

Why I Don't Date

One of the big social questions I have been asked, and re-asked, many times here at college is "Have you ever had a boyfriend?" My response often times shocks people upon first learning the response: "No." What I'm faced with now is how they respond to the answer that I give them. Oftentimes I get looks of confusion, wonder or critique. It is rare occasion that I will get a positive response. After all, I'm 19 years old. I should have had a boyfriend by now, right? For me, this isn't necessarily true.

I have learned a lot about different kinds of relationships in various ways. I have observed different relationships anywhere from middle school to college aged, long-distance relationships, and relationships that can hardly even be called a "relationship." I have also learned a lot from the sermons and teachings from youth pastors of my church. They started introducing this idea of "dating" in middle school.

I remember they had a panel of students who were in relationships come up on stage to answer some questions about relationships and their purposes. The youth pastor confronted them with a question, "What is the difference between being friends with someone of the opposite sex, and being in a relationship with them?" The only answer out of their mouths was "the physical." Oftentimes, relationships in middle school and even high school and college are all about the physical.

I witnessed many relationships end after only a couple months, start again, and end again because they didn't have much more happen in them besides being able to hold someone's hand or cuddle with them, or in college-having sex (this may also happen in the younger years but is almost seen as "normal" for college-aged adults). As I grew older and heard messages at the high school level about dating and relationships, there was still the same frame for the message, just a more mature

setting. There were a couple more reasons the students had at the high school level for dating, such as experience, to feel loved, to feel wanted, for support, etc.

However it wasn't until I went to a college age service, a service for young adults ages 18-30, and heard a dating and relationships series that I heard what I had been looking for. They talked about dating for the intent of marriage.

This is where my beliefs about dating start coming in. I want to stress that these are my personal beliefs; this is what I have chosen and what I believe to be the best for me. I have never dated because when I am interested in a guy, I only consider dating him if I could see myself marrying the person.

To me, it is not worth the emotions, time, and effort of being in a relationship if I can't see myself marrying the person in the future. When I look for a guy whom I would consider being in a relationship with, I have a list of important attributes that must be present in the man I choose to marry, which also must be in the guy that I choose to be in a relationship with. While I don't necessarily advertise this to many people, some things are givens for me.

So now I will share some of the most important qualities that I look for in both a future relationship, and in a future husband. First and most important of all, he must be a godly Christian man who is 110% sold out for God. This means that he prays, reads his Bible, goes to church on a weekly basis, is looking for a godly woman, worships God in music, and asks God for wisdom for decisions in life and with everyday choices and decisions, as well as having the same beliefs in God that I have. He will push me to further my relationship with God, and hold me accountable to pursue God with all that I am.

Other qualities that are very important to me is that he is kind, loving, smart, compassionate, responsible, passionate

and driven, as well as issues that have been presented to me from being in college, such as being a complete virgin, not drinking, smoking or partying. These last few are qualities that are often hard to find in a man in the college world, as well as being a Christian, as I have found that there are many atheists in college and our world as a whole.

At this point people tell me, "Come on Amber, there has to be at least one guy you have met that at least has some of those qualities." The truth is yes, there have been guys that have had lots of these qualities. But the man that I choose to date/be in a relationship with and who I will someday marry will have all of the qualities that I am searching for.

Not because they are necessarily the desires of my own heart, but God's desires for my life. For me, I haven't found this man yet. Or better yet, he hasn't found me. Another reason is that God simply is waiting for the right time in both of our lives for each other to appear. The Bible states that God's timing is perfect. For me and my life, I am willing to wait for this to happen, for God's timing. As much as I hate waiting, God is teaching me patience through it all. Needless to say, it's hard.

Some people believe that perhaps I may just not want to date anyone. That's not true. I do. I really do. I crave the emotional and mental aspects of a relationship with a guy as well as some of the physical such as holding hands or cuddling. However for me, I have chosen to respect my future boyfriend and husband by abstaining from having that with a guy unless I am in an actual relationship with them.

I would also like to be friends with a guy first before we date. In addition to the other stuff that I am looking forward to in a relationship, I am also looking forward to meeting and being with a guy who I can talk passionately about God with, and who I can have a relationship with that is centered around

God. I want my relationship with a guy to glorify God in everything that we do.

I can't wait to finally be in a relationship. But for now, I must wait because I know that through all this waiting, God's timing will be perfect and that he is finding me the perfect man for me that will love me and treat me like the princess that I am because I am God's daughter. For now, I just have to wait. (But hurry up, wherever you are!)

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