

CELESTIAL DATING

or...HOW TO PREPARE FOR LIFE AND REALLY FALL IN LOVE ON THE LORD'S TERMS
by Steven H. Satterfield

PREFACE: TO PARENTS and YOUNG ADULTS

David of old, choice in the sight of God, allowed his eternal soul to fall into the depths of hell. Can we say that God has been with us as much as He was with David in his youth? Can we claim the faith in God that David showed? Yet, David fell! And we can fall too, no matter how choice we are! To fail to believe that is to have fallen prey to one of Satan's biggest lies.

Why did David fall? He failed to obey his God. In doing this he physically placed himself in a position which could allow sin to strike. Had David turned away his head and not invited Bathsheba to his home, he likely would be exalted today.

I have looked into the tear-filled, sorrowful eyes of too many good latter-day saint youth involved in sexual transgressions not to know how easy it is to fall! I have asked myself time and time again why some fall and others don't. Surely such a question requires a very complicated answer. Nevertheless, after many hundreds of hours of interview, several common errors, among those who had fallen into transgression, became obvious.

Time after time, physical surroundings, circumstances, and activities were all repeated, and all seemed to set the stage for sin to enter into young lives. Bitterness, regret, sorrow, and a feeling of despair quickly replaced excitement and enthusiasm. The message of the following rules is plain and simple: You CAN and must be the one to control your life in order to be free from sin. Where you are, who you are with, where you are going, what you are doing, what time you are doing it, are all controlled by you, and will be to your good or to your detriment.

In order to help substantiate what I have written, I have used many quotes from President Kimball, but much of the inspiration comes from countless hours of interview with young people. To live these rules will require spiritual strength added to a sincere desire to do what is right. Prayer, scripture study, attendance at church, and service, are all necessary prerequisites to having the strength to follow these rules. The rules are strict, but make no mistake, so is the Lord! The rewards of a chaste life are far greater than the sacrifices necessary to follow this counsel. Nothing can be of greater assistance to you in obtaining the Celestial Kingdom than to be worthy to marry the right person at the proper time in your life in the Temple.

RULES FOR CELESTIAL DATING:

1. NO DATING UNTIL AGE 16; NO SINGLE DATING UNTIL 18.

President Kimball tells us, "Any dating or pairing off in social contacts should be postponed until at least the age of 16 or older, and even then there should be much judgment used in selections and in the seriousness." President Kimball goes on to counsel us that beginning the

dating process too soon almost always brings young, immature marriages or immorality and sin. He says that early dating is often done with parental approval, "yet it is near criminal to subject a tender child to the temptations of maturity." Remember, NO STEADY dating until after missions. It is an excellent idea to always double or group date until at least the age of 18. (Quotes in order: Ensign, February 1975, p. 4; Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 223.)

2. MISSIONS BEFORE SERIOUS DATING.

President Kimball advises us that "every boy should have been saving money for his mission and be free from any and all entanglements so he will be worthy. When he is returned from his mission at 21, he should feel free to begin to get acquainted and to date." He tells us further that, "one can have all the blessings if he is in control and takes the experiences in proper turn: first some limited social get-acquainted contacts, then his mission, then his courting, then his temple marriage and his schooling and his family, then his life's work." A word to you young ladies of the church: You should always encourage a young man to fulfill his mission. NEVER be the cause of a young man deciding to stay home for any reason, for you will be held accountable. Missions for young men of the church supercede marriage in importance from ages 19 to 25. (Quotes: Ensign, February 1975, p. 4.)

3. DO NOT DATE NONMEMBERS OR UNWORTHY MEMBERS. NO MISSIONARY WORK ONE-ON-ONE WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX.

I do not believe that the Lord would expect the choice young people of His church to find their eternal mates among nonmembers! He would not ask us to go against both HIS counsel throughout the ages or against the counsel of his prophets. President Kimball tells us, "clearly right marriage begins with right dating....therefore, this warning comes with great emphasis. Do not take the chance of dating nonmembers, or members who are untrained and faithless." Now, do not rationalize by saying that you are doing missionary work. The Lord does not instruct us to do missionary work one-on-one with members of the opposite sex. Fellowshiping should be done in groups. Missionary work needs to be done without hazard of emotional romantic involvement that could lead to conditions which confuse the potential candidate. Many potential members have been "turned off" by improper dating of LDS people. I am quite aware that we have faithful members of the church who have joined as a result of exposure to the church by his or her marriage partner. We are grateful for them. However, for every success story I have heard, I am aware of many sad examples of both members and nonmembers being hurt by not following the counsel of the prophet in this matter. (Quote: The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 241.)

4. DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN "KISSING-HUGGING" SESSIONS (making out, or necking, as it is called).

