



WEEK 3

SERMON GUIDE



THE BIG IDEA

Dating on purpose means you know who you're looking for.

THE BIBLE

II Corinthians 6:14-15
Proverbs 1:5, 3:1-35

WHAT?

WE'RE BACK FOR WEEK 3 OF THIS SERIES

VIDEO | *When Harry Met Sally* Couple Interviews

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play 2:08-3:24 of [this clip](#). You'll return to this video each week of the series.
- I'm not totally sure what a "good melon" looks like, but I love the way these couples seemed to have just "known" they were right for each other.
- That kind of thing doesn't happen very often though. It's not every day that you meet someone with a real-life "love at first sight" kind of story. For most people, figuring out if the person you're interested in or already dating is the "right one" for you is a pretty long and confusing process.
- For the last couple of weeks, we've been talking about dating and relationships. First, we said that if we want to have great dating relationships, we need to start by loving God well because staying close to Jesus makes every relationship better.
- Last week, we talked about how you can know if you're ready to date or not. We said a big part of it comes down to understanding that the purpose of dating isn't just to have fun—it's to lead toward marriage. So be intentional with your dating.
- But today I don't want to talk about *how* you date. I want to talk about *who* you date.

STORY | Talk about your journey toward finding "the one."

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Whether you're married, single, or dating, share a personal story with your students about your journey toward trying to find someone you love. It could be a story with a happy ending or a break-up ending. The point is that you give students a little insight into your personal life.

SO WHAT?

ACTIVITY | Designing the Perfect Partner

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Using a white board or pad of large blank paper, brainstorm the qualities of the perfect boyfriend or girlfriend.*
- Finding the perfect person for you is no easy task, but it's made extra complicated by the fact that the world around us is sending us so many messages about who that "perfect person" is. Sometimes it's hard to tell dreams from reality.
- Let's take a minute and describe the "perfect" boyfriend or girlfriend, based on the world's standards. What would you include?

QUESTION | How reasonable is this description?

- Give your students a few minutes to share and discuss.

QUESTION | How do you think these values line up with God's values?

- Give your students a few minutes to share and discuss.

WHO GOD SAYS (NOT) TO DATE

SCRIPTURE | II Corinthians 6:14-15

- The Bible gives lots of general guidance about the type of person you should be *and* be looking for, but there's one specific passage I want to look at right now.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read II Corinthians 6:14-15.*
- Ouch. These are intense words from Paul, the author of this book. If you're a Jesus-follower, Paul says not to team up with someone who doesn't believe like you.
- Maybe that seems harsh, but the apostle Paul (the author of this passage) isn't suggesting that you judge, or ignore, or feel superior to someone who doesn't believe like you do. He's just saying not to team up, partner with, or tie yourself to them in an intimate way—and this is never more relevant or important than when we're talking about dating.
- Dating is already pretty difficult and complicated, even when you both share the same values. It's nearly impossible if you don't.
- Now if you're thinking right now about a certain really cute guy or girl who doesn't know Jesus, you might also be thinking, "Well, if we start dating, I can help them get to know Jesus." Uh, yeah, that hardly ever works. But if you're considering it, here are a few things to think about . . .
 - If they started coming to church with you, how could you be sure their interest in God was authentic?
 - If you date and then break up, what do you think might happen to their faith afterward?
 - If your motive is to truly introduce them to Jesus, why couldn't you do that as a friend?
- I understand the temptation, but I also know that it's messy. And since (like we learned last week) the goal of dating is to lead toward marriage, is that really something you'd want to risk?

DISCUSSION | Why would the Bible give us this instruction?

- What do you think? Whether you like it or not, why do you think the Bible tells us, as Christ-followers,

to not become relationally tied with someone who isn't also a Christ-follower?

- Give your students a few minutes to share and discuss.
- If dating leads to marriage, could you imagine spending the rest of your life with a partner who didn't agree with you regarding the most important area of your life?
- Maybe this feels like a heavy subject, but dating is a big deal.
- If you are committed to following Jesus, date someone who shares that commitment. This isn't about following a religious rule. It's about aligning yourself with someone who shares the goals and values that are most important to you. Date someone who makes you want to love Jesus more.

