**Guide to Accountability Care for Dating Couples**

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Introduction by Pastor Mike Berry & Debbie Berry

**GETTING STARTED**

Once a couple has decided to date they should contact someone from the Fusion Couples Ministry.

One of the Leaders will discuss Accountability Care with the couple and who is available as a Care

Couples. The dating couple will create a 3P strategy of their Pace, Perspective and Purity boundaries.

They will meet one time with the Accountability Care Couple for a diagnostic session and then stay

in touch on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. The regular contact will typically be 2 separate conversa- tions (the guys talk alone and the women talk separately). The Care Couple will ask about the last

week and specifically about the 3P strategy boundaries and if they are being upheld.

**DATING MENTORS**

People often ask, "What ministry does New Life have for dating couples?" The answer is

'Accountability Care'. An Accountability Care Couple will help a dating couple by meeting with them

regularly, encouraging them, and challenging them to date according to God's plan.

Of course this type of Accountability Care is designed for those who are motivated to serve the Lord

and make sure their dating life is right before God. Anyone serving in a ministry who is dating is

asked to have an Accountability Care Couple if they are going to continue in ministry. Every couple is

encouraged to have this type of relationship.

At Midway ,the Fusion Couples Ministry takes responsibility to help line up Accountability Care. The

dating couple can help choose their Accountability Care Couple. The goal is to provide healthy rela-

tionship and accountability for those that are dating.

The Accountability Care Couple primarily operates on a 1-on-1 basis with each of the people dating.

In other words, the male mentor will keep up with the man in the dating relationship. The female mentor will talk with the woman who is dating. Eventually, if the dating couple becomes engaged then they will go through pre-marital counseling with a married couple if they want to get married

at New Life.

**ENGAGEMENT & MARRIAGE**

Although it can be an awkward conversation for a dating couple it is vital even in the early stages to

have an expectation on timing. At New Life we have come to the conviction that it is best for a cou-

ple to date at least a year before getting married. Although a timeframe it is not specifically men-

tioned in the Bible for dating it seems to fall under the area of wisdom. Experience has shown over and over that those who get married after less than a year of dating have a much higher rate of se-

vere marriage problems and divorce. If a couple is going to get married at New Life or by a New Life

Pastor they must have dated at least a year and successfully completed pre-marital counseling with a Mentor Couple. These two requirements are set up to help couples prepare for a successful mar-

riage. If a couple insists on getting married in less than a year they will have to find someone outside of New Life to lead the wedding ceremony. The early part of dating is the time for a couple to get to know each other. We strongly advise couples to not get engaged until at least 10 months of dating.

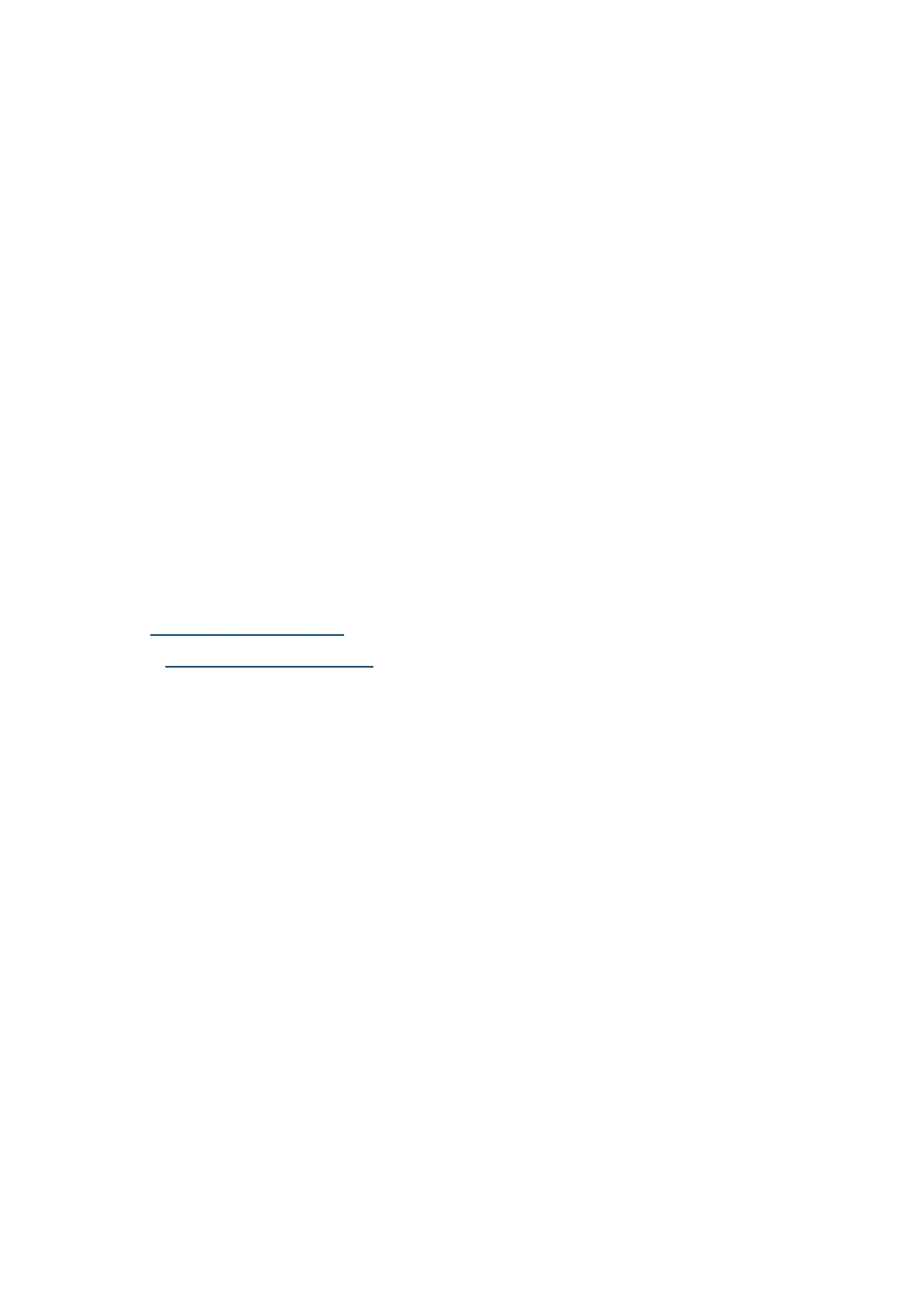
Again, this standard is designed to challenge a couple to build a foundation before moving forward.

**COUPLES LIVING TOGETHER**

Many adults that begin to live the Christian life are already living with a partner although not mar-

ried. As a church we are determined to help a couple make this relationship right before the Lord.

