

# Christian Dating: How Far Is Too Far?

The worlds of dating and Christianity can be two difficult worlds to merge. Find out where the lines are drawn.



Even couples who take responsibility for their actions and trust God to help them stay pure want to know when they're crossing the line. To offer them help with this vaguely marked boundary, Jason Illian, author of *Undressed: The Naked Truth About Love, Sex, and Dating* first reminds singles of a simple biblical principle stated in 1 Corinthians 6:12: "Everything is permissible for me—but not everything is beneficial" (NIV).

Illian then illustrates that statement with a helpful set of guidelines while comparing physical actions with rungs of a ladder.

"Every rung represents a new physical act you share in a relationship. ... The higher you climb, the more physically satisfying and intimate the experience will become. However, with each step of the ladder, it becomes increasingly more dangerous."

Rungs 1-4, Illian explains, represent activities that are permissible and can be beneficial—holding hands, hugging and cuddling, kissing, French kissing.

Rungs 5-6 are choices that are permissible but not necessarily beneficial—touching and caressing with clothes on.

Rungs 7-9, the top of the ladder, are neither permissible nor beneficial—petting and groping (under the clothes or without clothes), oral sex and intercourse.

Illian encourages couples to “draw a line and take a step back”—meaning, they ought to prayerfully consider the rung they feel comfortable climbing to “and then choose the rung right underneath it.”

For couples in the process of deciding on their physical boundaries, Mindy Meier, writing in *Sex and Dating* offers this cautionary observation: “A number of engaged people have shared with me that they wish they had done less sexually—sometimes with a high school girlfriend or boyfriend, sometimes with the one they are about to marry. But no one has ever said they wish they had done more.”

To set boundaries is one thing. However, to keep the standards that are set is a whole different challenge. But there are ways couples can help themselves stick to their rules.

Meier recommends having accountability partners: “Find someone of the same sex who you can be totally honest with, someone who will give you grace when you fail but not let you get by with disobedience to the Lord.”

She also suggests that couples meet in public places, where some privacy is afforded but where they can't give in to temptation for intimacy.

Author Gary Chapman gives nonsexual examples of ways to show affection, such as words of affirmation, gifts and acts of service. To these, Meier adds “food.”

“Cooking a special meal for the person you're dating or showing up with a well-loved snack,” she says, “are wonderful ways to say I love you.”

Most important is that a couple talk and pray about the sexual purity aspect of their relationship. God will honor the ones who pursue His standard of holiness and rely on Him for guidance and strength.

As a single person, you can “wait in the right way” by being content in God and pursuing His will while actively looking for a spouse. God created you for relationship and understands the desire you have to find a mate. Involve Him in your search, follow your passions, pursue maturity, be deliberate and don’t stop asking Him for the desires of your heart.

And keep dreaming.


In her book *You Matter More Than You Think*, Leslie Parrott, co-founder of the Center for Relationship Development, states, “The eventual pain that results from not dreaming—for the fear of being disappointed by an unrealized dream—will always eclipse the pain of a dream that never comes true.”

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## Q&A With Author Randy Singer

 *Randy Singer reveals the unique inspiration for his new book, **False Witness**. He also discusses how a trip to India changed his perspective.*

**Q: Where did you first get your inspiration for *False Witness*?**


At a funeral.

The deceased was David O’Malley, a good friend and former client. His wife had asked me to give the

eulogy. I talked about David's generosity, his big heart. He was always inviting someone to live at his house until they could get back on their feet. He ran a used car lot and hired people down on their luck. David believed in second chances. And he was a character. He had this larger-than-life personality that made people laugh. He sang in a gospel quartet. Everybody had a David O'Malley story. Heads nodded as I shared mine.

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## The Irresistible Church

 Wayne Cordeiro | Bethany House

A best-selling author and pastor at New Hope Christian Fellowship in Honolulu, one of the nation's fastest-growing churches, Wayne Cordeiro lays out a strategic framework for pursuing change and improvement, in *The Irresistible Church: 12 Traits of a Church Heaven Applauds*.

