I also believe that it can be very harmful to a person’s life when they do it the wrong way and at the right time.

Here are some questions to help you know if you are ready:



1. Has your relationship be approved by both parents and pastor?
2. Have you kept your relationship sexually pure?
3. Can you afford to be married?
4. Are you both mature enough to start a family?
5. Has the relationship been good and healthy?

In today’s culture most young adults will have sex and live with many different partners before they ever get married. And it will most likely take them having children before they consider it a good time to marry. The Bible is very clear that this type of behavior is SIN.

## ***Hebrews 13:4,***

“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”

So for the Christian who is waiting to have sex until marriage, I do not believe they should have a long engagement or a long romantic relationship. I believe that once they are both adults (over 18) and have followed all the steps in this book they can be ready to marry at any age. Some of the best godly Christian marriages I know of started when they were just in their early 20's.

Sure many of the world's relationships may end in disaster, but I do not believe the alternative is to live together and break God's commands, that only makes things worse. It doesn't matter how young or how old you are, I believe when you follow the steps in this book you will be successful at marriage whenever the time may be. Just do it God's way!!

## ***The Big Question***

When you have found the best that God has for you and the timing is right, you will want to get to the “Big Question”. The Big Question is when the man asks the woman to marry him.

I still am “old fashioned” and I believe it should be the man that asks the woman and he should try to follow these simple steps.

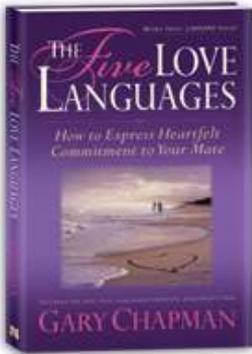
1. Find a ring that the girl will love
2. Make sure that it is the right time in God's eyes
3. Take out the girl's Mom and Dad and ask for their permission to marry their daughter. [Man must be ready to explain how he will take care of the woman.]

4. Set up a romantic time to ask the girl to marry on bended knee
5. Together set a date and begin to search out a Pastor to do pre-marriage counseling.

This lesson is taken from my years of pre-marriage counseling and is meant to prepare the couple that has just become engaged to get ready for an awesome marriage!!

## ***The Five Love Languages***

After the Bible, the greatest book that has helped Nancy and I build a strong marriage is called, “The Five Love Languages”, by Gary Chapman. Our pastor in marriage counseling recommended this book to us and it has been the backbone of all my pre-marriage counseling classes.



The basic idea is that we all have a “love tank” on the inside and it is filled in five different ways. The way we get our love tank full is when others speak to us in our “love language”. A love language is a way to communicate love from one person to another.

The five love languages are:

1. **Words of Affirmation:** To speak words of encouragement and edification to another person. Example: to look into the person’s eyes and say five good things about them.

2. **Quality Time:** To spend time together with another person just one-on-one, without any distraction. Example: to take a long walk; sit on a couch and talk, etc.
3. **Special Touch:** To give someone attention by touching them and displaying affection through physical pleasure. Example: back rubs, holding hands, etc. *(Sex does not count.)*
4. **Acts of Service:** To do things for another person in a loving way. Example: clean the house, make breakfast, etc.
5. **Gift Giving:** To buy a person gifts and give them things that show you were thinking about them. Example: to buy roses, a new pair of shoes, etc.

Now every person can give and receive love in all of these ways, but there is generally one language that speaks louder to a person's heart than all the rest. The job of a marriage partner is to find out what the other's person's main love language is and speak it to them fluently.

Love languages not only work in marriage, but also in every other relationship. When I was growing up my Mom would always make my bed, clean my room, buy my clothes, and cook all my meals. Obviously, "gift giving" was my Mom's love language. When she did all those things she was showing me her love. But in our relationship my love tank felt empty.

However, my love tank with my Dad was always full. When I would come home he would tell that I was the best son in the whole world. He would come to all my sporting games and afterwards he would always find two or three good things to say about my performance. Therefore, I always felt his love.

When my Mom and I would have fights and disagreements, and I would sometimes say, "You don't love!!" And she would

answer back, “I cook, I clean, and do everything for you!! How can you say I don’t love you?!?” The problem wasn’t that my Mom didn’t love me, it was that she was just speaking a different love language than me. It was like I spoke Chinese and she was speaking German.

Over the years my Mom has learned to encourage me and show her love through her words and by doing so I can feel her love much deeper now. *["I love you Momma you’re the best!!"]*

When it comes to marriages it is the same way. After the romance begins to cool down, you must be able to speak your spouses’ love language to build a strong marriage. Everyday you should ask each other, “Is your love tank full?” And if it is not, then give love to the other person until they are overflowing with your love!!



Nancy and I have learned that filling each other’s love tank is not an option but it is our number one priority. If Nancy needs to stop whatever I am doing to make sure she stays overflowing with my love. And the same works for me.

The root to many affairs is an “empty love tank”. An affair can happen because the spouse is not meeting their partner’s love language and they begin to get empty and someone else begins to fill it. Think about the woman whose love language is “gift giving”, but her husband has gotten tired of buying her gifts, because he thinks she is “too spoiled”.

But everyday at work her boss buys her lunch and even surprises her with little cards that say she is doing a great job, after some time she begins to feel attracted to her boss, why? Because he is filling her love tank. And before she can stop

her emotions, she is begging to fall in love with a different man.

This happens all because her husband wasn't filling her love tank. Therefore, always fill your spouses love tank everyday to guard their heart against an affair! A good marriage is the protection against divorce and affairs!!

In the engagement step be sure to buy the book, "The Five Love Languages", and find out what your partner's love language is and begin to speak it like a pro!!