I am not talking about the serious sin of "petting," but the lengthy make out sessions that many feel are "okay" as long as you do not let it go too far. President Kimball teaches us, "among the most common sexual sins our young people commit are necking and petting. Not only do these improper relations often lead to fornication, pregnancy, and abortions-all ugly sins-but in and of themselves they are pernicious evils...". Necking or making out, the kissing

hugging session, is wrong IN AND OF ITSELF, not just because it may lead to something worse. I am not saying that there isn't a proper time in a dating relationship to kiss. There is a proper time and place. President Kimball advises us, 'kissing would be saved at least until these later hallowed courtship days when they could be free from sex and have holy meaning." In an address delivered to returned missionaries (not high school-age people), President Kimball said, "a kiss is an evidence of affection. A kiss is an evidence of love, not an evidence of lust-but it can be. Don't ever let a kiss in your courtship spell lust. Necking and petting are lustful; they are not love.... I don't mind your kissing each other after you have had several dates, but not the 'Hollywood kiss,' not the kiss of passion, but the kiss of affection and there won't be any trouble. Now remember these things." (Quotes in order: The Miracle of Forgiveness; p. 65; Ibid., p. 231; An address delivered by Elder Spencer W. Kimball January 2, 1959.)

5. NO FRENCH KISSING.

This type of conduct is far too intimate and A French kiss does not meet the standards President Kimball describes above.

6. DO NOT PARK.

Especially in the high school years, parking in an automobile has been the downfall of many choice young people. Our prophet, President Kimball, tells us that, "in interviewing repenting young folks, as well as some older ones, I am frequently told that the couple met their defeat in the dark, at late hours, in secluded areas.... The car was too often the confessed seat of the difficulty. It became their brothel." BEWARE! Often I have found that a couple originally parked to discuss a problem or work out an argument-not to make out. However, after the problem was resolved, they kissed to make up and things developed from there. It does not matter the reason; DO NOT PARK. After a date, GO HOME! Once you get there, go into the house, ALONE!

7. NEVER, NEVER GO INTO A HOME OR AN APARTMENT ALONE.

I estimate that 80 to 85 percent of the young people I interviewed, who were involved in sexual transgression of any sort, got involved in a home or an apartment alone. This is especially true of COLLEGE-age members who have their own apartments. If you would live just this one rule ALWAYS, you would significantly reduce your chances of ever falling. If you are in a home and everyone leaves but you and your date, ONE OF YOU should leave also! DON'T GIVE SATAN A CHANCE.... That is all he needs!

8. NEVER, NEVER, NEVER GO INTO A BEDROOM.

Bedrooms are not for entertaining friends of the opposite sex; not even to "just listen to records," watch T.V., etc. Do not let- a bedroom become a "familiar" place to be with members of the opposite sex.

9. NO BACK RUBS.

Becoming too familiar with each other physically offers liberties NOT entitled to single couples, and is wrong. Back rubs have too often led to more intimate acts.

10. DO NOT LIE DOWN BY EACH OTHER OR ON TOP OF EACH OTHER.

Lying down to watch TV, lying down in the park, on the beach, or wherever, places you in a position that is not needed and spiritually unhealthy. When you watch TV, SIT UP! When you go on a picnic, sit up! When you have a good night kiss, at the proper time in a relationship, don't recline to do it. ALSO, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER lie on top of each other! This is absolutely wrong. Remember, do not do anything you would not want your own son or daughter to do.

11. ATTEND ONLY WHOLESOME ACTIVITIES.

X-, R-, and most P.G. 13-rated movies are NOT appropriate to see on dates or at any time. President Kimball advises us that, "danger spots likely to have most appeal among the youth, and which should be shunned as one would shun a poisonous serpent, are undesirable movies and improper TV programs." I have had many members (young and old) tell me that they just "over look" the filth in a movie and not let it affect them adversely. To that I say baloney! You cannot go to a movie or to any entertainment that portrays sexual or violent material, as do most movies today, and not be affected and spiritually hurt. It affects you whether you like it or not! In fact, if you find that this kind of material does not offend you, then this is a sure sign that you have already been spiritually damaged in your life and do not even know it. We should avoid Drive-in movies for dates. President Spencer W. Kimball in talking of drive-in movies, said the following: "There in the car, in dark privacy, with suggestive, voluptuous acting on the screen, was Satan's near-perfect setting for sin. With outward appearances of decency and respectability, with an absence of holy influences and with legions of vicious, hovering tempters, even good youth are trapped into immoral acts--acts which would at least be much less likely in the living room or in the formal theater on Main Street." Further, if you find yourself at a party where alcoholic beverages are being served, where the lighting is poor, where couples are making out in the corners, where drugs are being used, or anything else not conducive to maintaining the spirit, LEAVE! When you are at dances be careful of your posture on slow dances (NO BEAR HUGGING) and your intimations on fast dances. Now, never, should you go to bars. Even "just to dance" or "listen to the music," is not sufficient reason to go to bars. If you frequent bars consistently, you will fall into serious moral sin. I HAVE YET TO FIND AN EXCEPTION TO THAT STATEMENT. (Quotes in order: The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 229; Ibid, p. 225.)

