

# **SIX COMMITMENTS EVERY CHRISTIAN SINGLE MUST MAKE**

**By Andy Manning**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. To be a successful athlete, what you do before the game is just as important as what you do in the game. To win, it's not enough to just play your heart out. It's not enough to just do your best in the game. Winning is determined by the work and the preparation you do before the game.
2. Take Steph Curry, the greatest shooter in the history of basketball, and four-time NBA champion. When Steph plays, he does his best. He lays it all on the line. He gives it his all. But that's only a small reason for his success. Steph shoots around 2,000 shots per week. When the game starts, he is ready for success.
3. To have a successful marriage, what you do before marriage is just as important as what you do after you get married.
4. What you do while you are single will either set you up for a successful marriage or set you up for a very difficult marriage.
5. This morning I want to talk to singles.
6. We're in a sermon series about marriage right now, and if you are single, you probably assume that it is irrelevant to you. But this series isn't just for married couples. It's also for singles.
7. This morning I want to teach you what you can and must do right now, while you are still single, to set yourself up for success in marriage.
8. I call these six commitments that every Christian single must make.

## **II. SIX COMMITMENTS FOR SINGLES**

### **1. Only marry a Christian.**

- i. **1 Corinthians 7:39** "A wife is bound as long as her husband is living. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants—only in the Lord."

#### **1. This verse says three things:**

- a. Marriage is permanent. You can't just leave your spouse and marry someone else. You are bound to your spouse until death.

- b. You are free to remarry when your spouse dies.
  - c. You must only marry a Christians. Notice the phrase “only in the Lord.” Only a believer.
- ii. **2 Corinthians 6:14-15** “14 Do not be yoked together with those who do not believe. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? 15 What agreement does Christ have with Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?”
  - 1. **Craig Groeschel** “A yoke is a farming device used a long time ago that rested across the shoulders and necks of two beasts of a burden, joining them so they could work together, to plow a field, for example. Paul was actually referring to an Old Testament teaching: “Do no plow with an ox and a donkey toked together” (Dt 22:10). A donkey and an ox are different sizes; the yoke would pull down painfully on the ox’s neck and up the donkey’s. Also, they travel at different paces; one would continuously drag the other along. To yoke them together would be cruel to both. The same is true when a believer and a nonbeliever are yoked or joined together. At first everything may seem fine. Over time, though, the fundamental differences in life values and vision will start to tear the relationship. It’ll become impossible to keep in step with each other.”
- iii. The Bible is unambiguous about this. It is a sin to marry a non-Christian.
- iv. An unbelieving spouse will hinder you from being fully devoted to Christ, and from raising your kids to follow Jesus. And not necessarily on purpose, but just as a result of not being on the same page spiritually. Only marry a Christian.
- v. **Proverbs 27:17** “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”
  - 1. God’s plan is for you and your spouse to help each other grow in Christ.

2. But it's essential that you and your spouse both be believers. It's essential that you both be made from the same material.
  3. When iron hits iron, they sharpen each other. They improve each other.
  4. What happens when iron hits wood? One gets dull, and the other gets damaged.
  5. Only marry a Christian.
- vi. But don't settle for the first professing Christian who comes along. You should only marry someone who is as serious about Jesus as you, and who holds similar theological convictions. You may both be Christians, but if you come from two vastly different theological traditions or denominations, you will face a lot of challenges.

## 2. Only date a Christian.

- i. In his book about striving for sexual purity, *The Purity Principle*, **Randy Alcorn** advises singles, "If you're a Christian, date only Christians. If you're a committed disciple, date only committed disciples."
- ii. Why? Let me give you reasons to only date a committed Christian.
  1. Dating a non-Christian can lead to marrying a non-Christian.
    - a. Dates become mates. Mates always start out as dates.
    - b. If you date a non-believer and things get hot and heavy, and you fall in love, then marriage will be a real temptation. It happens all the time.
    - c. In fact, this is why you should immediately break off any dating relationship as soon as it becomes clear that they are not marriage material.
    - d. Again, dates becomes mates. If you are serious about not marrying an unbeliever, then you have no business dating an unbeliever.
  2. Dating a non-Christian will make you worldly.
    - a. **Romans 12:2 (ESV)** "Do not be conformed to this world."

- b. What is the world? The world consists of unbelievers who are driven by three values (1 Jn 2:16):
  - i. The lust of the flesh: the passion for pleasure. The desire to feel good.
  - ii. The lust of the eyes: the passion to possess. The desire to have.
  - iii. The pride of life: the passion for position. The desire to be.
- c. All unbelievers are driven by these three values. These are their primary motives.
- d. Believers are driven by a different value – the passion for God. The desire to please God.
- e. What will happen to you if your boyfriend or girlfriend, the person you spend the most time with, the person that you have deep affection for, is worldly?
- f. They will rub off on you, and you will become worldly. You will be conformed to this world.
- g. You might say, “Maybe I will rub off on him.”
- h. You might, but it is much easier to pull someone down than to pull someone up.
- i. If you were a parent, would you want your kids hanging around a bunch of good kids, or a bunch of bad kids? Good kids. Why? Because you know that we are all affected our friends.
- j. We all know that if you sleep in the sewer, you are going to smell like the sewer.
- k. **1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV)** “Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’”
- l. **2 Timothy 2:22b (NLT)** “Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.”
- m. **J. C. Ryle** wrote, “Perhaps nothing affects someone’s character more than the company he keeps. We are influenced by the ways and tone of those with whom we live and talk, and, sadly, we get harm far more

easily than good. Disease is infectious, but health is not. If a professing Christian deliberately chooses to be closely acquainted with those who are not friends of God and who cling to the world, his soul is certain to be harmed.”

