I WISH SOMEONE HAD TOLD ME

9 REALITIES OF ROMANCE CHRISTIANS DON’T TALK ABOUT

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR
I wish I could go back in time.

Since that’s impossible, I’ll have to take the next best option: telling you what I wish I could go back and tell my younger self. See, I started reading Christian advice about pursuing romance when I was a young teenager. I hoped it would ultimately guide me into a wonderful, fulfilling marriage. Years later, I’ve realized that what I read as a young teen didn’t prepare me for pursuing romance effectively. Even worse, in some ways it helped usher me into a very dysfunctional love life.

For years, I’ve studied Christian instruction on how to pursue romance as a Christian. I’ve seen firsthand that a lot of useless nonsense gets passed around as good advice. I want to change that. That’s why I’ve written this ebook. I want to share with you nine things I wish someone had told me years ago.

I've written about these nine particular realities of romance because they address areas in which I tend to see blind spots in many Christians’ perspectives of romance. **This ebook won't exhaustively tell you how to build a good love life.** But I think it’s a good step forward toward knowing how to keep your love life on track and avoid common errors that exist in our Christian culture. I hope you find it helpful in building your own love life!
# 1

Your love life is something that should be developed.

When my dad was a young adult, he was frustrated that he didn't have a job. He shared his frustration with his mother who, unfortunately, gave him some bad advice. "Don't worry. It'll happen," she said.

You probably already realize why her advice was bad. **Getting a job offer doesn't just happen.** It happens when an employer sees that you're the best fit for the job. In order for that to happen, you usually have to apply to job postings, send resumes, and go to interviews. Sitting on the couch at home usually doesn't get you employed.

So why did my grandmother tell him that? Well, I suspect she thought that my dad already knew what he should be doing to find a job. Maybe she thought that if he did those things it was just a matter of time before he got a job. Or maybe she merely thought that an opportunity was bound to pop up somewhere. After all, sometimes job opportunities pop up spontaneously. Regardless of her reasons, her advice was bad. **It was bad**
because she encouraged my dad to passively wait rather than practice the skills and behaviors needed to land a job.

The One Left Out
Parents and teachers typically make us develop many areas of our lives that are important. School, physical education, studying for the SATs...they're all ways we develop important knowledge, skills, or abilities that will be important in life. Even sending you to time out as a child is a way your parents worked to develop your personal character. **For every important aspect of your life, there's some way to develop it.**

That being said, I've come to feel that there's one incredibly important part of virtually every person's life that usually gets left out of this attention to development: a person's love life.

Think about it. To develop your intellectual abilities, there's school. To develop your spiritual life, there's church. There are even classes and groups you can join to develop hobbies!

But if the process of determining who you should marry is important (and I think we can agree it's important!) why do so few people talk about developing the knowledge and skills you'll need to build a healthy love life and journey toward marriage? I get the sense that, within our Christian culture, you can find books and some sermon series that talk about managing your love life. But does anyone tend to talk about it beyond that?

I feel as though a lot of people view romance as something everyone's just supposed to figure out on their own. After all, a lot of people manage to build healthy, fulfilling love lives without help. And if they did it, why can't everyone else? Like my grandmother talking with my dad about getting a job, I suspect a lot of people think that having a good love life *just happens.*

The problem with that way of thinking is that life's not that simple. For one, some people are naturally good when it comes to being social. Since
romance is a social interaction, the better you are at being social in general the easier it is to figure out romance. But not everyone has it that easy. I was born an introvert, and I've had to work to learn the finer points of socializing in general and pursuing romance in particular. It hasn't come easily to me. I've learned a lot of difficult lessons. I know a lot of people share my experience.

For two, some people are just plain fortunate. I've heard plenty of stories where people found the love of their life without even trying. Some people are fortunate enough to marry their first love. The rest of us don't have it that easy. Some happy marriages come into existence almost without trying, but some marriages only come into existence through intentional, concerted effort. It's important for you to have the knowledge and skills that will equip you to take the action needed to build your love life.

I Wish Someone Had Told Me
When I was a teenager, I was fed a big dose of the idea that you shouldn't be involved with romance at all unless you're ready to get married. I read this idea in books written by well-meaning Christians, so I believed it. I completely ignored everything about dating, romance, or pursuing marriage until I went to college. Even then I didn't start developing my love life. I just thought to myself, "Oh, I'll see what happens and then decide what to do." That mindset left me horribly unprepared for navigating the romantic realities I found myself facing not long after.

I wish someone had given me better advice when I was a teenager. I wish someone had told me, "Justin, since you want to get married when you're older, you should start learning about the process of finding the woman you'll marry. I know you're young, but you're not too young to be thinking about the knowledge and skills a man needs to pursue romance. It's smart to learn how to develop your love life."
That's is what I want to tell you. **Your love life is something that should be developed.** It's an important part of your life that you should take steps to develop just like any other. Even if you're still in high school, it's not wrong to think about how to date in a healthy manner, treat a date or significant other properly, keep God in the center of your love life, or recognize the traits you want your husband or wife to have. There's a lot to learn and practice when it comes to pursuing romance. It's better to start developing your knowledge and skills now than be completely unprepared when you need them. You've already taken the first step by reading this eBook. **But don't let that be your last!** Keep taking steps to develop the knowledge and skills that will help you glorify God, serve others, and find a lasting love as you pursue romance.
There's no one social system that will guide you into godly romance.

Have you ever heard of Christian Courtship? You probably have if you've read Joshua Harris' book *Boy Meets Girl* or watched any of the reality TV shows about the Duggar family. And it's certainly something you know about if you or your parents have chosen to use it. For anyone not so familiar with Courtship, Courtship is an alternative social system to dating that you can use to find the person you want to marry.

A lot of Christians use Courtship because they think dating is a bad idea or even sinful. They recognize that the world's dating habits are very warped. Unfortunately, many of the world's habits are absorbed by people who call themselves Christians. You don't have to look in many churches to find people who call themselves Christians, yet they're happy to date as if they're no different from non-Christians. They'll date in a self-serving way, care about enjoying their dating life more than serving God, have sex outside of marriage, and a whole lot more. A lot of Christian young people and parents have seen how the world's pattern for dating is harmful, and they want something better.
So awhile back, Christians started creating a different social system for looking for a spouse. Instead of dating, many Christians choose Courtship, believing Courtship will guide them into a godly and fulfilling love life. Christians who follow Courtship usually believe it's wrong or bad to go on dates. There are a number of key differences between dating and Courtship, but I don't want to get into all that here. If you'd like to learn more, feel free to read this blog post I wrote or type "Christian Courtship" into Google.