12. NO IMMODEST DRESS.

Dress that is modest and becoming of an LDS young man or young lady is most important at all times, especially when dating. Girls, immodest clothing includes two-piece swimming suits (or ones with low necklines), halter tops, short shorts, tight-fitting clothes, low necklines, short skirts, etc. Boys, keep your shirts on and buttoned up! President Kimball tells us that

those who do not actively resist the evil influence of immodesty will "absorb and foster it." He goes on to say, "I see some of our LDS mothers, wives, and daughters wearing dresses extreme and suggestive in style. Even some fathers encourage it. I wonder if our sisters realize the temptation they are flaunting before men when they leave their bodies partly uncovered or dress in tight-fitting, body-revealing, form-fitting sweaters.... We cannot overemphasize immodesty as one of the pitfalls to be avoided if we would shun temptation and keep ourselves clean." On occasion I have found young ladies who wore things that were immodest and did not realize it. All looked well in the mirror as they stood there with shoulders back and standing up straight. What they did not realize is that they don't stand straight all day--they sit, they stoop, they lean over and their clothes become immodest. Make sure all of your clothing is modest for all occasions. (Quote: The Miracle of Forgiveness, p. 226.)

13. DATE IN COUPLES OR GROUPS MOST OFTEN.

Even after the age of 18, it is desirable to date in couples or groups. Dating in groups is not only safer, but you will find that it is much more enjoyable. You will also get to know things about your date that you could not find out any other way. As we get older, we tend to think that we are "above group dating." This is a serious error. Do not make single-dating the largest portion of your dating. Sometimes when we start to like someone quite a bit, we tend to single date almost exclusively this is a dangerous mistake.

14. NO LATE HOURS.

We should be in from our dates by 12:30 OR SOONER. Most proper functions you attend will end by 12:00 or sooner. You then have 30 minutes to get home. If it does not take 30 minutes to get home, then get home sooner. Do not make it a habit to be out late or up late for that matter. Not all moral problems occur late at night, but many, many do! When we are tired and have become quite familiar with each other through the evening, it is very easy to let down our guard ... that is all Satan needs. Resistance seems to be lower at night, so make it a habit to be in early from your dates. THIS DOES NOT MEAN that if your go to one of your homes you can stay longer than 12:30! You should both be home by that hour.

NOTE TO PARENTS:

You would be shocked to know the number of young people that I have talked to that lost their virtue in their own front room, or family room, or bedroom. Parents, care enough to chaperon your children while in your home through the entire evening. DO NOT go to bed until the "party is over" and everyone has left! Do not let a young couple go to parts of the home isolated for long periods of time. WAIT UP until they are home from date.

15. EACH PARTNER SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OWN ACTIONS.

Dating is a two-way arrangement. You are each responsible for your own actions. Never allow another person to control your actions. Never say to yourself, "This young man (or woman) is

so good that they could never do anything wrong. What ever they would do would be ok." Anyone can make errors. You must have firmly planted in your mind right from wrong, and do not let ANYONE talk you into anything that would not meet the Savior's approval. Know exactly what you are going to do on a date before you go. To go on a date without a plan may sound harmless or even exciting but can lead to trouble very easily.

16. DISCUSS DATING RULES WITH PARTNERS.

As you date, especially with those you really like, discuss these rules and your standards so that you each understand what you expect from yourself and your relationship with each other. Set the stops now while your minds are clear and unhampered by emotions. It's too difficult to set them in the middle of a passion-filled night. If a dating partner is not willing to follow these rules or thinks they are too strict, DROP THEM FLAT! Never let your standards relax..... even for what may seem to be the best young man or woman you have ever known!! If you want the help of the Lord and his blessing, follow his counsel.

17. DO NOT THINK THAT YOU ARE THE EXCEPTION TO THESE RULES.

Don't say to yourself, "Boy, do I know so-and-so who needs these rules." The rules are for you! To think that it could never happen to you is an error. It CAN happen to you. YOU ARE NOT SO IN CONTROL THAT YOU CAN AFFORD TO SAY TO YOURSELF, "Oh, I would NEVER do that, therefore, I can go into an apartment alone with my date, or park, or whatever." This is an open invitation to Satan to prove you wrong! And, he will! The biggest error of all is to think that you are an exception to one of these rules.

These are not all the rules we might follow in dating. But, I have never talked to a young person yet who has committed a moral transgression of ANY kind who has not broken several of these rules. REMEMBER, breaking these rules interferes with Celestial Dating and falling in love. They DO NOT bind you down, but rather free you from the things that cause countless heartaches.... Things that have contributed to many a Celestial candidate falling to a lower kingdom!

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This was written in 1978 when Steven Satterfield was a Bishop in the Idaho State University Stake. The list of rules found its way to BYU where the then visiting General Authority Gordon B. Hinckley passed them out. He told the students that he had run the document through the church Correlation Committee whose inspection it had passed.