- n. Dating a non-Christian will make you worldly and pull you away from the Lord.
- 3. Dating a non-Christian will tempt you to compromise with your Christian convictions.
  - a. As a Christian, your commitment save sex for marriage. Non-Christians do not share this commitment. If you date a non-Christian, they are going to tempt you, and pressure you, and entice you to compromise.
  - b. Look at these verses:
    - i. **2 Timothy 2:22a (NLT)** “Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts.”
      - 1. We’re commanded to run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Dating a non-Christian will stimulate youthful lusts.
    - ii. **Hebrews 12:1** “Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us”
      - 1. We are commanded to lay aside every hindrance; anything that might make it more challenging to be pure. Dating an unbeliever is a hindrance; it will make it more challenging to remain pure.
    - iii. **Craig Groeschel** wrote, "As Christ followers, we simply choose not to date or marry nonbelievers. It’s not because non-Christians can't be admirable or moral people, but because ultimately they’ll

have different inner lives. Different values. A different vision for what life means at its core.”

### 3. Save sex for marriage.

- i. **1 Thessalonians 4:3** “For this is God’s will, your sanctification: that you keep away from sexual immorality”
- ii. What is God’s will. That you keep away from sexual immorality.
- iii. What is sexual immorality? The Greek word for “sexual immorality” is *porneia*, from which we get our word “pornography.” Sexual immorality refers to all sexual activity outside of marriage.
- iv. Why is it so important to save sex for marriage? In the *Apologetics Study Bible for Students* (p. 1227), Sean McDowell gives eight reasons to save sex for marriage:
  1. It is a command. If you are a Christian, you are bound to obey Christ.
  2. You are special and worth waiting for.
  3. Those who don't have sex before marriage are far more likely to experience lasting sexual satisfaction with their spouses.
  4. Sexually transmitted diseases are at epidemic levels in this country. Most STDs occur in teens and young adults.
  5. Sexually active teens are more likely to be depressed.
  6. Two-thirds of teens who have had sex wish they had waited.
  7. Sex typically speeds up the breakup of a relationship.
  8. Having sex can negatively impact your reputation.
- v. Let me add a couple of reasons to save sex for marriage:
  1. To avoid having a child out of wedlock. I have a friend who had a child out of wedlock right after high school, and she’s struggling. Things didn’t work out with her boyfriend; he moved on. So now, she’s raising her child alone; and her child is growing up without a married mom and dad at home.
  2. To attract a good mate. If you want to marry a committed Christian, then you need to be a committed Christian. You need to be the kind of person who would attract a

committed Christians. A committed Christian is not going to be attractive to someone who has been sleeping around. They are looking for someone who is pure; to someone with a track record of purity; to someone with a long history of purity. Why? Because if you can maintain sexual purity as a single, then that is a good sign that you will be able to maintain sexual purity within marriage.

- vi. And that's why saving sex for marriage is so important for singles. Sexual temptation doesn't go when you get married. You will still be tempted to go outside of God's will to fulfill your sexual desires. You need to use your single years to learn how to live sexually pure, so that when you get married you can continue to be sexually pure.
- vii. Let me put it this way: If you are not sexually pure before marriage, you will not be sexually faithful when you get married.

#### **4. Don't live together before marriage.**

- i. Pastors used to not have to say this, but it is becoming more and more common as our culture grows more secular.
- ii. And it should be obvious. Why? If you want to save sex for marriage, then living with your boyfriend/girlfriend before marriage is off limits.
- iii. There are some very popular myths about cohabitation that need to be addressed. People say that it's harmless; that it will prepare you for marriage; that it will help you to determine whether you are truly compatible for marriage, etc.
- iv. But there's a ton of research that shows the opposite. Those who live together before marriage are less satisfied sexually after marriage, are less satisfied with their marriage overall, and are more likely to divorce than couples who do not.
- v. Living together is for married people. If you want to live together, get married. If your boyfriend is pushing you to move in together, then first of all he's not a good man and you should break up with him. And second, if he wants to move in together, tell him to put a ring on your finger and say "I do."