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Each situation is different. Some couples should get married, some should separate for a time and date according to Biblical standards, while other couples should completely break up. It is

not good to continue to live together outside of marriage.

A couple that has been living together has essentially been dating so they are not necessarily re-

quired to date for a year before getting married. Usually the couple is advised to either move out

or get married as soon as possible. Sometimes living separate is not a good option, especially if they already have children together. In these cases a Mentor Couple can meet with the couple living together to help them figure out if they should get married right away. Often it is best for

them to have a simple wedding (whether at court or in church). It is not good to delay a wedding and continue to live together. The Bible is clear that the Lord is more concerned with our sexual

purity than the detailed plans of a wedding ceremony.

Of course our church wants families to stay together. If a couple has children it is best if they get

married. There are extreme situations (including abuse and other terrible circumstances) in which a couple with children will be counseled to break up. However, 'plan A' is to keep the

mother and father together with their children. The Bible talks about being yoked together (2

Corinthians 6). Having a child together is a yoke and it is best for the couple to try and make their

relationship work.

We are here for you! Contact us for more information:

Pastor Mike & Debbie Berry

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**Part 1: Accountability Care**

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**Diagnostic Meeting**

**Purpose**: To give dating couples a better picture of what to expect in Accountability Care. To clari-

fy any questions about the process and set norms and rules for meetings. To get to know each

other better and introduce other resources or materials that will be used.

**Clarifying our Goals**: What do we want to do?

1. To get to know you better as individuals and as a couple. Mentoring is most effective when

the mentors understand the couple.

2. To help you lay a solid biblical foundation for a healthy, blessed relationship

**Clarifying our Strategy**: How do we want to do it?

1. By participating in regular sessions, in which we will discuss, share, and comment on your 3P

strategy and progress

2. By completing other assignments like watching videos, answering reflection questions or

reading materials.

3. By looking closely at biblical principles (through scripture) that relate to relationships.

**Homework due at our next meeting:**

1. Review and sign "Accountability Care Contract" (on next page)

2. Each person should prayerfully write out a 3P Strategy to safely develop healthy intimacy.

They should reflect your personal convictions about how you want to honor God in this rela-

tionship. Do not discuss it together until the next meeting with the care couple. The 3P's:

**Pace**: The speed, timing, and rhythm of the relationship. How quickly is this relationship

progressing? What can I do to not go too fast and maintain a healthy pace? Many cou-

ples jump into a relationship too quickly. They become too emotionally, relationally, and

physically involved before they should. Dating should be a time to get to know one an-

other at a healthy pace.

**Purity**: The sexual integrity of the relationship. hat boundaries will I set in the physical

area to guard myself from slipping, stay above reproach (1 Tim. 4:12) and honor God?

Many couples struggle in this area. When you cross lines in the physical and sexual area,

you sow seeds of disrespect, distrust, and disillusionment into your future relationship.

**Perspective**: The mental/emotional awareness of the relationship. How can I make sure

that my life does not revolve around this relationship? Often couples make the mistake of focusing so much on their relationship that they lose their other friendships and be-

come exclusive. This leads to emotional isolation and over-dependence on the person

they are dating.

**Consequences:** What actions will you take to get back on track and realign your focus if

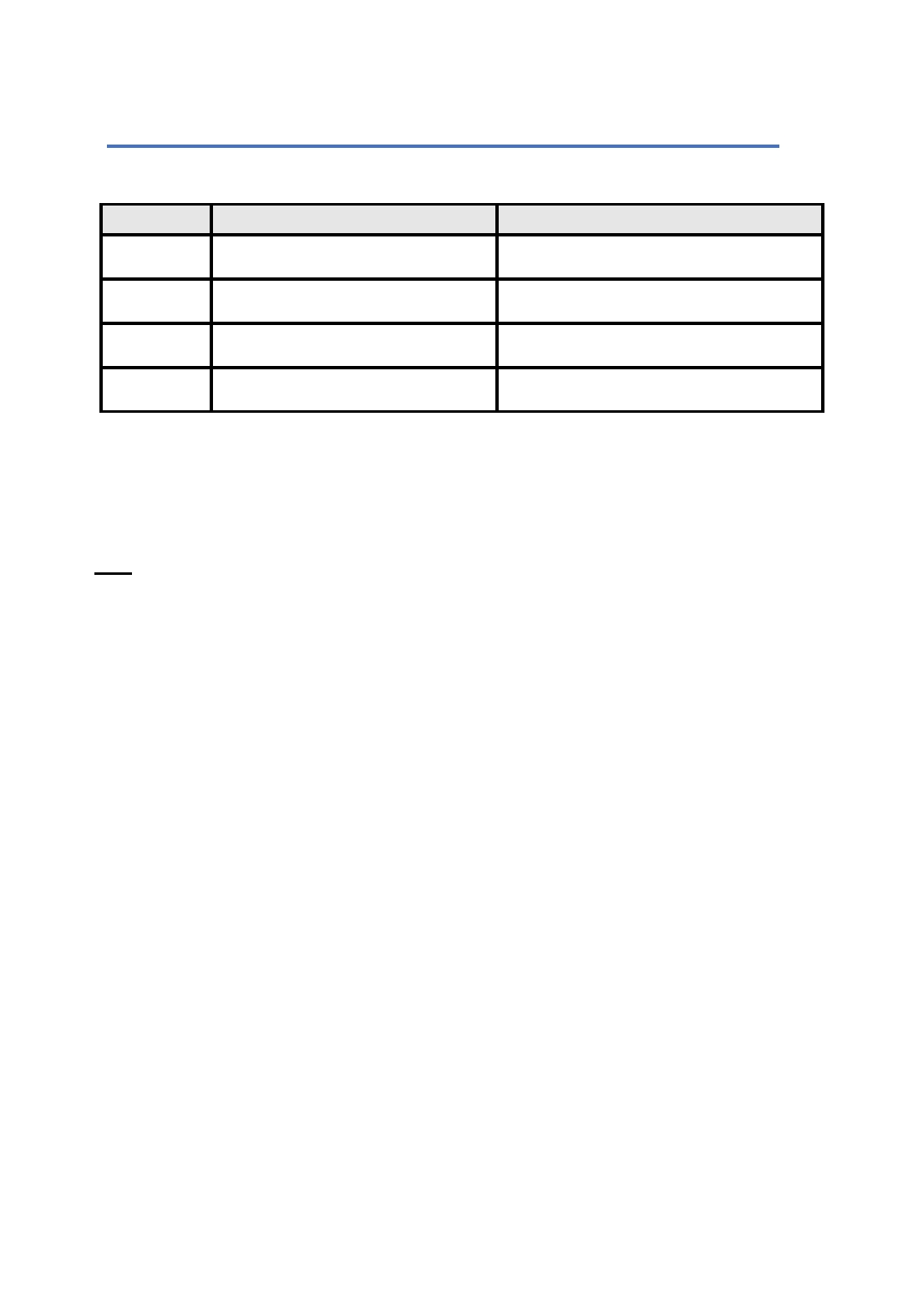
you violate 3P boundaries? For example, will you skip a date, confess your sin, make new

boundaries?

***Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.***

***Proverbs 15:22***

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**Accountability Care Template**

**Info**  **Care Couple**  **Dating Couple**

**Names**

**Address(es)**

**Phone #s**

**E-mail**

His:

Hers:

His:

Hers:

His:

Hers:

His:

Hers:

His:

Hers:

His:

Hers:

His:

Hers:

**Diagnostic Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** (date) at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (time)

**Frequency of Meetings (check one):**

\_\_\_weekly \_\_\_bi-weekly \_\_\_monthly

**How we will meet (check all that apply):**

 in person at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (address) at \_\_\_\_ (time)

 phone calls on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (day) at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (time)  text messages \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (daily/ weekly) for prayer and support

 online via \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(app) on \_\_\_\_\_ (day) at \_\_\_\_ (time)

**What to expect at sessions:**

 Receive personal spiritual care, including prayer.  Get growth assignments.

 Answer specific questions about your 3P Strategy boundaries.  Be challenged to uphold your original 3P Strategy boundaries.

 Possibly schedule a joint meeting, couple to couple.

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**Accountability Care Contract**

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ fully understand that I am a willing participant in the Fusion Ac- countability Care service. I have made this decision on my own accord. I make this decision to

declare that I seek to put God at the center of my dating relationship and my life. I agree to re-

spectfully and to the best of my ability—with the Holy Spirit as my guide—adhere to the following

service principles and norms.

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ agree to:

 Commit myself to faithfully and punctually attend all accountability meetings

 Commit myself to faithfully complete ALL reading, viewing and written assignments—on

time.

 Commit to diligently memorize all scripture verses assigned to me

 Commit myself to be absolutely honest and open during accountability sessions

 Commit myself to focus on my own issues

 Commit myself to prayerfully create and then uphold the 3P strategy by God's grace

 Commit myself to listen to and consider the wisdom and direction of my care couple

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***"Whatever you do, work at it with all your hearts, as***

***working for the Lord and not for men."***

***Col. 3:23***

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**Part 2: Your 3 P Strategy**

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**Pace, Perspective, and Purity: The 3P Strategy**

***In their heart's humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.***

***Proverbs 16:9***

Your goal in dating is to find out whether the other person is your life mate**.** To determine this, you will need to develop emotional, mental, and spiritual intimacy (physical intimacy will be minimally

developed before marriage). The 3P Strategy that you create will help you safely build healthy inti-

macy through proper pace, purity, and perspective.

Your personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the source of the 3P boundaries. As you pray, fast and seek the Lord, he will give you personal convictions regarding boundaries that honor him. Setting and

upholding the boundaries is a way for the gospel to be showcased in your relationship.

**Pace**: The speed, timing, and rhythm of the relationship

 Consider boundaries about how often you will see each other or how many hours a week you

will spend together.

 Consider planning for open-ended evaluation conversations every month or every 3 months. This

way you can determine whether you want to move forward or end the relationship. Ecclesiastes

3:1 says, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."

There is a time to get to know someone, a time to intentionally date, a time to break-up, a time

to get engaged, etc.

 Your strategy could include waiting to discuss certain topics such as marriage or children until

the relationship achieves milestones in time or commitment. 1 Cor. 13:4 states, "Love is pa-

tient…" The relationship pace needs to progress slow enough for you to explore increasingly

complex and intimate questions. Don't divulge too much, too soon! More intimate and personal questions should wait until there is the commitment of several months of dating or even engage- ment.

 Your boundaries may specify who will take the lead in setting the pace. We recommend that the

man take the lead with moving the relationship forward because God calls men to be the head of their wives in marriage (Eph. 5:23). Good leaders remove confusion. Women wonder, so re- move their confusion by clearly expressing your intentions and feelings. Answering a woman's

questions is intentional leadership.1 It is "speaking the truth in love" and a mark of maturity (Eph. 4:15).

**Perspective**: The mental, emotional and spiritual awareness of the relationship

 Proverbs 27:17: "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." What will you do to

intentionally sharpen one another intellectually, emotionally and spiritually?

 Consider boundaries regarding how much time you will spend with your families and friends to

keep those relationships thriving.

 Here are some ways couples can keep perspective:

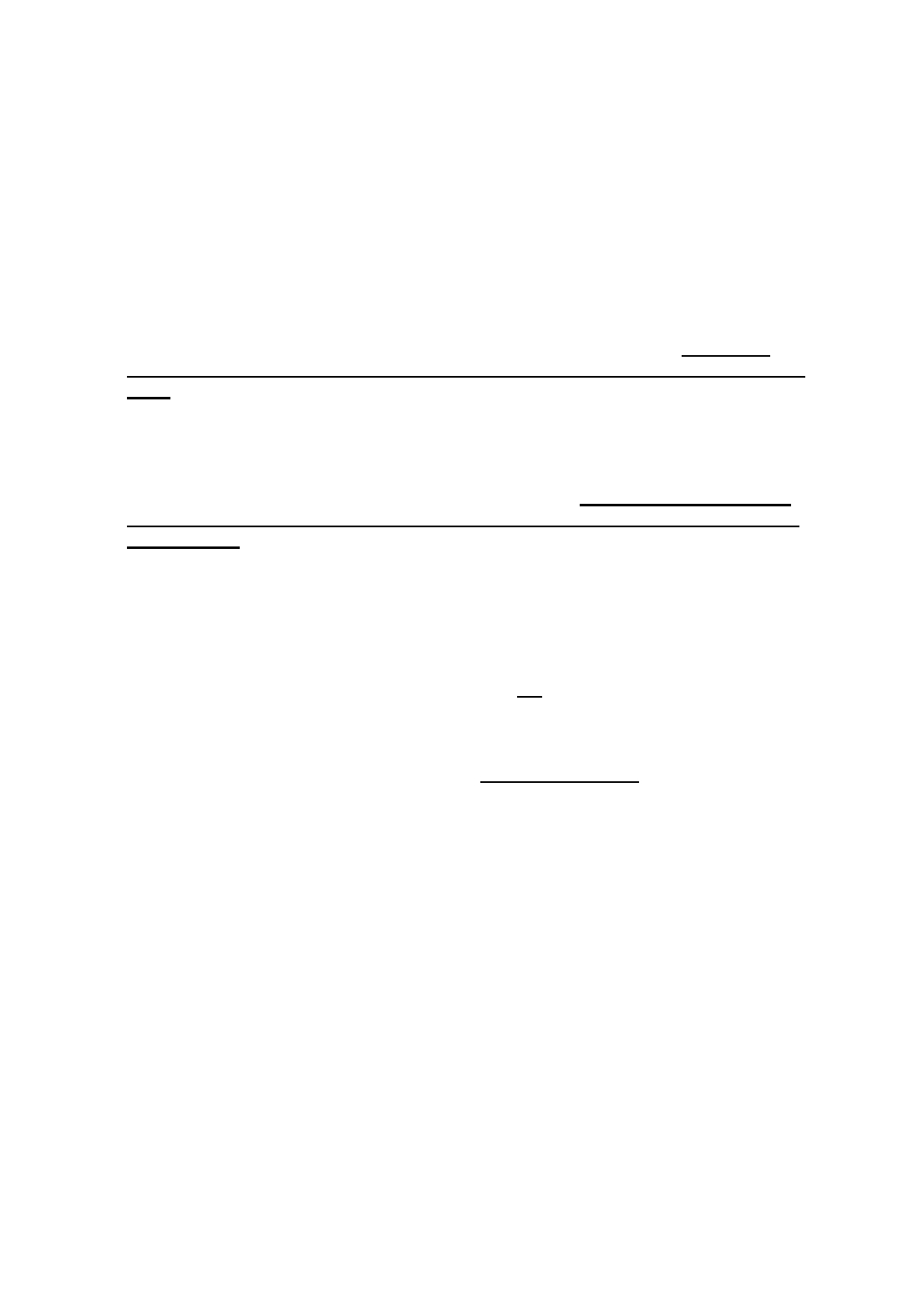
- Keeping their personal relationship with Christ as a top priority.