I want to address another question. Is Courtship the best system for building a godly and fulfilling love life? Is ANY social system the best for building your love life?

Justin's Courtship Coffee Machine

There's one thing you should know about me before I answer this question: I used to be a Courtship nerd. Through my teen years and into college life, I was all about Courtship and how I'd follow it into a beautiful marriage. Looking back, I understand why I believed in it so strongly. It seemed very orderly and righteous, which appealed to my left-brained personality and love for Jesus. Unfortunately, there were some important things I didn't realize.

First, I believed in the strengths that the Courtship system offered, but I didn't realize that Courtship, like every system, has weaknesses too. Second, because I put so much stock in my beloved system, I didn't bother to learn the skills and principles I needed to manage my love life apart from it. So once I started facing some of the weaknesses of Courtship, I didn't have anything to fall back on.

Have you ever known someone who bought a fancy coffee maker, thinking it would give them the best java a person could hope for? What happens once they take it home and pull it out of the box? They realize they don't know how to use it to get good coffee. That's because you can buy the best coffee machine in the world, but that won't magically cause you to know
what coffee beans to use, how long to brew the coffee grounds, or the
difference between a light and dark roast. You can buy the best coffee
machine in the world and not even know what good coffee tastes like!
That's because a coffee maker is just a tool. Even a very good tool
requires someone with skill to use it well.

That's what it was like for me with Courtship. Because I thought Courtship
was going to guide me into a wonderful love life and marriage, I missed
the more important truth that I needed to BE a person who knew
how to build a godly, fulfilling love life, whether I was using
Courtship or not. What I needed to learn is that every social system
we use for pursuing romance is just a tool. Whether it's used well
depends on the person who's using it.

What I Wish Someone Had Told Me
I wish someone had told me that I shouldn't believe that one social system
can guide me into a godly, fulfilling love life. I wish someone had told me,
"Justin, I know you really believe in this system, but you need to know that
every system has weaknesses and flaws, including both dating and
Courtship. So don't stake your love life on Courtship or any other social
system. Instead, learn the principles and behaviors that will enable you to
build a good love life. Then you'll be able to do well no matter what system
you're working with."
That's what I want to tell you. There's no one social system that can
guarantee you a good love life if you follow it.

Earlier I asked if Courtship or any other social system is best for building
your love life. The answer is no. The answer is no because it's
IMPOSSIBLE for ANY particular social system to be the best one. That's
because every system is just a tool. Asking if dating or Courtship is
better is like asking if a hammer or a wrench is better. Neither is better than
the other. The one you should use depends completely on what you need to
accomplish.
A Note On Choosing A Social System

Now, if you've been following Courtship or any other social structure because you think it's best, I'm not saying you should automatically part ways with it. What I'm saying is it's important you don't think that particular system is the key to a godly and fulfilling love life. It's important for you to recognize that the system you've been using has flaws and weaknesses. If you're not prepared, they could take you by surprise. I'm also saying that you should be willing to start using another social system if you realize that the weaknesses of the one you've been using are harming your love life in some way.

Remember that building a godly, fulfilling love life comes through being a good craftsman, not from using one particular tool. Strive to be a good enough craftsman in your love life to know what tool is best for building your love life and why. A social system doesn't build your love life. YOU do.
#3
Dating isn't evil.

Some of you might be thinking, "Duh, of course dating isn't evil!" Well, bear with me. This isn't so clear to many Christians. Remember in the last section I mentioned that some Christians believe it's wrong (even sinful) to date. It's not surprising, considering how there are some loud voices among Christians that criticize dating. The first book Joshua Harris wrote was *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*. I think it's sold over a million copies. In it, Josh explains why he believes dating is harmful, why he decided to stop dating, and why he recommends you not date either. Many Christians share Josh's skepticism about dating.

I certainly understand why many Christians think dating is an evil thing. The world has some very screwed up views of dating. For many people, dating pretty much means having sex with a person. It's not strange for a person in modern America to think that going on a date with a person means he or she is also going to have sex with that person afterward. Even for people who don't get in bed after the first date, it's extremely hard in modern America to find a long-term dating relationship that doesn't involve recreational sex. And even forgetting sex, a lot of modern dating
happens just because people want to have fun rather than explore the possibility of getting married. Because of this, many dating relationships become dysfunctional.

But that's the world. Do Christians do any better? Sadly, many who call themselves Christians don't do any better. Many so-called Christians think it's fine to get romantically involved with someone and start having sex. **Instead of Christians changing the world when it comes to dating, the world has changed Christians.** Many Christians who recognize this problem think the solution is to stay as far away from dating as possible. Are they right?

But first another question: What are we talking about when we talk about dating?

"You Keep Using That Word…"
I've noticed a huge problem in conversations about dating: everyone has their own definition of what dating is. To one person, dating means meeting someone to have sex. To another person, dating means sitting in a cafe and sipping coffee with someone while chatting. So what exactly are we talking about when we talk about dating?

I'm gonna cut the English lesson and jump straight to the conclusion... To explain what **dating** is, first I have to explain what a **date** is. **A date is a prearranged social meeting (usually when the people involved have some romantic interest in each other).** In other words, whenever you agree to meet someone at some particular time and place, that's a date. Now, generally speaking, that means that we all make many dates with everyone in our lives. You might make a date with your mom for lunch or with your friends to see a movie. You might make a date with your pastor to talk about spiritual things. But the kind of dates we really care about in our discussion (and call "dates" in daily life) are the ones where you're meeting someone with whom you share some romantic interest. So when I use the word **date**, I'm talking about **meeting someone with**
whom you have some level of romantic interest. It might be casual interest (like on a first date) or serious interest (like when you're in a serious, long-term relationship).

Okay, so that's what a date is. What is dating? **Dating is the process of going on chronic dates with one or more people.** In other words, **dating is when you keep going on dates.** This might be with only one person (which SHOULD be the case if you're in an exclusive relationship), or it could be with multiple people if you don't have any exclusive relationship.

The point I want you to take away is that **dating essentially means going to meet a person in order to spend time with him or her because you have some degree of romantic interest.** That's what dating is at its core.

So dating makes perfect sense in a romantic context. When you're romantically interested in someone, you usually want to spend time with him or her in order to get to know him or her better and develop the relationship. But perhaps by now you're wondering...how does this help us know if dating is evil or not?