#### **5. Honor your parents.**

- i. **Ephesians 6:1-3** “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, 3 so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land.”
- ii. This is one of the Ten Commandments. What does that mean? It’s very important to God.
- iii. What does it mean to honor your parents?
  - 1. When you are living under their roof or are still financially dependent on them, it means that you obey them.
  - 2. It means that you treat them with the utmost respect your entire life.
- iv. And your responsibility to honor your parents never goes away, even as an adult.
- v. When you are single, one of the ways you can honor your parents is to get your parent’s permission before you date someone.
- vi. Why? Well, why does God want you to honor your parents? One of the reasons is to help you navigate the big decisions in life, and one of the biggest decisions you will make is who you will date, and who you will marry. Your parents love you more than anyone else; and they want you to be happy; they want what’s best for you. And your parents have way more wisdom and experience than you. To help you make good decisions, God wants you to rely upon your parents. Your parents will help you avoid all kinds of trouble.
- vii. If your parents say you are too young to date, obey them. If they don’t like the guy you want to date, honor them.
- viii. Lydia and I practiced this principle. Lydia and I became good friends and got to know each other. When I knew I wanted to date her, I didn’t ask her to start dating. First, I asked my parents if they approved. They did. Second, I asked her if I could get her father’s permission to date her. She said, “Please do.” Well, her parents lived two hours away in DeRidder. So, I drove all the way to DeRidder to introduce myself to her parents and to ask if I could date her. Her parents said yes, so we started dating. And



then when I was ready to propose, I first asked my parents, and then I asked Lydia's father.

- ix. You may think that's so outdated and old-fashioned and even ridiculous, but let me push back a little. If your parents don't want you to date someone, then that's a huge red flag. That's a huge sign that that person is not a good fit for you. And if you refuse to listen to them, you are living recklessly. You are about drive off a cliff. You are headed for disaster.
- x. And let me say one more thing. Eventually one of the people that you date is going to become your spouse. And that means it's going to become your parent's new family member, and the parent of their grandchildren. Your parents deserve a say in that decision.

#### **6. Prioritize your relationship with God.**

- i. The best thing you can do when you are single to prepare yourself for marital success is to prioritize your relationship with God. Put God first in your life. Make your life all about Jesus.
- ii. How does this help you prepare for marriage?
  - 1. It will help you to avoid the herd mentality.
    - a. The way the world looks at dating, and singleness, and romance, and sex, and relationships, and marriage, is far different from God's perspective.
    - b. The world says "Hook up, shack up, and move on to the next victim." The world says that if you're not in a dating relationship there's something wrong with you. If you're not in a relationship, then you can't be happy. If you're not having sex before marriage, you're weird. There's nothing wrong with premarital sex, sexting, sending nudes, and on and on.
    - c. And the thing about people is that we are social creatures. We are heavily influenced by other people. We're like cattle; we tend to just follow the herd. We're like sheep; we tend to just follow the flock.

- d. But the world is headed straight for destruction. They are headed straight for suffering, and sorrow, and regret.
  - e. What can you do to avoid the herd mentality? To follow Christ and not be pulled into the world's way of thinking?
  - f. Prioritize your relationship with God. Stay close to God. Seek the Lord with all your heart.
  - g. If your priority is pleasing God, then you won't try to please the world. If your priority is imitating Christ, then you won't try to imitate the world.
2. It will give you strength to battle sexual temptation.
    - a. God wants to give you strength and motivation to say no to sin. He wants to give you the strength to put protective boundaries in place. He wants to give you the strength to listen to wise counsel.
    - b. But He can only give you those things if you will put Him first.
    - c. **Isaiah 40:31** "Those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength...."
    - d. God only strengthens those who look to Him for strength. If you are not putting Him first, then you are rejecting His strength.
  3. It will help you to discern God's voice.
    - a. God wants to lead you to the right mate. He wants to help you find the right person.
    - b. But He only promises to lead and guide those who put Him first.
    - c. **Proverbs 25:12** "Who is this person who fears the LORD? He will show him the way he should choose."
  4. It will help you attract and be attracted to the right person.
    - a. You attract who you are. If God is your top priority, then that's the type of person you will attract. And that's the type of person you will be attracted to.

- b. But if you are backsliding, then a fully-devoted Christian is not going to be attracted to you; and you won't be attracted to full devotion.
- 5. It will set you up for God's provision.
  - a. God promises to meet all your needs, and that includes your relationship needs.
  - b. He wants to provide a wonderful, godly mate just for you.
  - c. But look at Matthew 6:33.
  - d. **Matthew 6:33** "But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you."
  - e. In other words, God will meet all your needs as you put Him first.
  - f. God wants to take care of you, but He can't if you are running from Him. He can't take care of you if you are rejecting Him. He can't take care of you if you are ignoring Him.
  - g. But if you will put God first, He will meet your needs. He will bring along the right person into your life at the right time.

### III. CONCLUSION

1. Six commitments every Christian single must make.
2. Why? Because what you do before marriage is just as important as what you do in marriage. What you do as a single plays a huge role in the success of your marriage.
3. If you are single, will you make these six commitments?
4. And most importantly, will you put God first in your life?
5. If you are single, how's your relationship with God? Would you return to Him today? Would you recommit your life to Him today?
6. How do you do that?
  - i. Start by confessing your sins to God and asking for forgiveness.
  - ii. Renew your commitment to obey God's will in everything.
  - iii. Make a commitment to prioritize church. If church is not a priority, God will not be your priority.

- iv. Make a commitment that your relationship with God is going to be your top priority from now on, and you will not let anyone or anything get in the way.