### ***Colossians 3:14,***

"And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

### ***Fight Like A Christian***

Another great lesson that our pastor gave us is the rules to fight like a Christian. I strongly urge all newly engaged couples to learn these simple rules before they get married, because nothing is worse than a "knock-down-drag-out-fight" where nobody wins, but everybody is extremely hurt.

Though I believe that disagreements, arguments, and fights, are apart of all healthy marriages, I don't believe they should be done in the spirit of anger and with a bad attitude. I believe that even in the midst of a fight you should treat your spouse with love and respect.

My pastor said to us, "Mature Christians will have the best marriages because they know how to humble themselves and please God." If you truly love God, then you will love and serve your spouse and together you will desire the best for each other for your family. Therefore, disagreements are just a way to work out your different ideas and get on the same page.

Here are the rules to “Fight Like a Christian” from Dan Benson’s book, “The Total Man”:

1. **Divorce is never an option:** Never mention divorce. Always speak words of life and encouragement. [Proverbs 18:21]
2. **Attack the problem, not the person:** Remember to love your spouse, because they are your marriage partners, not your problem. Work out your problems as a team. [Psalm 133:1]
3. **Never get physical:**  
Never throw things, or hurt the other person, if you do, then you need to get professional help immediately! [Colossians 3:8]
4. **Always trust what the other person says:** Always believe that what the other person is saying is the truth. Never call each other a liar. [1 Corinthians 13:7]
5. **Try to see the other person’s point of view:** Remember that there are two sides to every story. Try to see things from their side. [Proverbs 18:17]
6. **Establish a time to fully work the situation out:** Once you know that “trouble is brewing”, make time to get alone and totally work the situation out. [Galatians 5:22]



7. **Never fight in public or around others:** A disagreement should always be resolved in private, where others will not be disturbed or interfere. [Matthew 18:15]
8. **Use only “I” statements:** Do not place the blame on the other person by saying, “You treated me bad”, but rather place the responsibility on yourself and say, “I feel bad when you say those things”. [Proverbs 18:4]
9. **Watch your tone of voice:** Never yell, but rather stay calm. If your spouse says your yelling, YOU ARE!! [James 1:19-20]
10. **Repeat what the other is saying:** Ask each other to say back what the other person is saying. Do not move forward until each person can accurately repeat each other’s issue. Otherwise there will be confusion and miscommunication. [James 1:19-20]
11. **Be open to the fact YOU might be wrong:** Humble yourself and be ready to admit your wrong. Usually both people have done wrong for there to be a fight. [Proverbs 10:8]
12. **Never use these statement, “You always...” and “You never...”:** Never say things like “You always hurt me” and “You never listen”. First, these statements are not true, because they have been good at other times.. Second, statements like that only bring hurt, instead of healing. Desire to bring healing to you marriage. [Proverbs 18:2]
13. **Never bring up past sins and disagreements:** When a problem is over, it is over. Only deal with the present problem with the present issues. Otherwise, you will never get over the past. Step out of the past and step into your future together.

14. **Do not leave until the problem is settled:** The Bible teaches not to go to bed angry. Stay and work out the situation together until it is fully settled. Do not leave or end the talk without peace. [Ephesians 4:26]

15. **Always forgive and move forward:** Verbally say to each other how much you love each other and say, "I am sorry" if you were wrong, and say "I forgive you" if you right. And then pray together and ask God for His strength to love each other more. [Luke 17:4]

### ***1 Peter 4:8,***

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."

### ***Time of Your Life***

The engagement time may come with new challenges and life lessons but never forget what it is all about... LOVE. It is because of God's love that you met and it is because of your Stay close to Jesus and ask Him everyday to help fill each other's love tank. And Ask Him to give you eyes only for each other, and a heart to love one another for a lifetime!!

### ***Questions:***

1. When should a person get engaged?
2. Is it okay to get married when you are only 21?

3. What steps should a man take to ask a woman to marry him?
  
4. What is a “love tank”?
  
5. What are the “Five Love Languages”? Describe each one.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Why is it important to fill your spouse’s love tank everyday?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. List five of the rules that you have broke when it comes to having an argument?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. How can you become a better person in regards to how you act in an argument?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Write a letter to the person you are going to marry one day and describe the type of marriage you want to have.

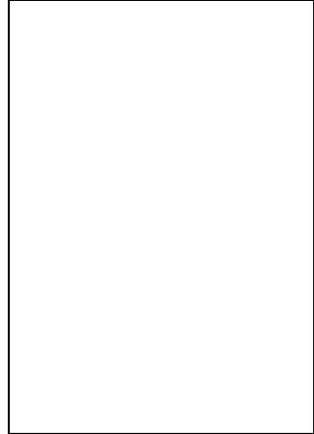
## Step 7

# *The Joining*

---

## *Heaven on Earth*

I believe the greatest day after salvation, was the day Nancy and I got married. I will always remember that day because it was like a dream that I never wanted to end. I had waited my whole life to finally be joined to the most beautiful woman in the whole world. And on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2005 heaven came to earth!!



I can remember the days when I was a single pastor that I thought I would never met the woman of my dreams. And when saw her coming down the isle she literally took my breath away and I knew heaven was missing an angel.

Before I saw her I was very nervous because I knew that after our wedding day I would never be alone again. I knew I could not be a boy anymore, but I had to be a man and take care of my wife.

But even though I was so nervous, when she finally came to the front and held my hand, I felt the peace of God. And all throughout the ceremony tears came to my eyes, because I was so amazed at how God gave me the best wife I could ever want. She was more than my lover she was my best friend.

I truly hope and pray that each one of you reading this book can experience what Nancy and I have both experienced.

