

Cars, Driving, and Dating

This title may prompt some to ask, "What is the correlation between cars, driving, and dating?" Consider the following thoughts:

I have a new '05 Mustang. When I get into my car and turn the key on, the instrument cluster is illuminated by a series of "warning lights." Those lights let me know the bulbs are working, and that certain systems are being monitored. The lights usually go out shortly after start up, but may illuminate during operation when a problem exists with one of the vehicle's functions. As a new car has "warning lights" that operate according to the manufacturer's design, so in dating someone, there are warning indicators prescribed by God in His Word, the Bible.

The warning indicators are designed to make us aware of a potential problem, and that something needs attention or fixing. In most cases, the vehicle is not completely disabled, and the owner can drive the car into a dealership and get it looked at. However, in some cases a vehicle is completely disabled or undriveable. In such a case, most new car warranties offer a coverage called "roadside assistance." This allows us to have the vehicle towed to the nearest dealership, and also offers assistance in such untimely and embarrassing situations as out of gas, or locked out of vehicle.

The key thought in this coverage is "assistance," the act of helping, or the help given, aid, support. As in driving, so in dating, there are situations that call for "assistance." This is where spiritual leaders within the church, or godly parents, or other mature believers can be of great help.

No one is born mature. At birth a human being is the most helpless of all of God's creatures, and it takes longer for him to mature than the rest. Maturity is a lifelong process, and young people just do not have the knowledge and maturity of experience so as to make good decisions in every important situation. It makes good sense to seek the opinion of mature Christians. They know God's word and how to apply it. They have faced many different decisions, and thus are able to share their experiences in such a way as to help you. Get all the godly advice you can.

Solomon said it this way: "Without counsel (proper consultation) purposes are disappointed (plans miscarry): but in the multitude of (with many) counsellors they are established" (succeed) (Proverbs 15:22). Similarly, he added, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (11:14). Keep in mind, this "counsel" is "not . . . the counsel of the ungodly" (Psalm 1:1), rather, it is the "wise counsels" (Proverbs 1:5) of the spiritually mature who themselves have been counseled by God's word. David said, "Thy (God's) testimonies . . . are . . . my counsellors" (Psalm 119:24).

God's commandments are always in the best interests of His children. Making decisions based on the guideline set in God's word delivers one from many heartbreaking pitfalls. If you do not know God's word and how it applies to your situation, ask someone who does.

In recognizing the "warning lights" in our vehicle's design, and knowing that warranty coverage offers "assistance" when our vehicle is disabled, let us begin our drive. As we travel, what do we see along the way? We see "warning signs" designed for our protection and safety. We also see "lights" for stop, go, and caution, and "signs" for direction. These things can teach you important lessons in dating.

Often in dating, things escalate, and move quickly. Remember there is a "reduce speed" sign. It is always wise to slow and get to know. Often in dating, there is the urge, or temptation, to compromise character, morality, or godly principles. Remember there is a "stop sign." Learn to say "No." Many lives have been ruined by drugs, alcohol, pre-marital sex, and the like. Saying "No" to such things will save you much regret, heartache, and may even save your life. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22). But you may say, "It's so hard to be in the minority, to be different, not to join in." Let me remind you of this: When Noah and his family entered the ark, they were in a minority, but when they came out of the ark, they were in the majority.

Every "warning light" and "warning sign" in a car and on the road as you travel should remind you of spiritual guidelines in dating. Think now: "Stop, go, caution, reduce speed, do not enter, one way, yield," etc., are all warning indicators in driving. You may say, "I understand the benefit of the warning indicators in a car, and in driving, but I don't know what to look for in dating." Let me give you a few things to look for as follows:

1. One's friends, or the company one keeps. "Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character" (I Corinthians 15:33, N.I.V.) "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Proverbs 13:20). Examine the company your date keeps, and ask yourself, "Are these people really the kind of people I want to follow, and be with?" One's friends, or the company one keeps, tells you a lot. And you do become like those you spend time with. David gave a good guideline, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" (Psalm 119:63).

2. One's speech. What comes out of the mouth is often an indication of what is in the heart. Our Lord said, ". . . out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). What does your date talk about? Spiritual things, or worldly? Is the mouth full of cursing, foolishness, and deceit? Or is it wise and instructive? One's speech tells you a lot. Many people talk without thinking and spout hollow words. But it is written, "The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips" (Proverbs 16:23). Again, "The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things" (15:28). Again, "she openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (31:26).