SCRIPTURE | Proverbs 1:5

- Let's take a look at another passage of Scripture. This is from the book of Proverbs. Proverbs are short, memorable guidelines for living wisely.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Proverbs 1:5.
- When it comes to our dating relationships, we absolutely must continue to grow in wisdom.
- Our relationships impact us, our faith, and our futures deeply. We can't make decisions about them based purely on feelings or attraction. We must use wisdom and discernment.
- When it comes to your dating life, you can show wisdom and discernment by thinking carefully not only about how you date, but who you date as well.
- **Dating on purpose means you know who you're looking for.**

NOW WHAT?

KNOW WHO YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- If you want the kind of relationship that feels "meant to be," there are a few things you need to know. You need to know . . .
 - **WHO YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.** Like we've said, **dating on purpose means you know who you're looking for.** Set high standards for the kind of person you want to be with and then keep those standards. Don't settle. Be honest about what you're looking for. If your list is superficial, work on your own heart. Here are a few non-superficial things to consider:
 - You are compatible spiritually. That means you are on the same level and support each other's spiritual growth.
 - You are compatible intellectually. When you talk (and you should do that often), it means you feel challenged and energized by your conversations with them.
 - You are compatible emotionally. That means you both feel understood, supported, and free to be honest with each other about how you feel.
 - You are compatible socially. You're not embarrassed by them when you're with your friends or family.
 - You are compatible physically. That means you set healthy boundaries and learn to express affection in ways that don't compromise those boundaries.

- **HOW TO BREAK UP.** This isn't fun to talk about, but it's important. Even that brand new, sparkly, exciting relationship you just started has a pretty good chance at someday coming to an end. Think about it. Every dating relationship ends in one of two ways: marriage or a break-up. You only need one successful dating experience. So don't settle too early—break-ups are okay. Here's how to do it well . . .
 - Be personal. Break up face-to-face. Not via text. Look them in the eye. Don't ghost them. Treat them with the respect they deserve as someone who is loved by God.
 - Be kind. Tell the truth, but speak with love. Don't give them a fake reason for ending it. Once you break up, stop texting, calling, and liking their pics. It may not have to last forever, but it should last for a season. Be kind during and after the break-up. Only speak positively about your ex, even if they're being a total jerk. Take the high road.
 - Be respectful. Keep things private, but not secret. Privacy is how you honor them by not sharing details with anyone who doesn't need to know. Secrecy is keeping the details from everyone, including the people you trust—don't do that.

WHO YOU NEED TO BE

- It's important to know who you're looking for, but it's even more important to be the kind of person worthy of the person you're looking for. If you want the kind of relationship that feels "meant to be," then you need to be someone who . . .
 - **LOVES GOD.** Like we learned a couple of weeks ago, a relationship with Jesus will make any relationship better. Love God with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. Follow His commands. Pursue wisdom and Christlike living.
 - **LOVES YOU.** Like we talked about several times this series, God created you uniquely. If you want a healthy relationship with someone else, you need to have a healthy relationship with yourself and the identity that God has given you. If you are insecure, lonely, or unhappy with who you are, a relationship will not fix it. Only you and God can fix that. If you're not healthy without someone, you won't be healthy with someone.
 - **LOVES OTHERS.** Dating is not all about you. It is a partnership and a relationship with another person—a person made in the image of God, loved, and cherished by Him. If you are walking into a relationship focused primarily on what you can get out of it, you shouldn't be in the relationship. Be someone who loves others, even more than yourself.

RESPONSE | A Letter to You

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play the song, "God, I look to You" by Bethel Music during this response time.*
- For the next few moments, I want us to reflect and respond to God about this last part of our conversation. Being in a romantic relationship is not the ultimate goal of life, but being in a relationship with God, your Creator, is. So spend a few moments writing a letter to God about who you are and who you are becoming. Ask God to help you find rest in your relationship with Him, no matter what. Remember, the best relationships come from staying close to Jesus. Use this time to move closer to Jesus.