Once you have gotten married, here are some of the expectations God has both the husband and wife.

## *Husbands*

**H**usbands are to love their wives as Jesus loves the church. As the husband you may be over your wife in your role, but you are to make her the center of your world and work together with her as a team. After God your wife should be the most



important person in the universe. As the head you are to be there to make the final decisions but in doing so you are to always remember her needs and desires.

The most important thing you can give your wife is your love and attention. You must be able to

fluently speak her love language. You should know if she responds best to special touch, words of affirmation, quality time, gifts, or acts of service. A good husband knows when to love his wife. And he also knows how to love her and fill her love tank everyday!

Second, you also must make your wife feel secure and at peace in your relationship. She must know that you will always be there for her. Whether it is just to listen to her hard day at work or to give her a romantic night on the town. She must be able to trust you and know that you will never cheat or give your love to another woman. That means you will not spend time alone with another woman and that you will not look at other women and lust after them.

You will only have an emotional relationship with her and no other woman can have that part of your life or heart. Your feelings and heart belong 100% to her forever.

Here are some verses from the most powerful chapter in the Bible on being a good godly husband. Prayerfully read each section and let faith come as you confess and believe each verse is for you today!

### ***Ephesians 5:25-33***

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Here we see that Jesus gave Himself for the church. That means Jesus was self-less and not self-ish. He laid His life down for the church. You are to love your wife so much that you are willing to lay your life down for her everyday. You must desire her wants and needs above your own.

26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—

Here Paul says that Jesus makes the church a radiant, beautiful, and holy bride. He does this because He loves the church. In the same way you must put action to your love for your wife. Your love for her should help her be all that God has made her to be. You must make her dreams your dreams and do all that you can to help and assist her so that she can fulfill her God given purpose.

Paul says that your wife will be a reflection of you, just like your body. So as you take care of your own body, you should take

care of your wife. Her smile and the look on her face should be an indication to everyone she meets that she is the pride and joy of her husband. Everyone should be able to tell that she has been lavished with your love because her countenance shines wherever she goes.

30 for we are members of his body, 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Next we learn that the church and Jesus are one. You and your wife therefore should be one. You must make her a part of your life and let her share in all your decisions and plans. Together you should encourage and strengthen each other.

The day you both said, "I do", you became a life long team. You may be the head of the team, but if you lose your wife, you will be the only one on the team. Prayerfully lead your wife and guide her in the plans God has for your family. Together you will do great and awesome things for God!

## ***Wives***

Wives are the backbone to every great marriage. The saying is true, "Behind every strong man, is an even stronger woman." As the wife you will either make or break your marriage. For the man to be successful as the head, he needs you to be his number one supporter.

I know today that the world may lead you to believe that being a meek woman is the same as being a weak woman, but the opposite is true. The Bible teaches that the greatest among us would be the least. And Jesus said the servant of all would be the best leader for all. (Mark 10:44)

Your greatest example of submission is found in Jesus. He was 100% equal with the Father in all ways, yet He humbled Himself and became a man and served His Father in every way that pleased Him. Everything Jesus did on earth was to please His Father and make His Name great. Jesus' number one goal in life wasn't to do great miracles, to help people, or even to be the Savior of the world, He first and greatest assignment was to make His Father's name great on the earth and to bring Him glory.

And by doing so, Jesus did many awesome miracles, changed people's lives and became the Savior of the world. And because Jesus pleased the Father He was given a name that is above every name and at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and confess Him Lord. But always remember Jesus' number one motivation was first to please His Father.

Other woman may try to tell you not to let a 4,000-year-old book with outdated rules tell you what to do. But remember you're not just following rules written in an ancient book, you're following a living person, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.



Please prayerfully read these verses and ask for strength to apply them to your life so that you may please your Heavenly Father as a wife and as a woman of God.

### ***Ephesians 5:22-24***

22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.

The Greek word here for “submit” means “to be under someone’s authority”. The term was used for soldiers on how they were to obey their commanding officers in the Roman army. Paul here says that you are to be under your husband’s authority just as you are under the Lord’s commands.

That may not sound good to your flesh, but it is the right thing for your spirit and for peace in your home. You cannot build a happy home with two equal authorities; one has to give in to the other. God’s plan for peace and harmony in the home is for the woman to give up her rights and let the husband have the final word.

This of course does not allow your husband to be either physically or verbally abusive, nor does it allow for him to neglect your needs and to treat you like a child. The passage is simply teaching you that when it comes to the authority of the house, your husband is in charge.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Once again Paul is stating that you are to look at your role as a command from God, not just a man’s opinion. And because it is a Word from God, I believe that when you do it His way you will be blessed with a happy home. I know that God will meet everyone of your needs and your husband will love you as Jesus loves the church.

Paul also says that you are to submit to your husbands in everything. Everything means everything. From how you cut your hair, to what clothes you where, to how you decorate your house, you must allow your husband to have the final authority in everything. But as my wife and many other godly women will tell you, they are very happy and their husbands allow them to do many things. The authority is not there to

harm you, but to protect you and the family from confusion and contention that can lead to divorce.

## ***Together As a Team***

God has a plan to use both of you in a mighty way. I pray that you see your great responsibility as being parents and the example to your children. I ask that you read this Scripture and let it give you a healthy fear of the Lord so that you always are reminded of your influence upon your children.

### ***Matthew 18:5-6***

5 And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. 6 But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

God is with you! With Him on your side you will do great things. He says to ask Him anytime you need wisdom and He will give it you. He promises that if you put first His kingdom and His righteousness He will give you all the things you need in life. And He also says if you put Him first and follow His commands you will be blessed in all that you do and your children will be His delight!