**What Makes The Difference**
Meeting with someone you're romantically interested in is the essence of dating, its foundation. **The foundational activity of meeting and spending time with a romantic interest isn't evil. It's what you build on that foundation that makes all the difference.** See, some people meet their romantic interest on a date and have sex before the night is out. But other people meet their romantic interest on a date and have a healthy time of building relationship in a positive, God-glorifying way. In both cases, the couples meet each other (the foundational essence of dating). But the first couple built on that foundation a casual sex relationship. That's not the kind of relationship God wants us to build. The second couple, however, used the date to build a relationship that edified
both of them. That's the kind of relationship God wants us to build. Even if they don't get married or become boyfriend/girlfriend, their time together has been spent building each other up rather than using each other.

You should think of dating like a tool...maybe a hammer. A hammer can be used to build, but it can also be used to tear down. In the hands of a skilled carpenter, a hammer can build a beautiful house. But in the hands of a vandal, a hammer can destroy a beautiful house.

What I Wish Someone Had Told Me
I read I Kissed Dating Goodbye in my teen years, and it caused me to think dating was evil, something used only by people who want to serve themselves and use others. I wish someone had told me, "Justin, dating isn't evil. It's fine to meet, talk with, and get to know someone you're romantically attracted to. **Dating is a tool you can use to build a relationship.** But if you don't know how to use it well, then you could end up hurting yourself, hurting someone else, or damaging a relationship. So learn how to date wisely. But don't be afraid of dating, because dating isn't evil."

That's what I want to tell you. **Dating isn't an evil social system you need to avoid.** Like any other social system for romance, it's a tool you can use to get to know someone and build relationship. Just remember that it has strengths and weaknesses. **It's up to you to maturely and wisely use dating to build something good in your life and the lives of the people you date.** When you date, date in a way that glorifies God. Behave in such a way in all your dating relationships that God can be completely pleased with you.
#4

God doesn't have a spouse chosen for you.

I once heard a story about a woman who wanted to find a spouse in a godly way. She didn't have the best history when it came to pursuing godly romance, and at age 27 she committed herself to finding her husband God's way. She decided not to use internet dating sites or go to Christian singles groups. She thought that God had a particular man in mind for her to marry, so she patiently waited for God to bring him into her life. She waited and waited and waited...for ten years. By age 37, she was still single and without any prospects. Do you think she did the wise thing in waiting on God to bring her a husband without doing anything by her own initiative?

It's a popular idea in our Christian culture that God has chosen a particular man or woman to be your spouse and that He'll guide you to this person as you trust and seek Him. This idea is explicitly taught by some Christian leaders. Frequently, Christians will talk about this idea more implicitly in terms of who it's "God's will" for you to marry. The idea is that if it's God's will for you to marry, then it's God's will for you to marry a particular person.
Let’s pause here and ask an important question: Is this idea even biblical??

**God Our Matchmaker?**

Let’s take a quick look at the passage of the Bible where we find the most explicit teaching on what God expects of us when it comes to choosing a spouse: 1 Corinthians chapter 7. You should read the entire chapter for yourself, but for the sake of space, I’ll only copy the most significant parts. In 1 Corinthians 7:6-9, the Apostle Paul writes,

> 6 I say this as a concession, not as a command. 7 I wish that everyone was as I am. But each has his own gift from God, one this way, another that. 8 To the unmarried and widows I say that it is best for them to remain as I am. 9 But if they do not have self-control, let them get married. For it is better to marry than to burn with sexual desire. (NET)

There are several important things to observe about this passage. The first is that in verse 6 Paul clarifies that these instructions aren’t a divine requirement. He’s saying that he’s sharing important wisdom and principles for us to consider, but God doesn’t morally require us to go one way or the other.

In verses 7 and 8, Paul explains that singleness and marriage are both good gifts from God, but he feels it’s better for people to remain single because they are better able to serve God without distraction in an age where God’s kingdom is in conflict with the world. He explains this more fully in verses 27 through 34 (I won’t post here for space, but be sure to read them!).

But in verse 9, Paul makes it clear that wisdom says that if a person badly wants to be married, then he or she should marry instead of trying to tough it out being single.

What Paul is saying is that he sees serving God as a single as best, while serving God as a married person is still exceedingly good. But ultimately,
each man and woman is free to choose for himself or herself which path to take. God doesn’t require each person either to marry or not marry. His will for a person isn’t only one thing or the other. God gives each person the freedom to choose.

What Does It Mean For My Love Life?
It means God doesn't want us to think that He wants to be our Great Matchmaker In The Sky. Instead of having only one particular will for our love lives, God gives us freedom to choose whether we pursue romance and with whom we pursue it. What He wants is for us to pursue romance and marriage (or not) in a wise, righteous manner that’s in keeping with the calling He’s put on our lives.

The reason God does this is because He's inviting us to freely choose to love. If it were God's will for you to marry a particular person, then it would be disobedience for you to refuse. But if you're required to love someone, that's not love. That's compulsion. This is the same way that God loved us. He didn't have to choose us, but He freely chose us because He loved us. God wants us to love in the same way when it comes to marriage.

One Exception
But before you run off and celebrate that God has given you permission to do whatever you want, there's one exception to what I've just said that I need to explain. See, what I just described is the general teaching of the Bible that addresses this issue for most people. I'm betting this applies to over 99% of you, because most people may freely choose whether they marry or remain single. However, it's possible that God may call individual people to ways of serving Him that require continued singleness. The prophet Jeremiah is one biblical example of a person God told to remain single. Jim and Elisabeth Elliot are modern examples of people who perceived God's call to singleness for several years before receiving His blessing to marry. If God were to call you as an individual to singleness for the sake of serving Him, you must obey His
calling. What I write here that's applicable for over 99% of people doesn’t set aside any command God gives you in particular.

Common Objections
I also want to pause here to respond to some common objections. I seem to catch flak on this issue more than any other. I think that's in big part because the idea of God choosing our spouse for us is popular. But I think it's also because what I'm saying about this issue is an easy one to misunderstand. So as I respond to these common objections, I think the responses you help you understand better what I'm saying.

"But God gives instructions in the Bible about who to marry. For example, God says not to marry nonbelievers."
Yes, absolutely! God gives many instructions in the Bible to guide us in choosing a spouse. And, yes, God gives us restrictions on the type of person we can marry (such as nonbelievers). We need to follow these instructions. I'm not saying we're free to marry whomever we darn well please without any regard for biblical restrictions or wisdom. I'm saying God doesn't tell us to marry a particular individual. As long as we're within the bounds of biblical principle, we're free to choose who we marry.

