

ELEVATE: Seek What Is Noble!

Session # 2: Dating – “Raising the Bar: Figuring out Life Together”

Session Objective:

The aim of this session is to help students raise their awareness of principles for dating based in scripture. Moreover, it is to challenge students to understand for themselves why they date or want to as well as what it looks like to have a healthy dating relationship.

Minimum Prep:

- Cue up the video **How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days**.
- Have a white board or foolscap and markers
- Go over each scripture verses you are going to use
- Have pencils, markers, and pens for students to create the final letter.

Extended Prep:

- Fill each balloon with a scripture verse that has a principle related to dating. (If possible try to have enough for the entire small group)
- Read over each scripture so that you know the context and the principle. Since dating is just a recent social interaction, this session uses scripture based on the principle.

Session Outline

Leader Preamble:

It could seem impossible to do a Bible study on dating simply for the fact that dating did not exist until about 100 years ago. Until then, the parents often arranged marriages. In many circumstances, the first time a man would see his wife would be on the wedding day. These marriages came to be a relationship where you learned to love each other and work things out because you were committed for the long term.

However, just because something did not exist at the writing of the bible (I.e. television, computers, dating etc.) does not mean that there are not biblical guidelines or principles that can be applied to a modern day issue. The scriptures were not written for the strict purpose of a “how to” manual, but instead have been written so that humanity could have a framework that would guide them to abundant life. We are a people who can enjoy dating, listening to music, watching movies, or partying with friends – but as we seek to elevate our standards and values, we can look to apply biblical principles to our everyday practices such as dating.

*There have been many classic dating/relationship movies - **Bruce Almighty, Can't Buy Me Love, How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days, Just Married, You've Got Mail, Sleepless in Seattle, Pearl Harbour, and Love Actually** – they all look at the context of dating in one way or another. Whether one is simply dating over the internet, dating for status, dating for a dare, or dating for romance, everyone looks at dating differently and everyone defines dating differently.*

*As we look to share with each other how we view dating and what we think about dating, let's look at "**How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days**" (select appropriate clips for your ministry) to see a dating couple and the adventures they get into.*

Small Group Questions:

1. Have your group create a definition for "dating"

Dictionary definition: "An engagement to go out socially with another person, often out of romantic interest."

2. What do you look for in a good friendship?

(Allow the students to create a list on white board or foolscap)

3. What do you look for in a healthy dating relationship?

(Allow the students to create a list without looking at the previous list)

Have the students compare the two lists. Draw as many connections between a good friendship and a dating relationship. Help them see the value in creating healthy friendship with the opposite sex and assist them in seeing that not every close friendship has to move towards a dating relationship but that outside of a few differences they are very much the same. Allow the students through a discussion on the two lists to realize that much of the dating context is simply a great friendship with the permission to now add physical touch, closer intimacy and "exclusive rights".

When it comes down to it, it is important that we not fantasize about how great dating looks in the movie and how within 2 hours a couple works through all of life's problems, have the best relationship with parents, and then fall in love forever. It is time to wake up and smell the coffee and realize that dating is a very awesome thing but if we want to have a healthy relationship that honours the other person as well as God, we need to put into play the principles that Scripture has given us.

4. How can I build a spiritually healthy relationship? (Check out 1 Thes. 4:1-10)

Allow students first to answer the question. After some time of dialogue, wrap of the question by explaining that dating can be cruel and unusual punishment for teenagers – there are so many expectations, pressures, confused feelings, and games. But the key to remember in any relationship with a member of the opposite sex is respect.

Have everyone turn back to 1 Thessalonians 4:1-10 and have someone read the passage aloud. Explain that this passage has four keys for dating. Have someone read each verse and after each, briefly discuss the verse and then make the point listed below.

1. Verse 3 - Avoid sexual immorality
2. Verse 4 - Practice Self Control
3. Verse 5 - Practice Respect
4. Verse 6 - Practice Love

5. Word of God Speak: [Extend Time]

Before the meeting place scripture verses in balloons and then blow each balloon up. Have students then pop their balloon and read their verse. This will help students see that although there is no dating recorded in scripture that there are universal/general principles that can be adapted to dating. Then have the group discuss together how the given passage helps them understand how to date and whom to date?

Sample Verses:

<i>Galatians 5:13-15</i>	<i>- Treat your date in a loving way</i>
<i>2nd Corinthians 6:14-15</i>	<i>- Only date someone who is a follower of Jesus</i>
<i>1st Peter 2:17</i>	<i>- Treat your date with respect</i>
<i>1st Corinthians 10:31</i>	<i>- Glorify God on your dates</i>
<i>Philippians 4:8</i>	<i>- Think positively about others</i>
<i>1st Peter 3:3-4</i>	<i>- Don't overemphasize outward appearance</i>
<i>1st Samuel 16:7</i>	<i>- Look at a person's heart and inner character</i>

6. What's the Real Motive? Why would you want to date someone?

Encourage students to be bluntly honest as to what their motivation would be for dating someone (i.e. money, not to be lonely, image, status, someone to care for, to feel needed etc.). Once the group has come up with a number of reasons begin to draw a line through all of the reasons that are self-seeking. (Often the word Love is the only selfless motivation.) Allow the students to see that for the most part, we date for our own gain or our own satisfaction; but that a healthy relationship is based on serving and lifting up the other person. If we want to love someone, to care for someone and to share our lives with someone and we want it to be effective and genuine, we need to focus on the other person.)

How do the principles found in 1st Corinthians 13:1-8 relate to the Christian practice of dating?

Leader Final Remarks:

Tell students to take dating seriously especially any potential physical activity, although the emotional connection is just as important to protect. Explain that although love is a matter of the heart, it must also involve the head; in other words, we must use our brains. Challenge them:

1. *Be wise in who you date*
2. *Be wise in where you go*
3. *Be wise in what you decide*
4. *Be wise in following Christ*

Application:

Have each student write a letter or create a picture that they would give to their future wife/husband. Encourage the students to highlight the person they want to marry, what they want to say to the spouse about their sexual past, to highlight the person they want to be for their spouse, and to express the values that are important in a marriage relationship. Remind the student that in many ways dating is laying the foundation for the person they will marry. More importantly, what they do with a dating partner will affect their long-term marriage. So although, like last week when we read in scripture that everything is permissible, it goes on to say that not everything is beneficial. What you saved for your future spouse is the greatest way to show him/her respect and love.

Leader Note: This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

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