### ***Joshua 24:15b***

“But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD”

## ***My Prayer for You***

*Father, my prayer for everyone that has read this book is that they will find the one you have made for them. I pray that they will not grow tired and weary, but that they will keep their eyes on you and trust that you will bring them a beautiful marriage in your perfect timing.*

*I ask that you will bless all those that have made you a promise to wait until marriage to have sex. I ask that you will keep them from temptation and guard their heart with your Spirit. Keep them pure.*

*I pray for the marriages that will be strengthened by this book, that they will always love you and each other, and that everyday their love for you and each other will grow more and more. I pray for true love to last a lifetime.*

*In Jesus' Name,  
Amen.*

### ***Questions:***

1. What was Joe's greatest day? Why?
2. What is the role of the Husband? Give Scripture.
3. What is the role of the Wife? Give Scripture.
4. How do the parents work together?
5. Write a prayer to God about your heart concerning marriage.

## Appendix A

# *Sexual Perversion*

---

Sexual perversion has invaded every place in this modern world. **Sexual perversion:** *any and all sexual behavior outside of what the Bible calls acceptable.* This sin takes many forms and has its roots in the soul and body of all mankind. God made men and women sexual beings for many reasons.

First, God made sex to show the unity and nature of the Godhead. God is three in one, when man and women have sex they become one, not only with their physical bodies during the act, but in their soul and spirit lasting even after the act.

### ***Genesis 2:24,***

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”

Second, God created sex to multiply mankind upon the earth. (Genesis 1:28) Instead of God creating each individual man and woman He gave the creative capability to mankind. That is why abortion is wrong. God intended every baby that has been formed in the womb to be given the opportunity to live. (Psalm 22:10) The taking of this life is murder and the work of Satan who hates human life.

Thirdly, God created sex for mankind to give man and women the opportunity to express love in a special, singular way. (Hebrews 13:4) He has given the ability to a man to show another women his love in a tangible way. And for the woman to show a man her love in way that will produce great excitement and pleasure.

## ***List of Sexual Sins:***

- 1. Adultery:** *sexual relations between a married and unmarried person.* Most would agree that this is wrong, however it is still one of the greatest causes of divorce and heartache in today's culture. Men and women all over America are breaking their vows because of their desire to have sex and intimacy with another. (Galatians 5:19-21)
- 2. Fornication:** *having sexual experiences with the opposite sex outside of marriage.* The rules that govern dating and courting in the Bible are set at a higher standard than MTV. Unmarried couples are to treat each other as brother and sister until the marriage covenant has been made. (Galatians 5:19-21)
- 3. Lust:** *a strong sexual desire forbidden in the Bible.* The Bible sets the road for us to drive on in our sexual cars. When you go to fast, or drive out of the lines, you enter in the area of lust. God created the sexual drive in mankind to help increase the ability to reproduce mankind upon the earth. But the feelings of sexual pleasure are to be controlled. (Matthew 5:28)
- 4. Bestiality:** *sexual sin that can happen between man and animal.* God did not make us sexual creatures to have sex with animals, though there are some that partake in this wicked practice. (Leviticus 18:23)
- 5. Molestation and Rape:** *to have sex by force/violence or to touch in a sexual way without permission.* These sins come from the heart of a wicked person that has become a slave to their sexual needs and will try to satisfy them regardless of the pain it causes others. These sins cause much

damage that only can be totally healed through the power of God by the Holy Spirit. [Deuteronomy 22:25]

6. **Homosexuality:** *to have sex with the same sex.* [See Appendix B, "Homosexuality"]
7. **Masturbation:** *to have sex with one's self.* [See Appendix C, "Pornography & Masturbation"]
8. **Pornography:** *to lust after images in a magazine or video.* [See Appendix C, "Pornography & Masturbation"]
9. **Unequally Yoked:** *to be married to someone that is a Non-Christian.* The Bible says not to date or marry a non-Christian; they are to be avoided and to be considered "darkness". If already married pray and seek godly counsel. [2 Corinthians 6:4]
10. **Sexual Impurity:** *to have sexual encounters with someone that you are not married too.* Oral sex, heavy petting, and touching private places are all considered impure and sin in God's eyes. Only in marriage are these experiences acceptable. [Galatians 5:19-21]

### ***Ephesians 5:3-7***

3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7 Therefore do not be partners with them.

## ***Homosexuality***

---

### ***It's Still Adam and Eve, Not Adam and Steve***

This is by far the most controversial of all sexual subjects in America today. Most who get saved will easily accept all the standards of sexual behavior stated previously. But this subject is openly debated very often with much hostility. I believe because it is the most damning upon a person and society. Of course sin is sin and no sin is greater than the other. But the consequences of sin upon a person, society, and church are different.

As in the Old Testament when the law gave punishment for sins, some received verbal correction and others received the death penalty. Though both were equally wrong, there consequences were different.

#### ***Leviticus 20:13,***

"If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads."

The Old Testament viewed the punishment for sin of a man having sex with a man, to be the same for murder, death by being stoned.

The Bible also teaches in the New Testament the only acceptable and pure way to have sex is with the opposite sex in a holy marriage. [Matthew 19:5] Also, Paul says that homosexuality is unnatural and leads to the wrath of God.

## ***Romans 1:26-32***

26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity.

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

## And in ***1 Corinthians 6:9-11***,

9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Here Paul clearly states the homosexuality is a sin, but you can be changed and forgiven. It says in verse 11, "and that is what some of you were", proving that God can change a homosexual and make them new.