"But if we seek God's guidance in every other area of life, why wouldn't we seek His guidance in choosing a spouse."
We SHOULD seek God's guidance in choosing a spouse. I'm not saying we should choose a spouse without seeking God's counsel and direction. What we shouldn't do is expect Him to tell us that we're supposed to marry some particular individual. God will give us counsel concerning every person we might ever consider marrying. He may give His full approval to one choice or warn us against another choice. (And if God warns you against marrying a particular person, listen to Him! Only a fool would ignore God's guidance and counsel in choosing a spouse.) But, ultimately, He allows us to make the final decision as to whether or not we exchange wedding vows with any given person.
"But if God has a plan for my life, doesn't that include who I marry?"
We often mistakenly believe that God's plan for our life is a single, unmalleable path, and if we leave it at any point then we're outside God's will for our life. However, as the 1 Corinthians passage I quoted above shows, God gives us freedom to choose one course or another when it comes to marriage. His will isn't only one or the other. **His will is for us to have the freedom to choose.** If we're single, God will use us for His purpose. If we marry, God will use us for His purpose. How that looks in daily life will differ depending on which course we choose, but all of them may be in keeping with God's will and purpose for our lives. (Just remember what I said earlier: God may give you a particular calling that limits what options are available. But, generally, we can freely choose.)

"But doesn't God bring people together? I've heard stories where God seemed to bring two people together."
First of all, anecdotes aren't where we should get doctrine. Doctrine should be firstly supported by Scripture. However, I can actually grant that God CAN encourage or help two people to meet and marry. Even we humans sometimes use our human capabilities to play matchmaker. I'd say God can do the same. But there are two important things we have to recognize: (1) Even if God plays matchmaker for two people, that doesn't mean He's chosen for them to marry. He won't force them to exchange vows, and they wouldn't be sinning by choosing not to do so. But, gee, if the God of infinite wisdom and love heartily recommends you marry him/her, then you should probably take His advice! (2) God NOWHERE in all of the Bible promises that He'll take the role of matchmaker in every person's life. There are biblical stories of God blessing or encouraging a match, but there are no biblical grounds for us to say that God will act as cosmic matchmaker in every person's life. The idea that's more clearly taught in Scripture is for God's people to use pragmatic wisdom in keeping with godly principles in choosing a spouse.

**Why All This Is Important**
What I've talked about in this chapter is important for a few reasons. First, how we view God's role in our love lives directly influences how we behave. By now, you probably know how I feel about the choice the woman in the earlier story made. Because she believed God would bring her a husband, she did nothing to try to meet men who were good husband material. But as we saw in the 1 Corinthians 7 passage, God doesn't work like that. He doesn't want to work our love lives like a marionette show. **While the woman in the story wanted God to take the initiative to bring a husband to her, she didn't realize that God wants us to use the freedom He's given us to take the initiative in building our love lives. God doesn't promise to bring us a spouse just because we mistakenly believe He's supposed to.**

I Wish Someone Had Told Me

Years ago, before I considered what the Bible said for myself, I too believed that God had a particular woman in mind to be my wife. So when I found myself attracted to a woman, I didn't think, "I should talk to her and get to know her." Instead I thought, "Is God bringing us together?" This caused a LOT of problems in my love life. Instead of romance being a time to get to know someone and consider if we should be together for a lifetime, romance became a convoluted process of trying to discern if it was "God's will" for us to be together.

I wish someone would have told me, "Justin, stop trying to know if it's God's will for you and this girl to be together! The idea that God has one particular woman chosen to be your wife is unbiblical. Rather than looking for some particular woman, God wants you to wisely consider if you'll pursue or marry a woman. He doesn't want you to marry some particular person. He doesn't even require you to marry at all. It's His will for you to use the freedom He's given you to choose whom you marry. Just choose wisely."

That's what I want to tell you. **God doesn't have a particular spouse chosen for you.** So don't try to navigate your love life by looking for
"God's will" for who you marry or by waiting for God to drop a spouse in your lap. God's will is for you to use the freedom He's given you to freely choose to love another person as you look to Him for guidance. God will give you guidance and counsel as you consider your choice, but He gives the choice to you as a gift. So choose wisely.
#5
If you sow passivity, you (usually) reap nothing.

There once was a farmer who loved strawberries. So he decided he wanted to harvest a crop of strawberries. So he went out to a piece of land he owned and declared it his strawberry field. Come harvest time, he excitedly went to his strawberry field to begin bringing in his crop. Upon reaching the field, he was astounded to find...nothing.

You're probably not astounded by that result, not if you noticed that the farmer in the story never even planted anything in his strawberry field. That's because you know that in life there's a law of sowing and reaping. A person doesn't naturally reap a harvest of any sort without investing effort beforehand. Not only does a farmer have to plant seed, but he has to weed, water, prune, and otherwise cultivate if he hopes to reap a healthy harvest. Every farmer knows that if you sow passivity, you reap nothing.

Did you know your love life works the same way?
Cultivating Your Love Life

The law of sowing and reaping applies to every area of life. To reap good grades, you have to sow hours of study. To reap a promotion, you have to sow a good work ethic. If you don't put in the necessary effort, you won't have much in the end. In our love lives too, we have to sow positive effort if we want to reap the harvest of a satisfying love life...usually.

I can freely agree that some people find the love of their life without even trying. They seem to effortlessly meet, pursue, and marry their love. This does happen in some cases. To think in terms of strawberries again, it's as though they were just walking through a field one day and happened to come across a patch of wild strawberries. This can happen. Just like some fruit can be found growing wild, some spouses are found as if by chance. **But it doesn't always happen that way. Often, a spouse is found only when you cultivate your love life.**

Thousands of years ago, humans survived by going out and looking for food that was growing wild. A huge advancement in civilization came when humans started cultivating crops, intentionally doing what was necessary to make a lot of food grow in one place. **You might make a huge advancement in your own love life if you realize that you can cultivate it.** Let me give you an example of what I mean.

When I was in my early twenties, I really wanted a girlfriend. Not just any girlfriend but, you know, a **good** girlfriend. The problem was I thought of finding a girlfriend the same way a person thinks of finding wild strawberries. "Well, I guess it will just happen when it happens. I can't **MAKE it happen.**" The problem was that I was growing more and more frustrated by my incurably single state. It was something that literally kept me awake at night. Every time I saw someone I knew start a romantic relationship, I grew more frustrated (not to mention envious). I might as well have been thinking, "Where is everyone finding these strawberries?! It's like they all know where the strawberries are growing! Why can't I
find strawberries? I appreciate the taste of strawberries so much. No one deserves to have strawberries as much as I do!"

