



COMMUNITY

DATING/ENGAGEMENT

Objective for Learning: To have a healthy, biblical paradigm on dating/engagement and understanding what it means to honor the Lord in this relationship.

Objective for Living: To be able to honor the Lord and the person you are dating/engaged to during this relational period.

Objective for Reproducing: To communicate, coach, and mentor others in this relationship so that it pleases the Lord, builds up the couple, and leads them in purity of heart, body, and mind throughout the duration of the relationship.

Scriptures for Dating/Engagement:

- Philippians 2:3-4
- Romans 12:9-10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8
- Ephesians 5:3
- Romans 13:14
- 2 Timothy 2:22
- 2 Corinthians 6:14
- Hebrew 13:4

How do each of these Scriptures help to **define** and **illuminate** what accountability is and why it is important?

Hearing (Discussion Points and Questions):

Overview:

Arguably the biggest decision you will ever make outside of following Jesus is who you are going to marry. The relationship leading up to marriage is also an extremely important piece to that decision. Marriage (and dating and engagement) is serious to God. He is less concerned about legalistic rules and more concerned about wisdom, which is needed in any dating relationship or engagement. Wisdom calls for those who are dating or engaged to have older, wiser ones in their life to help make sound decisions and hold them accountable. Wisdom calls for the militant pursuit of purity, knowing that worldly dating is about personal gratification while godly dating is about

honoring Christ and knowing Him more. Wisdom calls for the pursuit of *being* the right person before worrying about *finding* the right person.

The Bible uses a lot of Bride/Bridegroom imagery. Dating relationships and engagement reveal a part of God's heart for us. They have tremendous capacity to draw us closer to Him *if* we maximize it. ^[L]_{SEP}Conversely, you make decisions differently when you're only pursuing your pleasure and when you ask questions like, "How will this benefit me? Can this person meet MY needs? Does this person look how I want them to? What do they have to offer? How far is too far?" The right questions are instead "What is wise? What is going to bring honor to God and to the person I am dating? What do those in authority and who I respect in my life think about this person and this relationship?"

While there are a lot of items to discuss when it comes to relationships, the overarching purpose and focus of dating should be that of pursuing marriage and honoring the Lord in that pursuit.

Questions for Learning and Living:

- € Review the Scriptures above. What do these Scriptures reveal about God's heart towards engagement and dating relationships?
- € What does it mean to pursue being the right person before worrying about finding the right person?
- € How can dating relationships draw us closer to God? What are the ways it can move us away from God? Give examples of each.
- € How does community and having other voices in your relationship help with accountability and wisdom? Who in your life could be that voice of wisdom in your relationship?

Questions for Reproducing:

- € How can you help someone truly reshape their understanding of what dating is about and its purpose? Also, share some verses you could use to help drive that point home.
- € What are some of the major points that you would share and disciple someone in who is moving into a dating relationship?

Doing (Implementation and Application):

- What is Jesus saying to you about this?
- How are you going to respond? Look at your personal discipleship assessment.
 - Give 1-3 concrete action steps that you are going to do this week to help you take the next step of learning, living, or reproducing in this area.
- Choose one of the Scriptures that really impacted you and commit to memorizing it this week.