- Reading Christian books, Christian blogs and the Bible to inform their relationship.

- Preparing for marriage: develop their spiritual life, eliminate debt, get a job, deal with deeper emotional problems.

- Having community involvement with other church family and biological family.

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- Discussing their relationship with safe, trusted people and each other. - Being willing to utilize the advice from their community.

**Purity**: The sexual integrity of the relationship

To help you in the process of creating 3P purity boundaries, we have provided examples of real cou-

ples' 3P strategies. Here are some other Biblical guidelines to consider for your purity boundaries.

 **Sacrifice out of love for Christ.** Galatians 2:20 says, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no

longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of

God, who loved me and gave himself for me." With prayer and fasting, seek the Lord about how

you can handle your body in a way that reflects death to self and life in Christ. The sacrifice

Christ made for you fuels your motivation for the physical sacrifices you will make to guard your

purity. He gave everything for you—what physical pleasures are you called to give up for him in this relationship and for how long? Express these sacrifices as purity boundaries, for example, "I

will refrain from sexual relations until marriage" or "We will not kiss on the lips until we have

been together for 9 months."

 **Stay faithful to the original boundaries.** The boundaries the Lord spoke to you will help you re-

spect one another, protect one another, and trust one another. State them clearly and openly with your Care Couple at the beginning of the relationship and uphold them for the duration of the relationship! Psalm 18:25 says, "God will show himself faithful to the faithful. As you honor his directions, you will reap his blessings." For example, if the Lord called you to a boundary like this, "We will refrain from hugging for more than 30 seconds", we recommend you uphold it all

the way through to marriage regardless of how your feelings and desires for closeness intensify.

The only time to make changes is to encourage greater purity in the relationship by setting more

conversative boundaries. In the case that you are violating the boundary, you could revise it:

"We will refrain from front hugs and only give brief side hugs."

 **Assume weakness.** 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, everyone *will* face temptation: "No temptation has

overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be

tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it". We can prepare in advance for the temptation to indulge in physical pleasures by proactively creating boundaries that *assume our weakness.* As the Lord leads you,

set boundaries that are conservative enough that even if you violate them, you are still honoring

what the Lord called you to sacrifice. Think of the image of a cliff. The cliff represents a boundary

violation. Keep yourself as far from the edge of the cliff as you can rather than going right to the edge of it. For example, if you feel called to sacrifice the pleasure of sexual touches on the chest until marriage, set a boundary that will hinder you from getting anywhere close to this behavior:

"We will not touch one another anywhere except for the hands."

 **Above reproach.** Set boundaries to stay above reproach in your physical conduct: "Don't

let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in

speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). In particular, if you are in a minis-

try or leadership position, you are a model for many people. Hebrews 13:7 says, "Remember

your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life

and imitate their faith." The way you set and uphold God-given 3P boundaries affects

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not only you, but the people you lead. For example, if you set a boundary, "We will limit

caresses to the hair, face and neck" and others see you doing this in public, they may won- der what you are doing in private and assume that many kinds of sexual touches are ok. So,

a boundary like this might lead those under you to stumble into sexual sin. "It is better…not

to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall" (Rom. 14:21).

 **Consequences.** Love "does not dishonor others…it always protects" (1 Cor. 13:4-5). Boundaries

without consequences are merely suggestions. Your strategy must include consequences. Conse-

quences are meant to bring home the reality and importance of protecting and honoring the

Lord and each other. They are an essential part of your 3P strategy. For example, "If we violate a

purity boundary that is not sexual, we will confess to our Care Couple and give up our next

date." Consequences could also be re-drawing the boundary more conservatively.

 **Bottom line boundaries.** Boundaries are not meant to be a legalistic, strict, one-size-fits-all

measure. That is why you must pray and seek God's face about your personal 3P strategy. How-

ever, there are certain minimum boundaries we recommend for any dating relationship to be

God-honoring. Through experience, we have seen that these boundaries are vital in supporting

God's primary boundary of saving sex for marriage. To be clear, sex is defined as genitalia to gen-

italia, genitalia to hand, and genitalia to mouth.4 Sex is reserved for marriage, when the two

"become one flesh" (Matthew 19:5). We strongly encourage you to include these boundaries:

 Refrain from being alone in a car, home or other unoccupied building that will not be

readily accessible to others.

 No traveling on vacation as a couple alone. If you need to travel as a couple, recruit

trustworthy friends who will hold you accountable to join you. The women should over- night in a room together, and the men in another room.

 Avoid being alone with only your or your significant other's children to prevent you

from violating boundaries. Children are not able to hold you accountable! If you are in a

situation where the only other people present are your children, you should consider yourselves alone.

 Refrain from requesting or sending sext messages.

 Refrain from addressing one another as "fiancé" until the commitment of engagement.