Ridiculous, no?

But in all my frustration I didn't realize one key thing: I was doing nothing to cultivate my love life. I was doing nothing that would help me meet a woman I wanted to pursue long-term. My own passivity gave my love life nothing from which to grow. **Instead of complaining that I had no strawberries, I should have started planting some seeds.**

**I Wish Someone Had Told Me**

The people who love us teach us to take initiative and invest effort in things that are important. Our parents tell us to work diligently because it will reward us in our careers. Our teachers tell us to study faithfully because it will reward us in our personal knowledge. I wish someone would have pointed out that the same principle applies to a person's love life as well. I wish someone would have told me, "Justin, you want to have a girlfriend, but what are you doing that will help you find her? Where are you meeting new bachelorettes? How are you making your attractive qualities easy for women to see? Are you asking any women out? If you don't DO anything to build your love life, odds are you're going to just stay unhappily single."

That's what I want to tell you. **If you remain passive about your love life, then you're PROBABLY not going to have anything to show for it.** Take constructive action to bring about the changes you want to see in your love life. If you're unsatisfied with where you're at in your love life, then you should sow the efforts that will allow you to reap the changes you want. Try using these steps to plant a better harvest: (1) Take an honest look at where you are in your love life. (2) Determine where you want to be (in keeping with God's calling over your life). (3) Recognize what has to happen in order for that change to occur. (4) Break down the process of change into small, manageable action steps that you can do one at a time in order to move toward your goal. (5) DO the steps you've outlined!
Knowing what to do is useless if you don't actually do it. (6) Ask for help or assistance from someone if you need it.
#6

Romantic skills are worth learning and practicing.

If you see someone at church you find attractive but haven't met, how do you start talking with him or her in order to find out if there is romantic potential between the two of you...without being weird or creepy? What do you say to ask a woman on a date? How do you reject someone if you're not interested? What are good things to say or do on a date? What are BAD things to say or do on a date? How do you show you're open to a man pursuing you?

All these questions have one thing in common. They describe romantic SKILLS.

If you ask Google to define 'skill,' it will tell you that a skill is "the ability to do something well; expertise." Romantic skills are the particular social skills that enable you to engage with someone on a romantic level. That level could be anywhere from starting a conversation with someone you find attractive, to talking with a significant other about getting married, to rejecting a person's romantic interest. And just like any other skills in life,
romantic skills determine how effective and successful you can be in your love life.

He Ain't Got No Skillz

I told you earlier about how I was passive about my love life for a long time. But even after I realized I needed to be more active about cultivating my love life, I dragged my feet on doing so for a long time. Why? I knew that I had no idea what I was doing. Remember how I said in section #1 that I didn't give any thought to dating or pursuing romance until I was in college? Well, I didn't realize at the time that those years of putting my love life on ice left me with one significant problem: my romantic skills were terribly undeveloped. I realized that even if I went somewhere and found some cute bachelorettes, I didn't know how to walk up and start a conversation without being awkward. I didn't know how to go from "Hi" to "What's your phone number?" I didn't know the etiquette to follow on dates. Dating for me was a world of unknowns. I was suddenly realizing that being a great guy doesn't guarantee you'll get a great girl when you have no romantic skills.

Imagine you're planning to drive across the country. You plan your route, check your oil, buy your snacks, and think about how excited you are to reach your destination. Then reality pops the bubble of your excitement. YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO DRIVE. Your car, your route, your plans, and your snacks are all useless because you don't have the skills necessary to maneuver through the course of the journey.

Your love life is similar. You can be a great person, have great qualities, and want to enter a happy marriage, but you're going to need romantic skills with which to effectively manage the course of that journey.

Love Life Academy
I have good news! **All skills are learned.** No one is born knowing how to ask for a date. Everyone learns. So don't be discouraged if you feel lacking in the skills arena. You can learn all the skills you'll need. Perhaps you're wondering how.

In the mid-twentieth century, everyone went on casual dates, even kids as young as middle school age. There were various benefits from that culture. One of them was that everyone gained romantic skills through the experience of frequently going on casual dates. They naturally learned by experience and immersion how to ask for a date, how to accept or decline a date, and how to behave on a date. By the time a person was ready to commit to a long-term relationship, he or she already had gained through experience the romantic skills with which to build the relationship. That culture highlights the key to learning romantic skills: Skills are learned through experience and practice.

It's great to read books or get advice on what to say or do when it comes to pursuing romance. I support that. But ultimately, the only way to develop romantic skills is to practice them...in real life...**with real people.** Now, you've probably recognized the catch to this reality. If you have to start being active in romance in order to gain skills, you're going to have to be willing to start with a low skill level at first. This means you may not be the coolest cucumber when you ask for your first dates or first pursue romance in any other way. You might make mistakes. Some people may not want to stick with you. That's okay! The important thing is to persevere and keep growing.

I smile when I think of some of the mistakes I made in my early romantic pursuits. Looking back, I now understand why I should have done things differently, because my skills have grown. But there was nothing to do in the beginning but take a deep breath and **TRY.** I tried and failed at times. But I continue to try, and I fail less frequently. You'll find the same if you keep working to develop your romantic skills.

**I Wish Someone Had Told Me**
Skills are developed through practice. Practice takes time. The sooner you start practicing, the sooner your skills will grow. I wish I hadn't waited until after college to realize that I needed to develop my romantic skills. I wish someone had told me as early as my teen years, "Justin, I know you're not ready to marry yet, but it's still good for you to start learning how to pursue a woman. Those skills are worth learning. You'll want to know how to ask a woman out and how to treat her as you pursue her. Why not give yourself a chance to practice these skills on a casual level now before you need them? You'll be all the more prepared when it's time to pursue a serious relationship."

That's what I want to tell you: **Romantic skills are worth learning and practicing.** Now, I'm not saying you have to run out and start casually dating a bunch of people or you won't have the skills required to get married. Some people marry the first person they ever dated. What I'm saying is that it's worthwhile to open yourself to developing romantic skills sooner rather than later. If you realize that you need to learn these skills, take some steps to do so. Talk about what skills you need to develop with a trusted friend or mentor. Read some good advice from bloggers or authors. And when the time comes to ask for or accept a casual date, do so. Take steps to develop the skills that will serve you throughout the journey of pursuing your spouse.
#7

Casual dating is a good thing...when used wisely.