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# Now I Walk on Death Row

✘ Dale S. Recinella | Chosen

Dale S. Recinella was a high-powered attorney with endless money and big dreams, but his heart was empty and broken. On the heels of closing a huge deal for the Miami Dolphins, he gave his life to Jesus in a rock-bottom decision, a moment in which “I will lose every illusory thing I have thought important, and be given everything that really matters,” he writes in *Now I Walk on Death Row: A Wall Street Finance Lawyer Stumbles Into the Arms of a Loving God*.

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# The Deepest Waters

✘ Dan Walsh | Revell

Just married, Laura and John Foster are excited about their future together. On their way back East aboard the steamship SS Vandervere, where John will be reunited with his family to introduce his lovely bride, a hurricane brews in the Atlantic, destroying the ship they are on and leaving little hope.

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# Heart of Ice

✘ Lis Wiehl with April Henry | Thomas Nelson

Lis Wiehl continues her “Triple Threat” series with the third, starring a trio of best friends: crime reporter Cassidy Shaw, FBI agent Nicole Hedges and federal prosecutor Allison Pierce. One murder after another seem to be linked, but the three can’t figure out how until Cassidy breaks the case with a surprising discovery. But can they outmaneuver a killer who will stop at nothing to achieve her goals?

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# Revive Us Again

✘ Frank Viola | David C. Cook

Each life is a story, an unfolding narrative heavily molded by one’s family of origin and environment. In reality, Viola asserts, an individual’s script often works on an unconscious level and may not be aligned with God’s best. Known for helping believers find a deeper Christian life, Viola urges readers to return to God’s script in *Revise*

## **Abandon Releases 'Control'**

In the two years since Abandon's Forefront Records debut *Searchlights*, the San Antonio-based band scored a Dove nomination, throngs of critical acclaim and tours alongside Fireflight, Building 429, Remedy Drive, Teen Mania's *Acquire the Fire*, plus a plethora of major faith-based festivals. Amongst all the activity, the modern rockers crafted its sophomore CD, *Control*, which finds the five-some taking the next natural evolutionary musical step, while also turning inward for their greatest lyrical depth to date.

"It's been a lot of hard work, and when you're in the audience looking at a band on stage, it's easy to take for granted how they got there," notes frontman Josh Engler. "There's a lot of leg work that makes it all possible. From the very beginning, we set out to stay real and stay at the audience's level, even if we are literally three feet above them on stage."

The 13 tracks that comprise *Control* are oozing with examples of the group's instant reliability and heart on sleeve vulnerability, despite all the interactions with success and fame since first starting as an indie act in 2005. If anything, the more experiences members have encountered through their vast travels has yielded an even greater realization of their constant dependence on the Lord and need to break beyond comfort zones with a faith that's fully on fire.

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# The Invisible World

✘ Anthony DeStefano |  
DoubleDay Religion

Author Anthony

DeStefano offers insights into his new book, *The Invisible World:*

*Understanding Angels, Demons, and the Spiritual Realities That Surround Us.*

**Q: *The***

***Invisible World* is a book about understanding angels, demons and the spiritual realities that surround us. In a world that is so visual, why tackle such a murky subject?**

A: That's really the

whole point. What I tried to do in this book was attempt to render that

spiritual world a bit less murky and a bit clearer for people.

My hope is that,

by doing this, these invisible realities won't seem so unfamiliar in the

future. And the more familiar they are, the easier it will be to understand

them and to have absolute faith in their existence.

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# Francis Chan Talks About the Holy Spirit

✘ *In his latest DVD release, Holy Spirit, part of the BASIC series, Francis Chan challenges the church to allow the Holy Spirit to lead. Here he discusses this oftentimes misunderstood and sometimes dividing topic.*

**Q: You wrote a book in 2009 on the Holy Spirit called *The Forgotten God*. Now you have a film from the BASIC series on the Holy Spirit. Why all of this emphasis on the Holy Spirit?**

A: I received a lot of questions about why I titled the book *The Forgotten God*. Some thought it was a bit extreme. I don't think so. From my perspective, the Holy Spirit is tragically neglected and, for all practical purposes, forgotten. That's why I have a book and a film on the subject. While no evangelical would deny His existence, I'm willing to bet there are millions of churchgoers across America who cannot confidently say they have experienced His presence or action in their lives over the past year. And many of them do not believe they can.