In our church we have and have had homosexuals get saved and live great lives for the Lord. I look no differently upon them as I do the next person. But what homosexuality did to their

body, self-image, and thought life takes sometimes longer to heal than others sin. And left unattended to, it will lead in a return to the life they came from.

The consequences of homosexuality seem to last much longer and make for a greater effort of rehabilitation. Why? The answer is really simple, yet complex. Simply speaking, it requires one to go against all natural affections and reason for being. It puts everyone and *"everything"* in the wrong place.

The complex side to homosexuality is how a person feels comfortable and even takes pleasure in doing the exact opposite of what they were created to do. For this to happen great deception must be upon the person mental and spiritual life. In many cases today's homosexuals come from yesterday's molested or raped adolescent.

Because of this traumatic sexual experience their perception of what is sexually right and wrong has been corrupted. Therefore, they look for sexual gratification in the wrong places. And really they are looking for more than just a sexual pleasure, but true love. And they feel if they can have in a homosexual way then it will be real.

But the truth is homosexuals are even more active with different partners than heterosexuals. Meaning they cannot find love in their partner so they keep looking in new sexual experiences.

Others practice homosexuality not because of mental slavery to pain of the past, but out of lust. They desire to go to the *"next level"* of sexual experiences. You can compare the levels of sexual addiction to that of drugs. First I started smoking, then it led to drinking, then it led to marijuana, then it led to LSD, then it led to cocaine, and then it led to crystal meth.

Each drug had its own pleasure and when one pleasure would grow old I would look for another drug. The same is with sexual addiction, many have started in their youth lusting after people in movies and on music videos, then it leads to masturbation with different forms of pornography, then heterosexual sexual activity and when that grows old, then homosexual activity.

The solution for the homosexual living in sin for either reason is the same. Come to Jesus and receive His love and forgiveness. Then let the Holy Spirit make you a new creation. I believe God loves the homosexual just as much as he loves everyone. I am ashamed and embarrassed by “*supposed Christian*” that in the name of Christianity persecute and offend these for no other reason than anger.

I plead with the homosexual to come to a loving Saviour who will accept them just they way they are, and be changed into the perfect image of Jesus. I also plead with the angry Christian to be at peace with homosexuals and teach them the Word of God out of love and a humble spirit. The answer for the homosexual is the same as with all sins, they must acknowledge their sin, repent, and allow God to daily transform them into His perfect image. In the chapter on sanctification all will learn how to be transformed.

**(Note:** I do not address the issue of being “born gay” because I do not support that theory, but believe rather that it is a learned behavior. [See NARTH to understand more of the medical science of the gay community])

And even it were proven to be a medical condition, I would not think it to be normal. For example I was born with poor vision, but I was given glasses to make my eyesight “normal”, and I was born with the urge to always suck my thumb, but I was taught to use my thumb for other things, both are considered abnormal and negative, but I was helped through it.

The Bible teaches we are born sinners with the tendencies to sin. So whether being gay is a learned behavior or a born abnormality,

both need to be treated with the Word of God and the new life of the Holy Spirit. (2 Corinthians 5:17)]

***For More Information***

1. This web site addresses the issue of medical science in the gay community from a Christian perspective - **[www.narth.com](http://www.narth.com)**
2. Check out **[www.exodus-international.org](http://www.exodus-international.org)** for help understanding the gay lifestyle from the Christian standpoint and the freedom to live a new life.

## ***Pornography & Masturbation***

---

### ***Pornography***

Pornography as defined in Webster's dictionary means, "*indecent art, literature*". Today's porn can be described as, "*nudity, perversion, gross immorality, homosexuality, and the like*". Porn can come in many forms, it can be found in magazines, movies, on the Internet, stores and in clubs.

Pornography started after Adam and Eve sinned. When they were created they were made perfect in the image of God. They were spirits that possessed a soul and lived in a body. Their body was covered with the glory of God. When they sinned the spirit man in them died and thus they lost their connection to the tangible presence of God on and in their bodies. When the glory left, they noticed for the first time that they were naked. When they saw their nakedness they covered themselves in leaves. Thus proving that nakedness is shameful in public and only appropriate in private.

One can only imagine as mankind began to grow in the knowledge of good and evil, how they invented pornography. But the Bible says by the time of Noah, man was very wicked and lived continually in sin.

#### ***Genesis 6:5,***

"The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time."

We can easily accept that in their evil hearts was porn. Whether it was strippers, clay sculptors, or whatever, they were finding ways to exploit the naked body.

The Bible clearly states in the Old Testament that the body should be appropriately covered and that even among family members there should not be viewing of naked bodies. [Leviticus 18:6-18]

It does not take a Bible scholar to understand the New Testament stance on porn. One only needs to look at the life and words of Jesus to see that ALL such things are to be avoided. Jesus taught to look on women and desires to have sex with them, is adultery. [Matthew 5:28]

He also said that if a person's eyes caused them to sin, then it would be better for them to pluck out their eye and live a godly life and go to heaven, rather than live a life of sin through the eyes and go to hell. [Matthew 18:9]

The Bible also says in 1 John 2:15-16 that we are not to love the world nor the things in the world. He also goes on to say that the world provides "lust for the eyes", and these lusts will keep one away from God. Today many Christians are being tempted and drawn into the porn sites on the Web.

The habits they form lead to other sexual acts the Bible forbids. Many begin to masturbate more frequently; become more sexual active, and even begin to participate in things like rape, molestation, homosexuality, and bestiality because the pictures or movies they saw have excited them.

The Bible teaches us to turn away from such things, and that it "should not be even named among us". [Ephesians 5:3] As a believer we should avoid all the appearances of evil and set our affection above where Jesus is.