There was an attractive young woman at a church I once attended. I was barely acquainted with her, but I knew that she sincerely loved Jesus and was dedicated to Him. So I thought to myself, "Justin, you should go talk to her. You never know if something might come of it."

But I never went and talked with her. Why? In my teen years I read books by Christian authors who said that you shouldn't pursue a person romantically unless you're serious about figuring out if the two of you will get married. These Christian authors said you shouldn't date casually or just for the fun of it. If you got romantically involved with anyone at all, then you'd better be serious about him or her. These voices made me believe that it was wrong to ask a woman out if you weren't seriously interested in pursuing her in a long-term relationship. I felt like casual dating was wrong and that casually dating a woman without having any serious commitment to her meant I was treating her badly.
The problem I faced with that young woman at my church was that I didn't have very strong feelings for her. So I definitely wasn't ready to try to get into a long-term relationship with her. And since those voices I listened to during my teen years had me believing there was no other option between platonic friendship and serious romantic pursuit, I never felt like I really wanted to try to get to know her better.

Several months later, it so happened that I had the opportunity to spend time with that young woman in some group settings. I VERY quickly discovered that she was awesome and I liked her. It was also around that time that I discovered the truth about casual dating.

The Good of Casual Dating
Casual dating means going on casual dates without having any serious level of personal commitment to the other person. The two individuals may have a casual level of attraction and liking for each other, but neither has any significant relational claim over the other because neither has made any serious relational commitment. This type of casual dating relationship provides a very good thing: a small starting investment.

I once went on a date (a casual one!) with a woman to grew up in a church that was very into Christian Courtship. Christian Courtship says two people should go straight from being friends to entering into a committed, exclusive romantic relationship without having any kind of casual romantic relationship in between. This woman said that during her young adult years she received several invitations from young men in her church to begin a Courtship. She turned down all of them except one. The one she accepted was with a guy for whom she already had some feelings. She said she turned down all the other invitations because she simply didn't want to jump into a serious romantic relationship with a guy for whom she felt nothing. I asked her, "If the guys who asked you to start a Courtship had asked you to get coffee instead, would you have said yes?" "Oh, definitely!" she replied.
Why would she accept a coffee date but reject a Courtship? **Because a coffee date only requires a low personal and emotional investment while a Courtship (and any other form of committed romantic relationship) requires a high personal and emotional investment.** See, we humans are actually pretty predictable when it comes to what we choose to commit to. We invest our time, attention, energy, money, and emotions in things that provide some sort of reward in exchange. We don't like to risk a large personal investment in something when we don't think it will have a very large reward. But we WILL make a large investment when we believe the possible reward is worth the risk.

When that woman turned down the Courtship invitations from those guys, it was because she didn't have any feelings for them. She didn't feel that if she started a Courtship with them that there was a good chance that it would turn into a relationship she would want to last a lifetime. So she didn't want to invest the high amount of emotion, time, and energy required for a serious romantic relationship when there was such a high risk.

But she WAS willing to invest in a coffee date. **That's because a single coffee date has very low investment and thus a low risk.** If things go poorly, what did you lose? Maybe the cost of a couple coffees and an hour of your time? Since you don't invest much emotion in a casual date, you don't have to worry about the risk of a very painful emotional loss either.

But what's the reward of a casual date? **The reward of a casual date is the possibility of finding a valuable, long-term relationship if things go well.** It's a known phenomenon that you can develop feelings for a person as you get to know him or her. Sometimes people go to a first date with only a modest level of interest in the other person, but then they find an unforeseen chemistry with each other and become more interested. **Sometimes, these dates ultimately become happy marriages when the interest and feelings between the two people grow.**
That's why that woman was willing to go on a coffee date with guys she didn't already feel interested in. She knew it was POSSIBLE she would come to like one of them as she got to know him. And even if she didn't, she wasn't investing so much that she'd regret it afterward. This is the truth about casual dating. **Casual dating provides space in which two people can get to know each other and see whether there's possibility for a deeper relationship without having to make a dangerously large personal investment.**

Remember the young woman at my church? I dragged my feet on talking to her or asking her out because I thought I had to be seriously committed to her. I wasn't ready for that level of investment because it felt risky considering how little I knew about her. But as I found out when I finally spent some time with her, she was an amazing person, and I quickly became more interested. Once I came to learn the truth that casual dating would have allowed me to get to know her without making a huge commitment, I regretted not asking her out much sooner.

**The Bad of Casual Dating**

But if casual dating can do so much good for people, why are there Christians who say we shouldn't casually date at all? Well, it's because casual dating can be abused and also creates space where two people can get into an unhealthy relationship if they aren't careful.

Casual dating can be abused by people who don't want to commit to a serious relationship at all. Some people want to casually date just because it's fun. They'll go on dates with you over and over again and maybe even commit to being your boyfriend or girlfriend, but they're not willing to commit to pursuing marriage with you. They only want romantic involvement with you for the sake of immediate gratification. This kind of behavior can be found among people who call themselves Christians just as it's found among secular people. In response, some Christians say (and
write) that anyone who follows Jesus should only pursue serious romantic involvement.

However, I don't agree with that response to the problem. See, **when a person abuses casual dating, that doesn't reveal a problem with casual dating itself. It reveals a problem with that person's heart.** Instead of throwing out casual dating for everyone, we need to realize instead that people who abuse casual dating need God to transform their hearts. **For a person who has a pure heart, casual dating can be a very useful and positive thing.**

However, even for people who don't willingly abuse casual dating, **casual dating creates space in which a romantic relationship can become unhealthy if the two individuals aren't careful.** It's possible for you to go on casual dates with a person and get swept off your feet if you find sudden chemistry with that person. It's important to be emotionally disciplined and not let the relationship rush forward at an unhealthy pace. **It's essential to develop a strong friendship with a person if you're hoping to have a long-term relationship.** Romantic feelings make for beautiful tapestries, but they make for a poor relational foundation. It's also important not to allow your relationship to degrade into a sexually-driven relationship in the face of strong physical attraction.

**A Real Life Example**

In case you're having trouble imagining how casual dating can be a good thing, let me offer an example from my own life.