3. One's dress, or attire. The way one dresses, or appears, is often more than just a passing fad. Dress makes a statement, otherwise there would be no such thing as "the attire of an harlot" (Proverbs 7:10). Even today the way a woman dresses makes a statement about her availability. Notice Genesis 38:15, "When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot . . ." The outward appearance of today consists of nudity, tattoos, body piercings, and the like. Yet, God's word connects tattooing and body piercing with prostitution, and condemns both (Leviticus 19:28,29). Peter said, ". . . let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be . . . the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:3,4). It is certainly true that one may be tastefully attired and immaculately groomed, and yet spoil everything by a haughty spirit or a bad temper. The inward beauty of Christian character is "of great price." It can be seen in one's manner of dress.

Does the dress of your date show conformity to this world? Does it show indecency, immodesty, rebellion, vulgarity, and the like? Paul said, ". . . be not conformed to this world . . ." (Romans 12:2). God's people should talk differently, act differently, and look differently. Today there seems to be much more interest in "the separation of church and state" than the separation of God's people from the world and its adornment. Dress says a lot.

4. One's reputation, the general estimation in which a person or thing is held by others. Is your date's character of good repute, or ill repute? The word "name" is used of one's reputation, or character, such as "a good name, or a bad name." How is your date known to others? It is popular to say, "I don't care what others think of me," but "a good name is rather to be chosen (preferred, or desired) than great riches, and loving favour (kindness, graciousness) than silver and gold" (Proverbs 22:1). It is certainly true that one may be "falsely" accused (I Peter 3:16), but in many cases what others say of another is true, not false. One's name, or the estimation of one held by others, is an important "warning indicator."

5. One's countenance, or facial expression says a lot. Isaiah said, "The shew of their countenance doth witness against them . . ." (Isaiah 3:9). The "countenance fallen" of Cain indicated an inward resentment toward his brother. When Lot's "wife looked back," contrary to the instruction, "look not behind thee," it showed her love for the things behind (Genesis 19:17,26). A look answers to inner thought. There may be an angry look, a proud, arrogant look, a disgusted look, an encouraging look, a guilty look, etc. What does the facial expressions of your date indicate?

6. One's willingness to heed the advice of godly parents. Many young people are of the mind set that they know much more than their parents. And generally today there is a lack of respect for authority, especially parental authority. It is seen in the classrooms at school and in the homes, as well as in the demeanor on the streets. How does your date measure up to this important "warning indicator?" Paul said, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother . . ." (Ephesians 6:1,2). "Obedience" is the duty, and "honor" is the disposition of which it is born. To honor implies to love, to regard highly, to respect, and this is to be shown both parents involved in instructing the child. Solomon said, "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Proverbs 6:20).

Proverbs 6:20, in its contextual setting, is a warning against adultery. Adultery is the voluntary sexual intercourse of a married person with someone not the spouse. The word is synonymous with unfaithfulness, infidelity, and disloyalty. The guidance offered by sound parental teaching, Proverbs 6:20, is to be strictly followed, verses 20-23, so as to guard against the adulteress. One should not become involved with any woman, or have sexual relations with any woman other than his wife. "Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife" (5:20, N.I.V.) The Biblical boundary of sex is within marriage. "Each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband" (I Corinthians 7:2 N.I.V.). Within any healthy marriage, there must be love, trust, and mutual respect.

Sexual sins are presented in the darkest of colors. They may be thought to be done in private, but "the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings" (Proverbs 5:20,21). Sexual sins are not just a detour from the best path, but they lead to a destructive, shameful, disgraceful, and life threatening dead end. Please take the time to read Proverbs 2:16-19; 5:3-21; 6:20-35; 23:27-28; 29:3, and make decisions based on the "warning indicators" of God's word.

7. One's demeanor, or the manner in which one behaves. Little things along the way say a lot. Does your date have a little drinking problem, a little drug problem, a little lying problem, a little overspending problem, a little lazy problem, a little cheating problem, a little temper problem, a little gambling problem, and the like? An acorn becomes an oak, and "little" bad habits grow and strengthen by every indulgence. The "little" act, of which you may think, "only this once," provokes its own repetition. A single act becomes a way, and gains momentum with every step. Beware of so-called "little" things! They often "increase unto more ungodliness."

