



WEEK 1 MAIN POINT

Just like all relationships, dating is meant to reflect Christlike love and respect.

MAIN BIBLE VERSE(S)

Philippians 2:1-5

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Christ-centered dating isn't selfish or about seeking its own way; it seeks to honor God and the other person. Today's message is about what it looks like to respect God and the person you're dating.
LEADER NOTE: This series is not about pressuring students to date or shaming past choices, but about helping them see God's heart for healthy, Christ-centered relationships.

HOOK: PHILIPPIANS 2:1-5 NIV

- Hey everyone and welcome!
 - Before we get going, who was here last week when we closed out our series called "Follow me"?
 - That series was all about discipleship and what it actually means to call ourselves followers of Jesus.
 - And we talked about how following Jesus has implications on our relationships.
 - We read Philippians 2:1-5. As a matter of fact, let's read that again...
- READ PHILIPPIANS 2:1-5 NIV
 - Here, we see Jesus' way modeled for us and expected of us:
 - Paul describes a life shaped by:
 - Humility
 - Selflessness
 - Looking out for others
 - Not seeking your own way.

TENSION: DOES THIS APPLY TO DATING?

- But today I want to ask you a question we really didn't sit with last week:
 - Does that way of living apply everywhere, or are there areas of life where we quietly think, "This is different"?
- Notice what Paul doesn't do here:
 - He doesn't give different standards for different relationships.
 - He doesn't say...
 - ... Treat your parents with respect, but if you're dating someone, then you can do whatever you want.
 - ...Treat your small group leader like this, but treat your friends like that...
- Paul is teaching something to us that Jesus modeled.
 - Jesus didn't model multiple versions of love. He modeled one way of living. In all situations.
- Why do I bring this up? Because this means that the way Jesus calls us to live doesn't stop applying when feelings get involved.

TRANSITION: SET UP THE SERIES

- This week, we are starting a series of talks called “REALationships,” and we’re doing this because we know that some of you are in the place in life where you’re at least interested and starting to become interested in dating.
 - Now, while the Bible doesn’t talk about dating in particular, I hope you have already been able to see that the principle’s the Bible teaches – like the one in Philippians 2, shouldn’t only be true of us some of the time.
 - But instead, we want to see how we can apply biblical wisdom to an area of life that can be just flat out confusing.
- Now! Hear me say this: The purpose of these next few weeks is not to encourage you to date, but rather to prepare you.
 - Let’s be real: for some of you, the more we talk about this stuff, the more you’re ready to get out there and put it into practice. That’s not the point! This is about preparing you and helping you fix your eyes on Christ long before a guy or a girl comes along so that you can honor God when that season of life comes.
 - Because here’s some truth for you: Dating doesn’t create a new set of rules, it reveals what you already believe about love.

TENSION: WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT DATING?

- And unfortunately, I think for most of us, dating starts off with the wrong mindset of selfishness:
 - For a lot of us, dating isn’t think about the others person. It’s a way to have our own needs met.
- Most dating advice—whether it comes from culture or even other students—sounds like this:
 - “Follow your heart.”
 - “Protect yourself.”
 - “Get what you need.”
 - “If it feels right, it must be right.”
- And the problem isn’t that feelings exist. The problem is when feelings become the authority.
- Here’s the tension:
 - You can date someone and still treat them selfishly.
 - You can be attracted to someone and still fail to love them well.
- Philippians 2 confronts that way of thinking.
 - Christ-centered love:
 - doesn’t ask, “*What can I get?*”
 - asks, “*How can I honor God and value this person?*”

APPLICATION: WHAT CHRIST-CENTERED DATING ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE

- So what does it look like to apply Philippians 2 to dating?
 - It starts with motivation, not rules.
 - Ask yourself:
 - *Why do I want to date?*
 - *What am I hoping this person gives me?*
 - *Am I willing to put their good above my desires?*
- Christ-centered dating:
 - chooses respect over pressure
 - clarity over manipulation
 - honesty over games
 - boundaries over impulse
 - We’re going to talk about all of these in the coming weeks, by the way.
- And here’s a line worth sitting with: The goal of dating isn’t chemistry—it’s character.
 - Dating should help you become more like Jesus, not slowly pull you away from Him.
- That’s why the way you date matters just as much as who you date.

PASTORAL CLARITY: GRACE AND DIRECTION

- Let me say this clearly.
 - This isn’t about:
 - pressuring anyone to date
 - shaming past decisions
 - pretending mistakes don’t happen
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- **This is about direction, not perfection.**
 - **Philippians 2 isn't a standard we meet on our own. It's a way of life Jesus invites us into—with grace. Wherever you are right now, Jesus is inviting you to let His way shape this area too.**

LANDING THE POINT:

- **Dating doesn't sit outside your faith. It reveals your faith.**
 - **If Jesus is Lord of your life, He also gets a say in how you love, how you pursue, and how you treat the people you date.**
 - **Christ-centered dating reflects Christlike love and respect—just like every other relationship.**
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