A while back, I met a young woman through the internet. She loved Jesus and seemed like a nice person, so for a while we emailed back and forth. A six hour drive separated us from each other, so we couldn't go on dates in the traditional sense. Instead, we started casually “Skype dating,” where we would spend a few hours talking via Skype every couple weeks. We became good friends and got along well. But it was hard to know where our relationship was going due to the distance that was between us. So for six
months we kept up the habit of talking via Skype as we tried to figure out what the future held for us. During that time we managed to meet each other face to face and spend a Saturday together.

That six month period of casually dating across the distance was necessary for us because we didn’t know each other well enough to know if we would commit to a long term romantic relationship. It allowed us a way to get to know each other better without things being too serious too soon.

Ultimately, we didn’t pursue a long term relationship. That’s the result that sometimes comes through casual dating. Through a period of casual dating you might discover with another person that the two of you shouldn’t pursue a deeper relationship. But if you’ve used the season of casual dating to edify each other according to godliness and wisdom, you’ll probably be able to look back on that time of casual dating as a positive thing. While I was sad that I didn’t find good opportunity to pursue a deeper relationship with that young woman, I don’t regret getting to know her through casual dating. Through casual dating we became friends and had the opportunity to be positive influences in each other’s lives.

I Wish Someone Had Told Me
I wish someone had told me the truth about casual dating rather than persuading me that casual dating is something that should be avoided. I wish someone had told me, "Justin, you shouldn't avoid casual dating. Casual dating is a good tool to use to get to know someone and find out if there's opportunity for a deeper relationship. If you use casual dating wisely and in a righteous way, you can casually date in a way that's righteous and edifying for you and your date."
That's what I want to tell you: **Casual dating is a good thing when used wisely.** Use it to give yourself a way to get to know someone without either of you having to make a large, risky personal investment. You may find that what is casual at first turns into something deeper and lasting as the relationship grows. Just be sure that you use casual dating wisely. Don't use casual dating for your immediate gratification. And be careful not to let
the relationship rush ahead too quickly or drift into unhealthy behaviors. If you can do this, casual dating can be an excellent tool for you to use to build your love life.
#8
You should take romance seriously...but not too seriously.

Have you ever had the frustrating experience of shopping for pants and discovering you're between sizes?

Stop laughing! I'm serious about this pants thing.

It's aggravating when you're between sizes. You try on one size and it's too loose. You know the pants will fall off unless you hold them up or wear a belt. But when you try one size down, that pair is too tight. You feel choked, uncomfortable, and maybe even in a bit of pain. Did you know romance is like pants?

Stop laughing!

My Love Life Is Too Tight
In my teen years, I listened to the Christian voices that said you need to take romance seriously. Being casual about romance was depicted as self-serving or "playing with people's hearts." So I naturally took a serious view of romance. Any kind of romantic involvement, even a single date, was a big deal in my mind. Unfortunately, I didn't realize that bad things start to happen when you're too serious about romance.

In the section about casual dating, I mentioned how people who don’t casually date usually only become involved in a romantic relationship when they have significant feelings for someone. That's one way being too serious about romance has a bad effect. **Being too serious about romance can prevent you from beginning relationships because they're choked out before they even have a chance to start.** But being too serious about romance causes other problems as well.

You've probably heard jokes about people who are so serious about the long-term potential of a relationship that they start asking all kinds of marriage-minded questions on a first date. While most people know that a first date isn't the time to ask how your date feels about parenting roles, it's possible to be so serious about romance that it ends up sabotaging your interaction with your date. I once read an author who talked about how he would observe women who wanted to get a second date so badly that they became incredibly nervous on the first date. Because they were nervous, they acted awkwardly. Because they acted awkwardly, their dates didn't want to ask them out again. When the women stopped worrying about whether there was even going to be a second date, they relaxed. That allowed their true, enjoyable personalities to shine through. When that happened, they got second dates.

When you have an overly serious attitude about your participation in romance, it adds a heavy weight to all your romantic involvements, even casual dates. But casual dates aren't a time for weighty thoughts about the future. Casual dates are a time to get to know your date in a relaxed way. The future will figure itself out naturally with time. And **while you shouldn't date only for the fun of self-gratification, dating should**
be fun and enjoyable. After all, you probably don't want to marry a person who's constantly serious, nervous, and unable to relax and have fun. By relaxing an overly-serious outlook on romance, you can actually give your love life a big boost. Doing so might actually help you find a long-term relationship.

My Love Life Is Too Loose
But while you don't want to be too serious about romance, you also don't want to take it too lightly. Pursuing romance should definitely be an enjoyable experience, but it's also important to recognize that the pursuit of romance is a significant thing in people's lives. When you interact with anyone in a romantic context, even if it's a casual romantic context, you become an influence in his or her life. We have an obligation in the sight of God to love our neighbors and do that which edifies them. Because there are so many emotional, relational, and social components involved with romance, it's right that we have a sense of responsibility to care about the people with whom we're interacting. Everything we do should build up the people we're with and glorify God.

Unfortunately, many people (even some who call themselves Christians) don't look at romance this way. Many people just like to do what feels good in the moment and not think about the long-term impact their choices make on their own life or the life of the other person. This type of person doesn't take romance seriously enough. He or she might look at romance almost like some sort of plaything or hobby to be used if it's fun and forgotten if it's not. These are the type of people your mother warned you about.

When you don't take romance seriously enough, your love life easily becomes a loose, directionless thing that's just as likely to hurt a person as edify him or her. If you know that you haven't been taking romance seriously enough, work to develop a new attitude that recognizes the significance of romantic relationships in people's lives. It doesn't mean you
should stop smiling when you go on dates. Pursuing romance should remain enjoyable. Just pursue it with the attitude and personal discipline that will allow you to build a solid, lasting love life while building up others.

I Wish Someone Had Told Me

I wish someone had told me, "Justin, I know you've been approaching romance with a really serious attitude. But remember that you don't want to be so serious about romance that you choke out your ability to get to know women in a relaxed and enjoyable way. You don't want to be too serious about romantic relationships. You want to have a balanced attitude."