Refrain from addressing one another as "husband/wife" until there is the commitment

of marriage. Prematurely addressing each other this way has led to some couples fall- ing in their purity boundaries.

 **Handling your temptations.** 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 instructs us, **"**Flee from sexual immorality. All

other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their

own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you,

whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a

price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies." Based on 1 Cor. 10:13 and 6:18-20, we recom-

mend the following6:

1. Make a list of your "I wills"—statements that clarify your boundaries sexually. 2. Tell your Care Couple when you are tempted to violate boundaries.

3. Flee! Run fast from sexual sin!

4. Keep watching and praying against temptation.

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**My Individual 3P Strategy Worksheet #1**

**1. Pace: How quickly is this relationship progressing? What can I do to not go too fast and maintain**

**a healthy pace?**

(Many couples jump into a relationship too quickly. They become too emotionally, relationally and

physically involved before they should. Dating should be a time to get to know one another at a

healthy pace.)

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**My Individual 3P Strategy Worksheet #2**

**2. Purity: What physical boundaries will you set to guard you from slipping?**

(Many couples struggle in this area. When you cross lines in the physical and sexual area you sow

seeds of disrespect, distrust and disillusionment into your future relationship. What boundaries can I

put in place that will help us stay pure and above reproach?)

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**My Individual 3P Strategy Worksheet #3**

**3. Perspective: How can I make sure that my life does not revolve around this relationship?**

(Often couples make the mistake of focusing so much on their relationship that they lose their other

friendships and become exclusive. This leads to emotional isolation and over-dependence on the

person they are dating.)

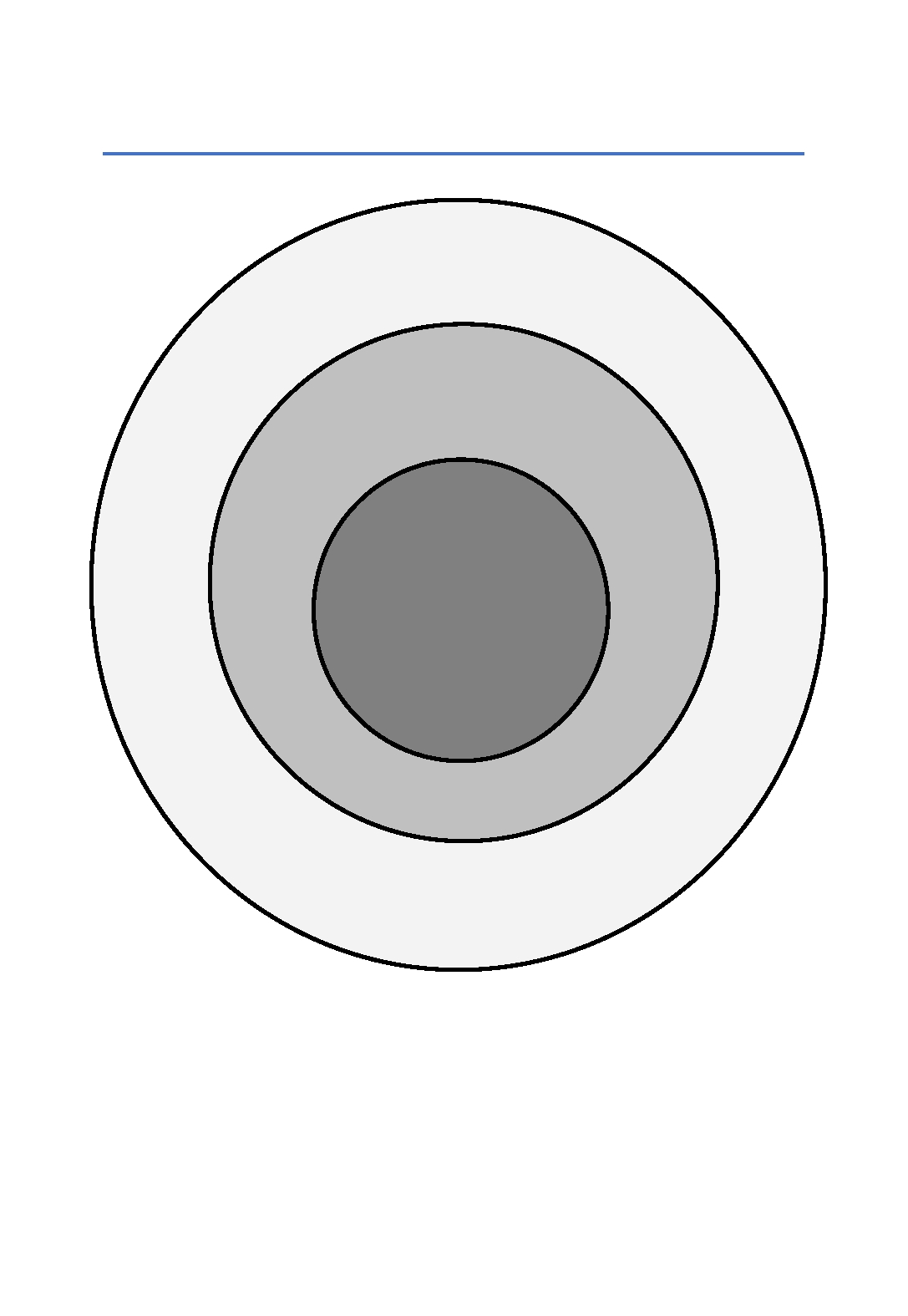
**Consequences:** What actions will you take to get back on track and realign your focus if you violate

3P boundaries? For example, will you skip a date, confess your sin, make new boundaries?

**Acknowledging that God's grace is sufficient for me and his power is made perfect in my weakness (2 Cor. 12:9), I commit to uphold this 3P Strategy to engage in a healthy dating relationship.**

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**3P Strategy Represented as 3 Circles**

**OUTER CIRCLE:** Healthy behaviors from my 3P Strategy that keep us

focused on Christ

**MIDDLE CIRCLE:** Behaviors I person- ally choose to sacrifice in dating be-

cause they lead me to the inner cir-

cle.

**INNER CIRCLE:**

Behaviors I'm saving

for marriage

**CONSEQUENCES:** What actions will you take to get back on track and realign your focus if you violate

3P boundaries by entering the middle circle? For example, will you skip a date, confess your sin,

make new boundaries?

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**3P Strategy Example #1: Boaz & Ruth**

**Prevention Plan**

**Past**: *What did we learn from our past?*

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

We learned that no matter how strong a person feels he/she is still susceptible to being

human, and our entire hope must be centered in God and not a person.

We learned that violating physical boundaries produces shame and decay to the trust and respect of a relationship.