To those that have given attention to these end time traps of the devil now is your time to repent and turn away from these things. Follow the Bible when it says, "do all things as unto the Lord." [Colossians 3:23]

Begin to live a life that is totally free from lust and pornography and live a life this holy, separate from this world, 100% totally devoted to God.

### ***Helpful Steps & Resources***

1. Confess your sin to your pastor and seek deliverance
2. Only look at the computer when others are present
3. Download “accountability software” on your computer and have it send all your web sites to another person [www.xxxchurch.com]
4. Go to www.xxxchurch.com for more info, helpful books & videos, and articles

### ***Masturbation***

Masturbation is still a very hidden sexual act even in today’s perverted society. Though it is gaining popularity, most will not admit they do it. I believe because in the heart of man God has given us a conscience, an inward ability to know right from wrong. And in this conscience even the worst of sinners will feel ashamed to admit in public they play with themselves in private.

Many “*experts*” are teaching that masturbation is a great way to get to know your body and relieve sexual tension, which can lead to stress. Many suggest a weekly “*session of masturbation*” will bring great fulfillment to one’s life. Some of these “*experts*” even come in the form of pastors, teachers and Christian workers. I just have one comment to make on such remarks made by these “*experts*”, ***“THE DEVIL IS A LIAR!”***

We know that Jesus was God in the flesh, therefore as a man He had a sex drive. He knew the Father did not want Him to reproduce physical children, but die on the cross to make spiritual ones. But could you see Jesus take the advice of these *"experts"*. The disciples one day look for Jesus and find Him masturbating in the closet. Could you imagine such a *"gross"* thing?

I know many are offended that I would even choose to use that example. They think I am blaspheming or being disrespectful. They have not correctly understood the Bible, or have been limited in their understanding. I John 4:17 says, "in this world we are like Him", therefore, I am Jesus to this world. That literally means Jesus lives His life in me, just as when He was here in the flesh. In turn, I am to choose all my actions by asking the question, *"What Would Jesus Do?"*

With the act of masturbation the question remains the same *"What Would Jesus Do?"* Would Jesus masturbate looking at a picture of Jennifer Lopez or while imaging of sexual fantasies? Or would Jesus take time away from the ministry to explore His sexual side and find what touches bring Him the most pleasure?

Please friends, I am not the gross one, the gross people are those that promote such garbage in our churches and schools. The gross ones are the parents who do not teach children such subjects will clarity and authority. I refuse to sit back and allow sexual perversion to invade our churches and especially our young people because people are too afraid to teach the truth and make it plain to be understood.

To those who masturbate, whether male or female know that the Bible considers your act "impure". "Impurity" is found in the list of sins in Galatians 5:19-21. Impurity is the performing of dirty sexual acts. Masturbation is a dirty sexual act. Men allow your body to relieve its own sexual tension through the "natural way" not masturbation. Women stay

away from “*explorations*” that cause to you want more sexual activity.

For both male and female that masturbate, repent of your sin and ask God to cleanse you and make you like Him. In your temptation to “*explore your sexual pleasures*” just ask yourself the question, “*What Would Jesus Do?*”

## ***Becoming a Virgin Again***

---

### ***Opps... I Already Gave it Away***

If you are reading this and you have already given your virginity away I want to let you know there is hope for a new life in Jesus. When you became a Christian not only were you forgiven of all you sins, you are also made a new person.

#### ***2 Corinthians 5:17,***

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

“New” means new!! You are now brand new in Jesus. He no longer sees your past sins but rather He sees Jesus living in you. The Bible says in **Psalm 103:12** *“as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”* Your sins are thrown away and are never coming back!! You are set free from all the accusations and sins of the past!!

Do not let your past failures and sins take away your future in Jesus. Say from this point on you are a virgin that is pure and holy in the eyes of God!! I had sex when I was a sinner, but when I was born-again I knew my life was changed. I was made a virgin!! Make your commitment to God from this point forward that you stay pure until marriage!!

### ***Ouch... Someone Took it Away***

If you were molested or raped I want you to know that it wasn't your fault and that God never wanted that to happen. Somebody evil and wicked was used by satan to hurt you and take something that wasn't theirs. Evil things happen to

innocent people because this world is full of sin. And people have a choice to do good or evil.

However, you can be sure that God knows what has happened to you and He wants to help you and heal your heart. He also is going to judge the person who hurt and take vengeance upon them if they do not confess to it and receive God's forgiveness and your forgiveness.

***Isaiah 35:4,***

"Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you."

But do not worry about their punishment; focus on your life being made new. Loosing your virginity wasn't your fault, so in God's eyes you have always been a virgin. None can take that from you, but you have to have God heal the deep hurt in your heart.

Here are some steps to receiving your emotional and spiritual healing:

1. Confess what has happened to your pastor so they can pray for you
2. Forgive the person that hurt you
3. Stop thinking about the past and start thinking about what God will do in your future
4. Believe and act like a new person, do not let anyone bring you down
5. Daily bring any hurt to God, so that He heal your hurt

***Isaiah 61:1-4***

1The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,<sup>[a]</sup>

2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,

3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

## *Internet Dating*

---

### *Welcome to Computer Age*

The way we communicate is now changing and we as Christians should be able to adjust and be apart of these changes, but at the same time we must still hold true to the standards that God has for us.

Today everything is on the computer - TV, movies, information, the phone and video communication. Right now if you can afford it and have the skill to do it you can watch TV, download a movie, get your favorite music, play a video game with players from around the world, surf the information highway, talk on the phone by speaker and see the person by web cam, and have a chat with a 1,000 different people from all over the world- ALL AT THE SAME TIME!!