That's what I want to tell you: **You should take romance seriously but not too seriously.** The proper outlook is one where you have a balanced view. You should be serious enough about romance to take responsibility for how you treat others and how you glorify God in your romantic relationships. But you should also be relaxed enough about romance to enjoy the journey and not worry about the future. Balance is key.
I know a guy who first started learning about dating, Courtship, and romance by reading books by Christian authors during his teen years. The authors had the best of intentions when they wrote their books. They wanted to help their readers find godly, fulfilling relationships that would lead to wonderful marriages. This guy quickly absorbed the ideas he read. He never had been involved in any type of romance, so he had no personal experience by which to compare what he read. Unfortunately, many of the ideas really weren't as good as they sounded when he read them. When he took those ideas out into real life, he found that they often fell short of the practical solutions he needed. It was only after some difficult and painful experiences that this guy realized **a lot of the ideas you read in Christian books about pursuing romance are bad ones.**

I've read a lot of books about pursuing romance by Christian authors. I've listened to quite a few sermons and lectures as well. **I've sadly come to realize that there's a lot of nonsense within our Christian culture that gets passed off as biblical wisdom for romance.**
I think there are a few reasons this happens. One is that some Christian authors write out of their own painful experiences, and it causes them to overcorrect. It's good that these authors want to prevent others from making the same mistakes. The problem is that we humans tend to be reactive. When we experience pain in some context, we are at risk of believing that the context itself is bad. But that's not always the case. For example, some Christian authors had painful dating experiences or made bad choices while dating. As a result, they warn others not to date. But that's an overcorrection. Earlier we talked about how there are many positive things that come out of dating. We shouldn't completely throw out dating as a whole.

I believe another reason this happens is that we have some pet beliefs in our Christian culture. We can hold so tightly to some seemingly precious beliefs that they actually steer us away from a truly biblical or wise perspective. The big example I'm thinking of is the idea that God has a particular person in mind for each of us to marry. Earlier I explained why that perspective is unbiblical. But many Christians still love the idea of God directing their love lives to one best possible outcome. The idea seems so wonderful and spiritual that it's easy for us to completely miss the fact that it's unbiblical. **But we have to hold onto biblical truth rather than pleasant ideas.**

And I think one more reason this happens is because it's easy for us humans to be wrong. We're mortal. We often don't think through things well. Often, our emotions form our perspectives and beliefs more easily than scripture or reason. It's also easy for us humans to all be wrong together. Once any particular idea gains popularity, it can quickly spread far and wide. Even ideas and beliefs that have serious flaws can live on in people's minds if the flaws aren't noticed and corrected.

So if there's a lot of crap being passed off as wisdom for romance, what does it mean for us as we seek to build our love lives?
Test, Challenge, Verify

It means perspectives on how to pursue romance shouldn't be accepted without being tested. Whenever you read or hear some perspective on how to pursue romance, try challenging it with some of these questions:

- Does this agree with what the Bible says?
- Are there any mistakes in the author's/speaker's thinking?
- Are any past, painful experiences giving the author/speaker a bias?
- Does this perspective work in all situations?
- Is this perspective right for everyone?
- What weaknesses does this perspective have?

When we ask questions like these, they help us find instruction that's truly biblical and wise. **Whenever you read or hear any perspective on how to pursue romance as a Christian, you should always challenge it against scripture, wisdom, and your own experience.** This will help reveal any flaws in what's being said. If what's being said is biblical and wise, questions like these will help confirm it. They'll also help you separate wisdom from non-wisdom. Both wise and unwise ideas can often come from the same person.

But if I'm telling you that you should test everything you read and hear about romance, have you realized the catch? If you should test everything you hear about romance, then you should be testing the very words you're reading right now! I don't want you to accept any instruction about how to build your love life without thinking about it critically, **NOT EVEN MY OWN INSTRUCTION.** I'm mortal too. I have my own past experiences that put me at risk of having a biased perspective. I hope you won't accept these words just because I said them, because they're in an Ebook, or because you got them off a blog about pursuing godly romance. **I hope you'll accept these words only if they are true, biblical, and wise.** And you're going to have to decide for yourself if you believe that's the case.
I Wish Someone Had Told Me

I wish someone had told me to think critically about the things I read and heard coming from Christians about romance. I wish someone would have said, "Justin, I know you've been excited about these books you've been reading because you feel like these authors have a lot to teach you. But remember that humans can be mistaken. Don't just swallow every idea you're given without testing it first. Make sure it's truly biblical and wise before staking your love life on it."

That's what I want to tell you: **Not everything that comes from a Christian bookstore on the subject of romance is actually biblical or wise.** Test the ideas and perspectives you hear within our Christian culture about how to build your love life. Challenge their claim to wisdom. Verify that they're truly biblical. Hold tight to what's true and reject what isn't. Ask God for His guidance, discernment, and wisdom. Remember that He's the only one who can teach perfectly. So always consider God the only ultimate guide as you seek to build a godly and fulfilling love life.
There's More You Need To Know

Thanks for reading my ebook! I hope you've found helpful and that these nine principles will help guide you as you build your own love life. **But there's more you need to know.**

As helpful as these principles might be, the truth is none of them form the core of what determines how successful you'll be in pursuing godly romance. **There's one other essential principle that determines success in pursuing godly romance.** I would go so far as to say that this one other principle is more important than all the principles you just read in this ebook combined! **If you don't practice this one essential principle in your own love life, then you will always be missing the key to Christian romance.** I would rather you know and practice this one principle more than anything else in your love life.

Because this one principle is so essential to pursuing romance as a Christian, I needed to write an ebook dedicated solely to it. That ebook, *The Key To Christian Romance*, is now available for download. I urge you get your copy, read it, and practice the principle it discusses in your own love life.

**This principle is the one key that will guide you in every situation as you pursue romance as a Christian.** Don't miss it!

[Click here to get your copy of The Key To Christian Romance.](#)
Thanks for reading my ebook! I hope it’s been helpful for you and that your love life will be stronger for it. I hope that together we can build a Christian romance culture that’s more biblical, more sensible, and easier to navigate. For that to happen, we Christians need to talk about these things.

So will you carry the conversation forward by sharing this ebook with friends? Let your friends on Facebook and Twitter know they can have a free copy of their own. Click the buttons below to fuel the conversation!
About The Author

Justin Megna was born and raised in Michigan. He graduated from the University of Valley Forge in 2012 with a Bachelor of Arts in Pastoral Ministry.

Justin's interest in biblical romance began in his teenage years with reading popular books about Christian romance. New experiences in college caused him to re-examine his beliefs about pursuing Christian romance. Since then, he's studied the varied perspectives on Christian romance from authors, including Alex Chediak, Jeremy Clark, Elisabeth Elliot, Debra Fileta, Joshua Harris, Jonathan Lindvall, Eric and Leslie Ludy, Martha Ruppert, and Douglas Wilson.

Justin currently lives outside Philadelphia as he continues to take the adventures of life and love. He hasn't mastered it all yet, but he's working on it.

See more about Justin at www.justinmegna.com.

If you’d like to send Justin a message, click here.