



Practical Tips for Dating Online

www.TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries

There is no substitute for acting with caution when communicating with any stranger who wants to meet you. You are in control of your online dating experience at all times. Remember to always trust your instincts, pray and ask God for direction. If you feel unsafe or threatened, cease communication and report any misbehavior immediately.

1. Do your homework on the various dating sites.
 - What does the website say about Christ, about what they believe, about who they follow? Remember, Christian in the title doesn't necessarily mean they believe or support being equally yoked. It also doesn't mean they are really following Christ.
 - How do they collect their funds?
 - How do they find new potential members?
 - What is the application process; how much information are they asking you for?
 - How accessible are the owners/leaders/managers of the website?
 - What is their policy on separated folks who are considered by God to still be married?
 - Pray and ask God is this the right choice/direction for you?
2. Is there some kind of identify verification; marital status, background check they can make available?
3. Talk by email first, then phone, going slow, building trust and a foundation.
 - If this is going to be the person you may want to spend the rest of your life with you will not regret taking the time to get to know them better.
4. Ask for a recent photo.
 - Your picture should have been taken within the last 6 months. Provide ahead shot and full-body shot. Be honest about who you are.
 - Avoid pictures of yourself with too many props or too many other people. Avoid sunglasses or holding your dog as your main picture. Use those other photo's for the sections that ask for them. Supply your latest vacation photo's, hobbies, etc. but be careful not to put too many pictures of you with the opposite sex.

Note: With the addition of facebook, anyone can easily see more updated photo's, personal information, etc. Think about this when you submit your email address, last name, etc. I personally like the fact that I can find them on facebook as I have nothing to hide. However, if you don't want someone to know you quite that quick, you need to use a different email address.
5. Group date first when possible.
 - I would invite them to a church function or in some cases, the dating site might have group events that you can attend. This would allow a safe place to connect. It would also allow others to get to know them first.

6. When it comes time to meet in person, meet in a public place (not late at night or in bad weather). A place where people might know you.
 - This way you can leave the date if you are uncomfortable.
 - This way others see you together including those who might know you.
7. Bring a friend along for your date (double date) or plan something shortly after with a friend.
 - Again, this is a great step until you feel more comfortable being alone with someone you have met online.
8. Take your cell/mobile phone; if you aren't the one driving, have cash for a cab/taxi/bus. If possible, drive separate.
9. Make sure someone knows where you are and who are meeting; have a plan to call them during the date. Don't leave personal items unattended (like when you go to the restroom). You don't want to risk having personal information stolen.
10. Date people that are local whenever possible; it makes it easier to visit their church, come along on group dates, meet their family, friends, etc..
 - I know dating locally can be hard making it tempting to date folks long distance. Just be aware that you will know even less about them when they don't live where you live. You will have a hard time verifying information about them. Going to their church, seeing their friends and family, etc. will all be harder.
11. Never, never, tell them anyone where you are staying/living and never go home with them after your first or even several dates. If you are out of town, meet them at a location and never have them pick you up at the hotel.
12. Date equally yoked.
 - The bible makes it clear that we are to marry someone who believes the way you believe. This not only applies to being equal in our Spiritual beliefs but also in our direction that God has given us. If you feel led to stay in the city you live but the other person feels led to be a missionary overseas, you are not equally yoked, and so on. Filtering questions that may or may not show up on the application are things such as denomination, wanting kids and how to raise them, how you serve at your church, your passion, etc. are very important in making decisions to even have a first date.

Note: There is no dating in the Bible, only courtship for marriage (or in today's terms, "dating with a purpose." So unless you are serious about marrying someone, you should not be dating to just date. Of course, you won't know if the person is someone you could marry without spending time with them. However, be intentional about the things God has told you about your future. If you know for sure God has called you in one direction, don't think you are going to change someone else by dating them or marrying them.
13. Be smart, go slow and wait on God.

FINAL THOUGHT:

If the thought of telling someone of how you met the love of your life bothers you, then perhaps that is God telling you the way your are connecting is not right for you.