

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- There's nothing right or wrong about using online dating sites.
- Keep in mind that not everyone is what they claim to be.
- If everything checks out, and you know, really know, the person's worthy of your trust, then go for it!

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The Hard Questions

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Answers to Life's Hard Questions— Are You Ready?

Dear Joy,

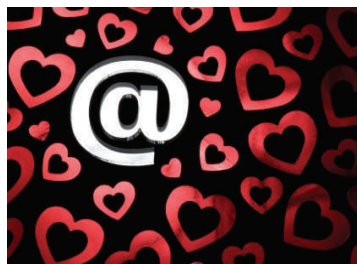
I'm a widowed Christian lady. I attend a small church with no eligible bachelors but I'd really like some male companionship. Is online dating an option for Christians and how safe is it? Signed, Looking

True story: a woman met a man online who wanted to show her his home in the mountains. She agreed and found he lived in a huge home surrounded by fir and pine trees with flowers gracing the curving driveway. There was a wine cellar, a huge master bedroom, a home theater as well as other beautiful amenities. She was enthralled but wondered why he picked her up in a rickety pick up instead of the Rolls Royce in the garage. She also wondered why women's clothing hung in the bedroom walk-in closet. His answers to her questions were evasive but she thought of reasons this might be so, as well as believing his explanation that the clothes belonged to his deceased wife. She pictured herself in this setting and felt she could love this wonderful and caring man. But back at home, she asked around and discovered that the real owners of the mountain retreat were living in France and he was the caretaker. This pinpoints one of the huge problems with online dating.

I, too, was widowed and found the choices slim at my church. So I turned to the internet considering only those who

were local. Unless you are ready to make a major move out of town or out of state, it's best to look for those who live in your area.

There's nothing right or wrong about using online dating sites. It can be safe or unsafe depending on how you handle it but you should always be cautious. And as the saying goes, if it looks too good to be true, it probably is. You might want to consider some alternatives at the same time to cover all the possibilities.



- ◆ Let your friends know you are looking and give them your criteria. What are you looking for in a man? And I'm thinking more of character qualities than looks. Tall, dark and handsome may sound wonderful but not if he's a cheat and a scoundrel.
- ◆ Widen your search by joining one or two church singles

groups. Be forewarned, though, that for a woman this can be discouraging since many times they consist mainly of women like you who are also looking. There's lots of competition out there, especially for Christian women!

- ◆ I suggest you might join a class, perhaps at a close by community college. They offer short courses year around for a variety of interests. The main problem with this approach is you may not find a Christian man in this venue.
- ◆ Any effort by a Christian interested in meeting someone for companionship which may lead to marriage should always be surrounded by prayer. Get your close friends praying, too, that you will meet the right person.

As for online dating, Christian sites are, I believe, the best way to search. Most charge a monthly fee, so be prepared. An important tip: once you've found your Mr. Wonderful, follow the instructions for closing your account or you will continue to receive charges until you do.





**My lover is mine
and I am his;**

Song of Solomon 2:16

Sites I recommend, and used when I tried online dating, are: Christian Café and Christian Mingle. When using online dating sites, even Christian ones, you must keep in mind that not everyone is what they claim to be. I have a friend who on his profile specifically asked for a Christian to respond. When he asked one woman if she was a Christian, she said, “Yes, I went to church with my parents;” another said, “I was baptized as an infant, of course, I’m a Christian;” another responded, “I’m a Christian, I believe in God.”

Now, you’ve prayed about it, you’ve actively looked, and you’re signed up on dating sites. You’re ready for the following Safety Tips:

- ◆ Once you find someone of interest to you and who’s interested in you, proceed with caution. Always start with an email or a phone call using your cell phone. Never at this stage give out your full name, address, or place of work.
- ◆ Emails are safer than a phone call for those initial contacts. It’s wise to use an email address specifically for your online dating contacts and choose a screen name carefully. Never reveal your name, make it too provocative or one that makes you appear needy such as “marryme” or “lookingforlove”. Do try to find a name that elicits a positive feeling such as “sunnydaffodil” or “sunshine” .
- ◆ You’re at the place where you decide to meet in person. Always give someone you trust the pertinent details of this first meeting: where you’ll be going, what time, what time you expect to be home, what he

looks like, his name if you know it and promise to call them when you are safely home.

- ◆ So now you’ve found a likely prospect and have arranged to meet. This is of extreme importance: meet him only during daylight hours at a busy public place. Avoid isolated places. Try to park your car in an unobtrusive spot. Either arrive early or a little late so one of you will already be there and you won’t meet in the parking lot where he can see your car and license plate.
- ◆ You should arrange before you meet how you will pay. He may offer to pay for both or you may agree to go dutch but never, ever pay for his and yours. This sends a wrong message. The best way to go is each paying for his or her own.
- ◆ During the meeting find out his full name, and talk, talk, talk. Ask questions, listen carefully, watch him closely. How he treats the waitperson is a good indication of his character—but not always. First impressions are extremely important but both of you will be trying to impress the other so exercise caution.
- ◆ You’ve met him, checked him out, like him and he indicates an interest in you. Arrange another date but follow all the safety tips. Always be wary until you know you can trust him. Go with your intuition and on date three, introduce him to a male relative or married male friend and get their opinion of him.

If everything checks out, and you know, really know, he’s worthy of your trust, then go for it, Girl. But, whether it works out or not, you have remained safe and not become another statistic.

RESOURCES & INFO

Web Sites:

[Single Minded Women](#)
[Dating Tips—Christian Life Advisor](#)
[Christian Dating 101](#)

Books:

[How to Get a Date Worth Keeping](#) by Henry Cloud

[World Wide Search: The Savvy Christian’s Guide to Online Dating](#) by Cheryl Green



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Helping you find genuine joy!

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We're on the Web!

www.genuinejoyministries.org

Sometimes you come up with really hard, tough questions that you don't have the answers to.

At times you're too embarrassed or uncomfortable to ask your friends and family... and when you are brave enough to ask the questions, even they don't always have the answers.

You don't think you have anyone that you can talk to... well now you do.

Genuine Joy Ministries is dedicated to helping

Just for Fun

SPEAKING ABOUT CHOCOLATE...

1. If you've got melted chocolate all over your hands, you're eating it too slowly. Chocolate covered raisins, cherries, orange slices & strawberries all count as fruit, so eat as many as you want.
2. The problem: How to get 2 pounds of chocolate home from the store in a hot car. The solution: Eat it in the parking lot.
3. A nice box of chocolates can provide your total daily intake of calories in one place. Isn't that handy?
4. If you can't eat all of your chocolate, it will keep in the freezer. But if you can't eat all of your chocolate, what's wrong with you?
5. If I eat equal amounts of dark chocolate and white chocolate, is that a balanced diet? Don't they actually counteract each other?
6. Chocolate has many preservatives. Preservatives make you look younger. Eat more chocolate!

If you know someone who would be interested in or needs to see this newsletter, you can easily add their email address to our mailing list.

Just send a quick email to: info@genuinejoyministries.org

"Mr. Marx, do you believe in computer dating?"

"Only if the computers really love each other."

-- Groucho Marx