8. One's faith in Jesus Christ. Is the person you are dating a believer in Jesus Christ? God's word warns, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers . . ." (II Corinthians 6:14). You cannot pray, "And lead us not into temptation" (Luke 11:2) if you ignore the prohibition of II Corinthians 6:14, because you will be plunging headlong into it of your own accord. It is not always possible to change the other person, especially after the relationship becomes more serious. Israel, as a case to point, did not turn the nations round about to "the true God," but rather was drawn away from God by them. She became guilty of the sin of complicity. The book of Psalms states: "They . . . were mingled among the heathen (the nations), and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them" (Psalm 106:34-36). Please read also Judges 2:11-13; 3:5-7. Fellowship and close association with an unbeliever usually dulls one's spiritual senses, and works to one's moral detriment.

Samson had three involvements with Philistine women (Judges 14:1; 16:1, 4). The third was Delilah, and this involvement brought Samson to a tragic end. The Philistines implored Delilah to entice him so as to determine the source of his strength with a view to his ultimate capture and defeat (16:5). He was so infatuated by her that he was like the moth attracted to the fire, though burning awaits it. Delilah as much as told him her intention, verse 6, "Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee." Samson divulges the secret, and Delilah finally accomplished her goal, verses 16-21. There is a lure, and cunning deception to this world's system. It blinds and infatuates. And when you fail to maintain your separation and purity demanded by II Corinthians 6:14, the results are as that described in Proverbs 2:19; 6:27-28. What a vivid warning to all subsequent generations of believers!

As a young person, you are just entering on life's journey. Youth is the best time. Health and vigor belong to it. But youth is characterized by a lack of knowledge and experience. It is also a time of special temptations, called "youthful lusts" in II Timothy 2:22. Those lusts are naturally strong, and are subject to defile one in thought and deed. Thus, many young people end up used up, and having nothing left long before their time. The future depends on the young. Shall the best years be devoted to the devil, worldly things, and worldly pursuits, and when there is little left, will you offer God the dregs?

Will you follow the pure or impure path? "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psalm 19:8). "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word" (119:9, N.I.V.) God's word informs us of sin and its consequences. It warns us of going astray, and urges us to beware of the deceitfully pleasant pastures of sin. At the same time, it directs our path and informs us of the great joy and happiness that comes from serving the Lord. It does not eliminate all problems, but it informs us of divine resources greater than all our problems, and encourages us all the while by the prospect of a sure and brighter future.

Life is certainly about choices. The first and greatest of all choices is to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," resulting in "everlasting life." Following that fact, one must "choose . . . whom ye will serve." It is impossible to "serve two masters." When God's word is studied, understood, and applied, then good choices can be made.

Do You Know Jesus Christ As Your Savior?

At some point, we have all entered life, and are traveling between two eternities. At the time of creation, God established the principle that each was to produce "after his kind" (Genesis 1:12,24,25). Also He affixed a penalty for man's disobedience, namely spiritual death, and physical death resulting therefrom (2:17; 5:5). God did not create evil, but created the potential for evil by creating man and woman with a will to choose. The first pair had no sin nature, but a test of obedience was placed in the garden, and Eve succumbed to the temptation, and Adam followed (2:16; 3:6). The nature of man became a sin nature, and that nature has been inherited by every son of Adam (5:3; Job 14:1,4; Psalm 51:5; 58:3). Thus, man is a sinner before God, and under the sentence of death (Romans 3:23; 5:12; 6:23).

Yes, God was faithful to Himself, to His character, and to His word to punish the sinner, But do not despair! The punishment of the sinner took place in the Person of a Substitute, so that God's judgement was meted out upon One who took our place. He was very God, manifest in flesh (John 1:1-3,14), and without sin (John 8:46; Hebrews 7:26; I Peter 1:18,19). His death has satisfied the just demands of a holy God, and on the basis of justice satisfied has enabled God to save the one who does no more than "believe on him," that is, accept "by grace . . . through faith . . . not of works . . ." the great "gift" of salvation (Ephesians 2:8,9).

As an unbeliever, you have but one nature, a sin nature, and all that you think, say, and do stems from that nature. But upon believing in Jesus Christ, the dominance of the sin nature is broken, a divine nature is given, and the affections are changed "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Romans 5:5; 6:2,7; II Corinthians 5:17; II Peter 1:4). This gives the believer a greater capacity, and makes it possible and easier to make good choices on life's pathway.

Be sure you understand: "All have sinned," and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 3:23; 6:23). But, "Christ died for our sins . . . and . . . rose again the third day" (I Corinthians 15:3,4). And, "if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," and "whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 8:24, 21).

"Choose life" by believing on Jesus Christ. Then "choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Deuteronomy 30:19; John 3:16,18,36; 6:47; Joshua 24:15).

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March, 2005