We learned that men and women perceive, communicate and cope extremely different- ly.

We learned that our past causes certain actions and reactions that must be deliberately

monitored and modified.

We learned that the more physical two people get, the more physical they want to get.

**Pitfalls:** *What Mistakes will we avoid?*

a. We want to avoid replacing God with each other.

b. We want to avoid regrets and painful memories caused by sin.

c. We want to avoid becoming ingrown and self-centered.

d. We want to avoid forfeiting a fruitful future for momentary pleasure

**Preparation:** *What will we do differently to anticipate and avoid those pitfalls?*

**Pace**

**Evaluation Checkpoints:** *Where are we now? Where are we at spiritually, emotionally,*

*mentally, physically, financially, relationally with regard to love languages?*

a. When will we do our next evaluation? The first Tuesday of every month.

b. Where should we be by then? Pure/Church status/ministry status/accountability part-

ners

**Pace Protection:**

a. We will limit our time together to four days a week including ministry.

b. We will refrain from talk of marriage until engagement.

c. We choose to set apart the phrase "I love you" for our engagement.

**Perspective**

**Identity:** *Who are we? What Stage is our Relationship In? (Who does God say we are or should*

*be?)*

a.

b.

c.

We are a New Generation, Promised Land Christians.

If we do not know each other, the proper place to get to know one another is in a friendship context, not a dating relationship.

Dating and exclusive, romantic involvement is reserved for relationships that are head-

ed toward marriage.

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**Purpose**: *Why does our relationship exist? (If our relationship didn't exist would it matter? Why?)*

*Mission Statement:* Our relationship exists to build us up in Christ and be God's expressed love

to a hurting world. The current stage of our relationship is to get to know each other with the prospect of marriage.

**Values**: *We are not willing to compromise these in our pursuit of our Dream/Vision.*

a. We are unwilling to compromise our devotional/spiritual priority. b. We are unwilling to compromise our calling as ministers.

c. We are unwilling to compromise our quality time together.

**Strategy**: *How will we accomplish our Vision/Dream?*

1. We will recruit strategic prayer warriors to hold us up in prayer. 2. Guard regular Tuesday Time.

3. Read a book together (Memorize Verses).

4. Save money from each date for optional ministry fund.

5. Prayer Walk

6. Utilize both of our giftings in ministry together. 7. Take parents out once a month.

**Purity**

**Purity Covenant**

a. b. c.

d. e.

f.

g. h. *i.*

We will refrain from any and all sexual relations, We will refrain from kissing (save on the hand),

We will refrain from being alone in a home or other unoccupied building that will not be readily accessible to others.

We will avoid home visits except for planned family events.

We will limit physical touch to the hand, forearm, and an arm around the upper back

(we will not play with each other's hair, face, neck, legs, waist, etc.),

We will only give short side hugs.

We will not spend time alone in a parked car in the late evening. When together we will abide by an 11pm curfew.

We will refrain from watching romantic movies together alone (theater).

**Communication/Conflict Covenant**

We believe that as New Generation Christians, the patterns we set in our relationship now will set the pace for our entire future as well as deeply impact all whom we influence.

1. We will not let the sun go down while angry with each other.

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2. We will always be completely honest with each other and never allow the smallest dishonesty

to sit.

3. We will always save our disagreements for private meetings and protect each other in public.

4. We will never slander one another.

**Consequences of breaking our covenant**

1. If it is not a grave sin, we will forfeit one Tuesday together.

2. If it happens again or if we've dishonored each other, we will meet with our pastors to confess

and assess our relationship.

3. If it doesn't stop there, we take time apart to assess whether or not we should be together. If

we cannot be faithful to this covenant, we cannot be faithful to the greater covenant of mar- riage.

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**3P Strategy Example #2: Isaac & Rebekah**

**Purpose:**

To use our relationship to first grow in Christ as individuals and then together as a couple, to glorify

and worship him, be it in ministry together as led. At the end to be able to use our relationship to

glorify God and impact others.

**Values:**

We are unwilling to compromise our devotional/spiritual priority.

We are unwilling to compromise our calling as ministers.

We are unwilling to compromise our quality time together.

**Communications/Conflict covenant:**

We will be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.

We will seek to understand before being understood.

We will not interrupt each other, and listen with eye contact.

We will not allow outbursts of anger (verbal or physical - no yelling).

We will refrain from attacking personal character and focus on specific issues.

We will not use "always" and "never" statements about each other.

We will not let the sun go down while angry with each other.

We will not walk away from or hang up on each other. If we are unable to talk about it at

that moment we will politely ask to be excused from the conversation and immediately set

another time to finish our discussion.

We will always be completely honest with each other and never allow the smallest dishon-

esty to sit for even a minute.

We will always save our disagreements for private meetings and protect each other in pub-

lic.

We will never slander one another.

**Goals:**

Read a book together.

Use our giftings in ministry together as a way to minister to others, I.e., worship ministry,

audio, and tech.

Spend quality time with parents together (Once a month per parental set).

Have double dates with other couples to grow and encourage one another.

**Pace:**

We plan on dating for a minimum of one year with the intentions of marriage.

We will refrain from the talk of marriage until engagement.

We will have one date night a week.

We will evaluate our relationship the first date night of every month.

**Consequences of breaking covenant rules**

If not immoral - we will forfeit that following date night.

If it is immoral - we will forfeit that following date night and meet with our accountability

partners to discuss appropriate actions.

**Purity covenant:**

Rule #1 - Try not to break the rules ☺.

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Rule #2—We will refrain from any and all sexual relations.

Rule #3 - We will refrain from being alone in a home or other unoccupied building that will not be

readily accessible to others.

Rule #4 - We will not be alone in a room together unless we are having a disagreement; Door must

be open.

Rule #5 - We will not sit on the same bed together.

Rule #6 - We will not spend time alone in a parked car for more than 5 minutes.

Rule #7 - No texting during school hours except for one greeting text.

Rule #8 - When alone together we will abide by a midnight curfew (with few exceptions & calls to

our accountability partners).

Rule #9 - Making out is not allowed.

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**Part 3: F.A.Q. About Dating**

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**Dating F.A.Q.**

***"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without***

***finding fault, and it will be given to you." James 1:5***

**Why We Date**

It's all about the 3M's: Master, Mission and Mate5. We're dating to find a life **mate** to be our com-

panion on a common **mission** as we follow our **master,** Christ. We intentionally date or court with

marriage in view.

**When We Date**

 Consider senior year of high school as the earliest to start intentionally dating.

 If you don't know your **master** or **mission** in life, maybe it is not yet time for you to intentionally

date. You still have some big personal decisions to make that will affect the life **mate** you choose.

