

The Relationship Series: Week 1 Devotions

In week 1 of the Relationship Series we explored Romantic Relationships.

Day One

Read:

Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm. (Proverbs 13:20)

Engage:

One of the questions asked today was, "Why would you get into a romantic relationship?"

On your own, be honest with yourself and ask yourself why you would get involved with another person.

One of the things that influence why we should get into a relationship and how a relationship should be or run is society.

Society has dictated how life should go, and from as young as five, we all know the song "girl and boy, sitting in the tree...K I S S I N G, first comes love, then comes marriage, then comes a baby in a baby carriage," and that is what the said principle is. BUT, society has tainted that, and most relationships have become pretty toxic because of so many reasons which I will not mention.

Relationships have become so nasty, and I can be honest and say, I do not see myself getting married; I am scared of marriage because of the relationships that I have seen around me. Yet I am still a hopeless romantic and I am now learning to trust in God, and do relationships his way. Because when we do relationships his way, yes, they are not perfect but they are much more beautiful than when you do relationships on your own.

Prayer:

Lord, in this area of relationships, may you please heal the scars that I have and may you make me complete again, within you. Teach me the right way to do relationships and may you guide me in all of my ways. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day Two

Read:

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." 1 Corinthians 15:33 NIV

Engage:

One thing my mother always said to me was, "if you're not ready to get married then leave relationships alone," and if I look at it now, I see that she was right. At that time, I didn't.

This is the situation I see in our culture today. I see a generation lost at sea, unsure how to navigate the tempestuous sea of love and avoid the pitfalls of fear, lust, and pride.

One thing we should do is date with purpose; that's dating with the end goal in mind. What are you looking for in the relationship that you're in or that you're about to get into? In a godly relationship, the end goal is usually marriage...

If you can't see yourself possibly being led by them in the image of Christ, connecting with them and possibly marrying them after getting to know the person as a friend, then it wouldn't be wise to waste your time in the wrong relationship only to be hurt in the end.

Dating can be devastating or harmful if it's done at the wrong timing and without God in the centre.

Be careful who you align your heart, soul and mind with because it can damage your purpose, and tarnish your identity —as well as self worth.

Prayer:

Lord, may you protect my heart and allow me to love you, love myself completely then eventually love others. May you guide me, and help me to know right from wrong and may you remove those who are not supposed to be in my life. In Jesus name, Amen.

Day Three

Read:

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. (Proverbs 4:23 NIV)

Engage:

The reason why romantic relationships can be devastating is because they do not have proper (christ representing and biblical) boundaries. Boundaries help up do relationships God's way and they are one of the things God uses for you to reach your purpose.

One thing we should know though, is that, dating and being in a relationship are two different things. Dating is like an interview for a really good job and sometimes as humans, we get so desperate and lonely that we let unqualified people get a second interview when they don't deserve to get past the first.

Some of the questions you should take time to answer are;

1. What are your boundaries as a person and a child of God?
2. What are the standards you'd like to be met? Your deal breakers?
3. What are your values and do they align with your potential partners values?

When you invite God into the situation, He will give you the desire to do things right and the power to do it. You can set the right boundaries by setting your eyes, heart, mind and soul on what pleases God. Guard your heart and let Jesus show you how to love.

Prayer:

Pray that God leads the right person into your life when the time is right. (Isaiah 60:22)

Day Four

Read:

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

Engage:

There is often nothing we'd like more than to find ourselves in a wonderful relationship where our partner loves us and is everything we have dreamt of. Growing up I had many dreams of who I would one day find myself in a relationship with, I even drew up a list so that I didn't forget anything. Love is blind, so I wanted to be sure I'd found the right person before he wooed me and I forgot all about the standards I had and characteristics I wanted. Despite my dreams and hopes for love I had a lot of things I was fighting against. No one believed that the man I was looking for was possible and constantly would tell me to open my eyes and not put myself in a position to get hurt. But even so, there was something inside of me that told me to hold onto my dream, and so I started to pray. Every time I missed having a relationship, I'd pray, every time someone would discourage me or tell me it was impossible, I would pray, every time I thought of him or dreamt of him, I'd pray, and even though I wasn't sure I'd ever find a man that fit the one I was looking for, I gave him over to God and trusted that He would be my prince. Slowly, as I prayed more and more for my one day man, I started to get to know him and God started to grow my love for a man I had never met. I knew what kind of man he would be and I had hope to hold onto. Just over a year ago I got an invitation to a party and the moment I saw that invitation I had the weirdest feeling that at that party I would meet the man I'd been waiting for. The weeks rolled by and as the party drew closer I started to feel nervous, but not nearly as nervous and excited as I did when we drove in the driveway. I had butterflies in my stomach and a feeling I couldn't describe or tell anyone about, that I was about to meet the man I had loved and dreamt of for so, so long. A few minutes into the party, once I had fetched myself a cool drink, I saw him, the man I knew but had never met, the man that I loved and had prayed for for so long... He felt it too and both of us knew that we had just laid eyes on the person that we were waiting for, and for me it was Asher Pardey.

I had a dream and a list and a thousand prayers for a man that I thought was impossible, but Daddy God heard and saw them all and found me the man of my dreams, He found me my prince and the man I would love with everything in me. God answers prayers and wants our relationships to work out when they are what's best for us. He has plans of hope and prosperous plans for a good future for us, we just need to trust Him with our futures, and I can promise you, it is so, so worth it!

Prayer:

Dear God, I thank You that for all eternity You have had the perfect person for me in mind. One that won't only love me, but also grow me a stick with me. Help me to trust You and I give You my love story and promise to listen as You lead me. We are Yours, please bless our one day romance. I love You Lord, Amen

Day Five

Read:

"When the time is right I, the Lord will make it happen," Isaiah 60:22

Engage:

When we are God's children we have the right to pray and ask him for the desires of our heart and he says that if we seek him wholeheartedly, we will find him. He will answer our prayers. I've known God to be a provider, I've known him to answer my prayers and almost all the times these prayers are answered with a yes.

So I heard you can pray for the kind of partner you'd like to have in your life. I've grown up in a traditional setting and I've seen my uncles treat my aunts like they put the stars in the sky. I always admire that and I say, 'God, I want something like that, something that gives praise to you, and something that sustains me and grows until kingdom comes,' and so this has been my prayer request for the longest of times.

Lord, I've seen bad relationships, I don't want those kind of relationships, I want a person who is like this and that, and of course if it's in your will please—pretty please, provide that for me. And then there was a person I got to know and I prayed that he might be the one because clearly in my eyes he covered what I'd prayed for.

And God said to me, "When the time is right, I the Lord will make it happen," and so I got happy. I was raving to my friends and telling them, "Jesus said the person is in repairs, and when he's out of repairs, you can have him". I got so excited and I was telling my aunt, and my mom and my best friend. And I was like, God is finally coming through for me. Your girl is about to be taken.

Then I got humbled, I watched this person go further and further and further away from me. I was distraught, and I asked God. I'm like, God, what's up? I thought you said it was mine? I just had to wait? And I've been waiting, close to 6 months... What's going on? Then he said to me, if I don't give you this person, will you still praise me?

I'm like but Lord, you had my hopes up... It hurt, because I thought this was it and I prayed about it again, and I surrendered it all to the the Lord. Then he said, "Trust in the Lord in all your ways, and lean not on your own understanding," Proverbs 3...and slowly, I started to see why God told me to wait, or no... I'm still not sure what the answer was. I began to see what my eyes could not initially see. The darkness.

And my aunt said, " You see why God told you what he said? "

Sometimes we might not understand why God blocks the partner you think is for you. Sometimes God says wait and we don't, but he sees way more than we do and he wants what's best for us. So when you pray for your partner, listen to what God has to say... He knows better and he loves you. Sometimes he's trying to make you grow before you get into that romantic relationship. And when the time is right, He alone will make it happen.

Day Six

Explore:

When it comes to principles for dating, first and foremost you need to invite the God of the universe into the process. Allow the truth about who he is to influence your thoughts and actions. Prayer frees you from the terror of being alone—and protects you from compromising your standards. You can relax and enjoy every moment because you rest in the knowledge your strong and loving God is leading you in a good way. When you have a clear connection with God, you can see people as precious creations in his image—not to use, but to honor.