More traditional people sometimes are not comfortable with these type of relationships - such as "myspace", "Christiancafe.com", or other networking web sites because they feel it can be dangerous and that people can be deceiving and misleading.

Because older people do not always understand the new technology, they can be a little frightful or over sensitive, but there is some truth in their concerns. The truth is there are many "predators" and "perverted" people that use these sights to hurt innocent people.

However, I believe that if you are mature and are strong in your walk with God you can use these modern conveniences to meet great people from all over the world.

**Here are some of the positives of using the Internet to meet people:**

1. You can meet people from all over the world who love Jesus
2. You can guard against being alone and having sexual temptation
3. You can really get to know people before you see them and become “blinded” by the physical attraction.
4. You can easily make friends without any romantic commitment

**Here are some of the negatives:**

1. You can be emotionally attached to someone you have never even met
2. You can live a lie or be deceived by someone else who is living a lie
3. You can hide your friendships from people and have a “secret relationship”
4. You can rush into love and marriage without really getting to know the real person in everyday life

My conclusion about “Internet Dating” is that it is okay only up to “Step One: The Search”. Because you must truly meet someone and get to know them before you can know if they have the potential to be more than just a friend.

I think many people try to rush past “Step One” onto the others steps and they really do not know the person they are chatting/talking with. So be careful and guard your heart. Just use the Internet to search and meet cool people and if

find you find one that you would like to meet make sure to follow the steps listed below.

### ***Steps to Meeting People on the Internet***

1. If you are already married do not get close or intimate with the opposite sex
  - a. The temptation of adultery is just as strong in chatting as it is in person
  - b. If you are married stay away from all dating sites, and be careful in all that you do on the computer
2. Only single adults 18 or over should look for potential friendships over the internet
  - a. People of all ages can and should use the internet to meet people, but the “bad guys” still can do bad things, so minors should only chat for fun and stay accountable to parents/pastor
  - b. Even those over 18 should be careful, so use prayer and wisdom in how you chat with people
  - c. If you are under 18 and you want to meet someone, ONLY invite them to your church with the permission of your pastor and parents
3. Single people should be careful what sites they choose to meet people on
  - a. Only use Christian sites that have rules of conduct and keep the site clean

- b. Myspace: be careful in what you look at, if the person's page would not be appropriate on the screen at church on Sunday, then STAY AWAY!!
- 4. Use the same standards of meeting and getting to know someone as you would in person
  - a. Woman: be godly and wait to be pursued
  - b. Men: pursue woman in a godly and respectful way
- 5. Do not get emotionally attached
  - a. Separate chatting and dialoging from romance
  - b. It is okay to talk and chat with different people, but don't get heavily involved with one person, talk of commitment and relationship should only come after you have met and are operating "normally" in the 7 steps
- 6. Be open to give your phone number and talk on phone (Only if you are over 18 and have followed Step One and have found a godly person)
  - a. The reason I say this is because, meeting the person is going to be the best way to determine if there is any interest, chatting alone can not do this
  - b. It is just like meeting someone at church that you would like to talk to, you give them your number and if at anytime you feel uncomfortable you let the other person know and go separate ways.
  - c. If the person continues to call, you report it to the police, and your family, and the internet site where you met

- d. Most people will be “normal”, but be careful
7. Set up a place to meet in public with your friends
- a. If you have enjoyed chatting and getting to know a person through the internet, set up a time to meet in public
  - b. Here are some helpful guidelines for meeting:
    - i. Men should come to meet the woman
    - ii. Never meet alone for the first time
8. Pick a place during the day to meet for about 15 min with friends present
- a. Make sure there are no strings attached
    - i. After 15min each person should decide if they are willing to continue to hang out
      - 1. If the date does not continue, then they both should part ways as respectful godly Christians
      - 2. Remember a friendship gained is better than nothing
  - b. ATTENTION MEN: this could mean you spend \$500 on a plane tick and \$75 on a hotel just for 15min, then to be told she doesn't feel comfortable, BUT you have to be willing to take that chance, that is the way it has to go!!
9. If both choose to continue then you start the 7 steps from step 2 and allow the Holy Spirit to lead

God will bless the person that sets his heart on Him and to do what pleases Him. These helpful hints and guidelines will keep you from being overcome by the present evil and sin that can be seen on the Internet today. Allow God to lead you in all that you and as a single person, always remember those who seek the kingdom of God, will be given all they need!!

**Here is Some Christian Single Web Sites:**

1. [www.christiancafe.com](http://www.christiancafe.com)
2. [www.bigchurch.com](http://www.bigchurch.com)
3. [www.christiandatingforfree.com](http://www.christiandatingforfree.com)

**Here are Some Christian Networking Web Sites:**

1. [www.xianz.com](http://www.xianz.com)
2. [www.24hrchristianspace.com](http://www.24hrchristianspace.com)
3. [www.yourchristianspace.com](http://www.yourchristianspace.com)
4. [www.spacefaith.com](http://www.spacefaith.com)
5. [www.mypraise.com](http://www.mypraise.com)

## Appendix G

# ***"YourSpace or God'sSpace?"***

---

*(Note: This was a devotional I did for our youth group)*

**1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."**

I am writing this devotional in response to all the sinful mysplaces I have viewed over the last two weeks. When I first set up the myspace for our youth group I expected to see some non-Christian people doing things that I as a Christian pastor would find offensive and unacceptable, but what totally shocked me was what I saw many "Christians" doing.

So I have written this devotional to be the letter I send to any and all people I see that claim to know Jesus and yet their myspace is far from a Biblical example of a true Christian and a disciple of Christ. It is not my job to teach non-Christians to act like Christians; it is my job to preach to them so that they can be born again. However, it is my job and the job of every Christian to teach the Word of God and train other believers to keep it.