 You are content with your singleness before you date. "But godliness with contentment is great

gain" (1Timothy 6:6).

 You are at an age and stage in your life where the relationship could have the chance of moving

towards marriage.

 You have prayed, fasted, and sincerely sought the Lord for direction about getting married and

finding a life mate.

**The 10 C's**

The truth is that there are many people who will have a common mission and master and compatibil-

ity with you. Knowing God's will for your lifelong partner is more like staying inside a yard with a

fence than walking on a sidewalk. The fences can be represented by the 10 C's of who and how we

date. Within the fences, you have freedom and there are many choices. The 10 C's are: *Christ Follow-*

*er, Commitment, Character, Culture, Core Values, Chemistry, Competency, Communication, Chaste,*

*and Community.* 5

**Who We Date**

 **Christ Follower**: God tells his people to find a spouse within his people. 2 Corinthians 6:14

states, "do not be unequally yoked." Dating an unbeliever is outside of God's boundaries. A per-

son who has not received the unconditional love of Christ will find it difficult to love another

person with that same type of love.

 **Commitment**: You are looking for a sole mate versus a "soul mate." Rather than looking for "the

one," we are looking for a sole mate to live out our lives alongside. You are looking for a person

who can commit to you for a lifetime as your one and only! Look for a person who commits to

something and sees it through to the end. Do they follow through? Do they keep their word?

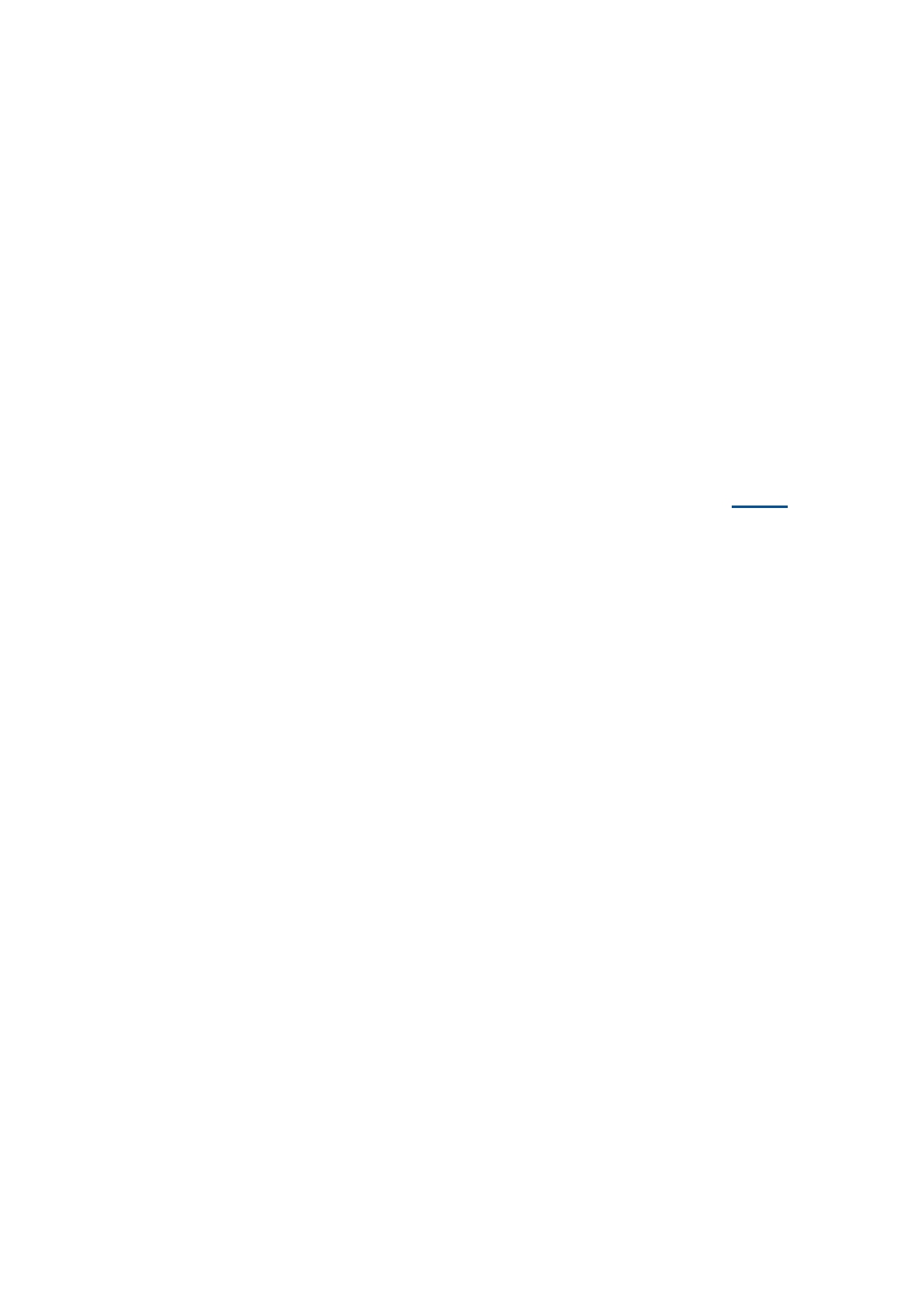
 **Character**: You are looking for a person of godly character. Like attracts like, so consider if you

yourself have a godly character! Make a list of character qualities you want in a future spouse,

then *become* a person with those character qualities. Use the criteria in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 or 1

Timothy 4:12 for your list to address speech, conduct, love for others and purity. You want to

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be and attract someone who is living "rooted and built up in Christ" (Col. 2:6-7). If you don't

know what you're looking for, you're looking at everything. That wastes a lot of time and ener-

gy!

 **Culture:** First, we aren't looking for the stereotypical romantic ideal that is presented by our

culture. Often our hearts have been informed about romance with stories, images and music from this world. Following a heart that has been informed this way will mislead you! Remove

unhealthy cultural influences like gender degrading music, erotic images, or dishonoring shows

from your own life. Rather, inform your heart with God's word to direct it with the truth about

loving relationships. "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (Proverbs 4:23).

Second, consider the other person's cultural influences: media, family, ethnicity, religion, educa-

tion, etc. Differences in culture can be very rewarding, but they can also be a major source of conflict in your relationship.

 **Core Values**: As mentioned earlier, you are looking for someone who values Jesus as supreme

and sufficient in their life. Starting with faith values like this, you should next evaluate whether

you have similar values in areas like family, finances, work, ministry, etc. Asking each other

questions helps you determine whether you are aligned in your God-given dreams, values, pas-

sions, and personal preferences. You can find some great questions at Brett Ullman's [website.](https://www.brettullman.com/2020/07/09/dating-questions/)

 **Chemistry:** One of Satan's greatest deceptions in dating is the over emphasis on physical appear-

ance. Looking for someone who is hot is not enough! Proverbs 31:30 states that beauty is

fleeting. It's on its way out. Look for an attraction to their character, to their inner qualities and a

chemistry that is more than physical. Attraction like this lasts a lifetime and is beautiful and timeless.