In dating, that honor begins when you follow the second principle of dating: provide clarity to the other person. In Ephesians 4:15, Paul says a hallmark of the people of Jesus is that they "[speak] the truth in love." Proverbs 24:26 declares an honest answer is a kiss on the lips. It is a sign of respect and love to tell someone the truth. So muster the courage to graciously tell the other person what you think, how you feel, and what you would like to do.

Be sure to keep your meaning clear when you are on a date. Let the other person know how you are feeling about the experience—don't keep him or her wondering about what will happen next. Ambiguity is uncomfortable. Also, be clear about how this process of dating might end. Share your comfort level with your experience at any time, and be willing to stop without putting pressure on each other if one of you feels uncomfortable. There should be a clear door out. When you give people clarity, you give them peace and the opportunity to be themselves.

Believers in Jesus do not need to play games. Life is short. You don't have time to mess around with people's emotions. Say what you mean. Mean what you say. Be clear about the process.

A third principle for dating is that it should be between believers in Christ. The Bible is clear those who trust in Jesus are to date (and marry) those who trust in Jesus. You are to love those who do not believe, but you are not to extend a romantic relationship with them. As a believer in Jesus, dating is part of being in community with other believers—a covenant relationship. God does not recognize dating as a "status." You are either brother and sister in Christ, or you are husband and wife. There is no intermediate sphere. So don't get this confused.

In the same way, the Bible draws a hard boundary between what is permissible sexually. In marriage, much is permissible. In singleness, none is permissible. And in dating, still none is permissible. True love does not request access to your body while simultaneously avoiding any responsibility to care for you emotionally and financially. So, until the two of you are married before God, you are still two. You are separate.

You are accountable before God for your own life. So treat dating as a season of evaluation that leads to a solid conclusion about the other person. Use dating to determine whether you are in a good partnership or are not.

Reflect:

How have you invited God into your dating life? Why is it important to invite him into the process first before you choose to date someone?

What are some ways to appropriately communicate your intentions to someone you want to date? How can you honor a person you want to date by the way you treat him or her?

What boundaries has God set in relationships? If you have crossed any of these boundaries, how can you get back on track?

Day Seven

Read:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us," (Hebrews 12:1 NIV)

When God wants to bless you, at times he sends people into your life. When the enemy wants to destroy and distract you, he also send people into your life. Therefore, people who come into your life can either be a blessing or a curse.

One question you should constantly ask yourself is, Is your relationship with your partner a liability or an asset? An asset being something that gives to you, and a liability being something that takes from you. Your relationship should

drive and push you to your purpose. Don't get confused though, because there are some people who benefit us, but their negativity outweighs the good that they bring into your life.

Therefore, how do you know if a relationship needs to end?

When you started it, and God didn't. You should not rush into a relationship that God has not ordained. Sometimes, we ask God when we are in the relationship to bless it, when we should have asked for permission to pursue before pursuing the relationship. Don't try to help God when he tells you to wait, or when he says no. Instead, you should obey him. When you don't obey God, you invite relationships into your life, that weren't even supposed to happen in the first place and you give the enemy entrance to introduce counterfeits.

You should exit a relationship when no one wants to deal with the real issues in the relationship therefore leading to unaddressed problems that fester. We should be honest in our relationships - telling the truth at all times.

As we end, you should know that, when you are in the wrong relationship... You could be blocking your own blessings. You'd be surprised that when you cut off the person, you both get blessed in your own areas. We should end these kind of relationships, whether toxic, abusive or lustful quickly, peacefully and intentionally and trust God to deal with them because God may use that for them to depend on God and not on you.

God wants us to win in relationships.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, I come before you and ask that you may help me discern right from wrong. May you lead me and guide me in all my ways, and may you help me submit my relationships to you. May you help me cut off a relationship if it needs to be cut, and may you help me win in the relationship that I do have. May my relationship honour you. I ask all these things, in Jesus name. AMEN.