### ***2 Timothy 4:1-4,***

"1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 **Preach the Word**; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 **They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."**

So if you are reading this because someone has sent it to, then please be very careful as to how you handle this information, this

is not the opinion of a man, but the Word of God. Your eternal soul is on the line. I am not trying to hurt you, but help you in the Name of Jesus.

### ***Ephesians 5:11-12,***

"11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but **rather expose them**. 12 For **it is shameful** even to mention what the disobedient do in secret."

### ***Do all Things for the Glory of God***

Can you honestly look at your Myspace and say that you have placed everything there for the glory of God? Read the Scripture at the top and pray that God will teach you what it means to do, "all things for the glory of God." Do not make any excuses; be honest about all the items on your Myspace page.

Would you like Jesus to look at your page, watch your videos, read your blogs, look at your pictures, and see your jokes? If the answer is, "No." Then get it off right now because Jesus is looking at it. He is looking at it right now and is grieved with your sinful behavior.

You might be thinking that your page really isn't that bad or that God would understand you are just "having fun". Please read this Scripture and see how serious Jesus is about sin and the appearance of evil.

### ***Ephesians 5:1-7,***

1 **Be imitators of God**, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

3 But among you there **must not be even a hint of sexual immorality**, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

5 **For of this you can be sure:** No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things **God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.** 7 Therefore do not be partners with them.

Do you understand this passage- "let no one deceive you...because of these things God's wrath is coming?" My friend God is serious, there must not even be a "hint" of sexual immorality on your page, you must avoid all obscenity, and profanity- this is not the way a true Christian acts. A real Christian lives like Jesus and is an imitator of God the Father.

### *The Real You*

I believe the scariest thing about Myspace is that everyone is showing who he or she really is. I saw a young man that helped referee our basketball tournament last summer post a naked picture of himself as his main profile. I was totally shocked. Though this man is my friend, he hid from me who he really was. I would be ashamed to have his picture in my friend's list, especially in the comment section where everyone could see it.

But the truth is he has always been that person on the inside, he was just hiding it from others. Today on Myspace many young girls who always wanted attention are posting their half naked pictures all over Myspace and showing God and everyone else who they really are on the inside. Also, young men who want to look "rough and tuff" are placing pictures of their gangs and fights on their pages, along with violent rap songs playing in the background. They place pornographic images all over their page to make other guys lust. Please read and learn where Jesus said all our junk and sin really comes from.

### ***Matthew 12:35-37,***

"35 The good man brings good things out of the **good stored up in him**, and the evil man brings evil things out of the **evil stored up in him**. 36 But I tell you that men will have to **give account on the day of judgment** for every careless word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

You may think you're just having fun and you're really not all that you pretend to be on Myspace, but guess what? That is exactly who you are in God's eyes. Sure you may be playing a little "make believe" and trying to appear to more pretty or more tough than you really are in real life, but your heart is being seen in every blog, in every picture, and every item you willfully place on your page. Ask yourself this serious question, "Would you want God to judge you by your Myspace in front of the whole world?"

### ***Revelations 20:11-15,***

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead **were judged according to what they had done** as recorded in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and **each person was judged according to what he had done**. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

### ***What to Avoid***

Here is a list of things that a disciple of Jesus Christ should avoid on Myspace. Please be careful to read each one carefully and ask God to teach you what they mean and pray

for the strength to apply them to your life and to your myspace.

1. **Avoid all appearances of sexual perversion:** do not have pictures of naked or under dressed people on your page, do not allow your friends to post their naked pictures on your page. A good way to judge whether a picture is perverted or not, just ask your self this simple question, "How would this picture look if it where placed on the screen at church this Sunday?"

2. **Avoid all profanity:** do not use profane words to communicate with others or in your blogs. Use language that would be proper for a person to use in church in front of your pastor because Jesus is always listening and reading your page.

3. **Avoid all dirty jokes:** do not post or repeat jokes that are perverted, dirty, or obscene. Once again ask yourself if Jesus would find your video or joke funny.

4. **Avoid all violent songs and images:** do not have songs in the background that are against the Lord's ten commandments- such as murder, lying, stealing, and disrespect towards parents and authority.

5. **Avoid all lying:** do not pretend to be older than you are, or someone that you are not in person. Be the person God made you to be, not a "wanna be".

### ***Colossians 3:1-9,***

1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 **For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.** 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 **Put to death**, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.

8 But now **you must rid yourselves of all such things as these:** anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

## *God's Space*

You may think that Myspace has nothing good to offer you now that you have removed all the sinful things from your page. But the opposite is true, now you can fill your page with all the good things God is doing in your life. You can do the following:

1. Write blogs about your life as a Christian.
2. Post images that show your interests and what you enjoy in life
3. You can surf and find your favorite Christian artists and post their songs and videos so others can hear their awesome anointed music.
4. Find all your friends and begin to share God's love with them and all the good things in your life.
5. You can make your Myspace "god'sspace" so be creative!!
6. Have good clean entertainment that is non-offensive, but fun to watch and look at.

In closing, I want you to know that God loves you and has a great plan for your life. Do not let sin come and steal that plan away from you. The devil knows your weaknesses and therefore desires to make you fall, but remain in the Word of God and prayer and you will overcome all His attacks.

Remember, God's love is all you need. Love God today with all your heart and let Him fill your life with His. Your life is "god'sspace", let Him shine through you and make you a great man or woman of God!!

***Colossians 3:1-9,***

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves with** compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 **And over all these virtues put on love**, which binds them all together in perfect unity.