 **Competency**: What skills or abilities do you have that will make you an excellent mate? What

responsibilities will you have as a husband or wife (work, cooking, childcare, maintenance, car

care, etc.)? Become competent yourself. Then, choose someone who is becoming competent at handling these responsibilities as a single person through serving their family or the community.

**How We Date**

 **Communication**: Love must be sincere (Romans 12:9), and mature Christians "speak the truth in

love" (Eph. 4:15). This means no games in dating. Communicate with vulnerability and transpar- ency about your thoughts and intentions. Don't play games by delaying communication so as not

to appear too eager. Also don't be too intense. Be clear about when you will call again about the

next date and give them time to think and decide whether to go out again.

 **Chaste (Purity)**: 1 Corinthians 6:18-20: **"**Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person

commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. **19** Do you

not know that your bodies are temples 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

bodies."

Avoiding porn and individual sexual temptations will help you to prepare for monogamy in mar- riage. Premarital sex will keep you in the wrong relationship for too long and keep you from the

right relationship because sex has the capacity to camouflage an endless list of relational defi-

ciencies and dysfunctions! Staying pure as a couple will help prevent you from confusing sexual

compatibility with relational compatibility. Getting sexually involved causes you to give away

your heart and attach in ways that are very painful when a break up occurs.

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Rather than pursuing pleasure through sex, we need to pursue pleasure through God. Psalm

16:11 states, "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your pres-

ence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

 **Community**: Proverbs 15:22 says, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they

succeed." Choosing to rely on your feelings alone in dating is unreliable! Infatuation and chemis- try are powerful forces that cloud anyone's judgment! Feelings change and cannot be a good

indicator of whether a match will last a lifetime. A better indicator is the Christian community

around you agreeing that you are a good match. In Song of Solomon 1:4, the friends of the da-

ting couple say, "We rejoice and delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine."

Live in Christian community for support and guidance. Your small group members or older, ma-

ture believers at church can be an invaluable source of feedback if you ask them, "Am I ready for marriage?" Additionally, having roommates can help refine your character and prepare you for

married life.

**How We Break-up**

Breaking up is not a bad thing. Your worth is not tied to the other person's acceptance of you. Re-

member, this is about finding someone of good character with whom you have some attraction

based on inner qualities. Breaking up can teach you to fully let go of things, and the brokenness can

lead to personal growth and deeper intimacy with the Lord. You *will* feel normal again after a time.

 **Humbly**: Make it as easy as possible to the other person to bow out of the relationship. Take

responsibility for the reasons why you want to leave. Or humbly accept the reasons the other

person wants to leave without arguing.

 **In Person:** Do not do it over text, email, Instagram, etc.

 **Honestly:** Provide honest reasons for why you will no longer pursue this person as a life-partner.

Do this kindly and objectively, without breaking their spirit or putting the other person down.

 **Without Drama:** It's ok to cry. It hurts! But avoid trying to persuade the person to re-commit,

chasing them down or continuing to reach out when the door has been shut.

 **Respectfully:** Do not put down an ex or slander them to others. Wish the best for them-a godly,

lifelong partner and a family that will further the gospel.

 **Just Do It:** There is never a good time to break up. It will always be inconvenient for one reason

or another. When you know the relationship doesn't have a future that ends in marriage, it is

time to say goodbye maturely.

**What if I Found the Person for Me?**

Congratulations! Your next step is to get engaged! You are ready to pursue pre-marital counseling. New Life suggests at least 12 months of relationship time (including the engagement) prior to mar-

riage.

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**Suggested Resources**

***Outdated* by Jonathan Pokluda**

*Four 10-minute video sessions on Right Now Media; book*

In this four-session series, pastor and author Jonathan Pokluda will discuss the joys and frustrations

that come with dating as a Christian and the ideologies of the world that impact how we approach

relationships. He will debunk the myths that give us faulty expectations for dating and teach us a godly view of dating and God's design for relationships and sex.

**Dating.for.life.the questions by Brett Ullman** *1 hour 18-minute video on Right Now Media*

Brett answers the 8 basic foundational questions on dating, such as, "How do I start dating?" and

"How do I break up?"

***Love Is* by Bianca Juàrez Olthoff**

*Six 8-minute videos on Right Now Media*

Bianca Juárez Olthoff uses 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 as a framework to discuss everything from love to

sex, singleness, and dating from a Christian perspective. Falling in love can seem difficult—but with

the love of Jesus, it doesn't have to be.

***The Sacred Search* by Gary Thomas**

*Eight 20-30-minute videos on Right Now Media, book*

Whether you are single, dating, or engaged, Gary's unique perspective on dating will prepare you for

a satisfying, spiritually enriching marriage even before you walk down the aisle. As Gary reminds us, a

good marriage is not something you find-it's something you make.

***The New Rules for Love, Sex and Dating* by Andy Stanley**

*Four 20-minute videos on Right Now Media or Youtube*

In this video-based small group Bible study, Andy Stanley explores the challenges, assumptions, and land minds associated with dating in the twenty-first century. Best of all, he offers the most

practical and uncensored advice you will ever hear on this topic.

[***How to Pick a Spouse* by**](https://www.amazon.com/How-Pick-Spouse-Practical-Lifelong-ebook/dp/B00LA9LCP2/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=how+to+pick+a+spouse&qid=1631226343&sr=8-3) Dan Chun and Neil Warren

*Book*

This book incorporates Pastor Dan's principles, which provide practical and proven ways to pick

a spouse and is your guide to finding--and keeping--a lifelong partner. You will discover how to

test your relationship for key differences using a variety of methods including the Seven Cs:

Character, Chemistry, Competency, Cultural Differences, Commitment, Communication and

Core Values.

**90 Great Questions to Discuss When Dating by Brett Ullman**

[**https://www.brettullman.com/2020/07/09/dating-questions/**](https://www.brettullman.com/2020/07/09/dating-questions/)

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**Notes**

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Jonathan Pokluda, *Outdated* video series

Brett Ullman, *Dating.for.life.the questions* video series Andy Stanley, *The New Rules for Love, Sex and Dating*

Bianca Juàrez Olthoff, *Love Is*

Dan Chun and Neil Warren, *How to Pick a Spouse*

Linda Dillow and Dr. Julie Slattery, *Passion Pursuit*

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