



WEEK 3 MAIN POINT	MAIN BIBLE VERSE(S)
The best relationships challenge us and help us become more like Christ.	Proverbs 27:17; Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33
<b>ABOUT THIS WEEK</b>	
<p>Students will understand that dating relationships are formative, not neutral, and will be challenged to pursue relationships that help them grow in wisdom, character, and Christlikeness rather than pulling them away from Jesus.</p>	

#### HOOK: DATING IS DIRECTIONAL

- Have you ever looked back at an old photo of yourself and thought, “*Why did I dress like that?*”
- Or did you hear an old song and immediately remember the people you used to hang out with?
- Or maybe you’ve caught yourself saying something and thought, “*Wow... I definitely picked that up from someone.*”
- Here’s why that happens:
  - We become like the people we spend time with.
    - It’s not dramatic.
    - It’s not intentional.
    - It’s just true.
- And that’s actually what we’re talking about today — not just dating, but influence.
  - Whether you realize it or not, the relationships in your life are shaping you.
- Which leads us to something important: Dating isn’t neutral.
  - Every relationship you’re in is shaping you in some direction.
    - The question isn’t *if* it’s shaping you — it’s *how*.
- Dating has a way of revealing:
  - what you value
  - what you tolerate
  - what you prioritize
- So today we’re not asking, “*Do I like this person?*” We’re asking a better question: Is this relationship helping me become more like Jesus?

#### SCRIPTURE:

- The Bible is incredibly clear about the power of influence.
  - READ Proverbs 27:17
    - That verse tells us relationships are meant to *shape* us.
    - Sharpening requires friction.
    - Growth isn’t always comfortable — but it is intentional.
  - READ Proverbs 13:20
    - Notice the certainty.
    - Not *might* become wise.

- Will become wise.
- And then Paul puts it even more directly in 1 Corinthians 15:33:
  - Scripture doesn't treat relationships as neutral.
  - They either move us toward wisdom — or toward compromise.

#### TENSION: CHEMISTRY VS. CHARACTER

- Most dating decisions are driven by:
  - Attraction
  - Chemistry
  - how someone makes you feel
- And chemistry matters — but it's not enough.
  - Chemistry can spark a relationship. But only character can sustain it.
  - Feelings are powerful, but they're unreliable leaders
  - If feelings become the authority, character usually becomes the casualty.
- That's why Scripture never tells us to "follow our heart." It tells us to pursue wisdom.

#### TRUTH: WHO YOU SURROUND YOURSELF WITH MATTERS

- There's a pastor named Jonathan Pokluda, and he claims that besides the Gospel, the single most consistent piece of advice that he gives young people who are going through an identity crisis or who can't seem to stay out of rough situations is this:
  - "Change your playmates and your playground. Where you go and who you go with is half of the battle in life. If you want to change your life, change where you go and who you go with. That's going to be half of the battle."
- This isn't just a smart guy talking...
  - That lines up perfectly with Proverbs and Corinthians.
    - If you want to grow spiritually, your relationships have to move you in the right direction.
    - Dating doesn't just reveal your heart — it accelerates whatever direction you're already headed.

#### NOTE ON DATING AND FORMATION:

- Whether you realize it or not, dating is practice.
- The person you date is someone you're practicing:
  - communication with
  - conflict with
  - emotional intimacy with
  - spiritual influence with
- That's why dating isn't just about *now*. It's shaping *later*.
- A Christ-centered dating relationship should:
  - strengthen your faith
  - Challenge your character
  - help you grow in Christlikeness
- If a relationship consistently pulls you away from Jesus, that's not love — that's misdirection.

#### APPLICATION: CHOOSING GROWTH-ORIENTED RELATIONSHIPS

- So how do you evaluate your relationships honestly?
- Ask questions:
  - Do I follow Jesus more closely because of this relationship?
  - Does this person encourage wisdom or excuse compromise?
  - Am I becoming more patient, humble, and faithful... or less of those things?
- This doesn't mean every relationship is easy or comfortable. And it doesn't mean that every relationship is perfect, because people are broken.
- Dating should never cost you your walk with Jesus. It should strengthen it.

#### PASTORAL CLARITY:

- This isn't about shaming, pretending, or expecting perfection.
  - Growth takes time and wisdom develops through formation.
- Jesus is inviting you to choose intentional direction.

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- Wherever you are right now, He cares about where you're headed from here.

**LAND THE POINT:**

- Proverbs tells us to walk with the wise
- Paul warns about the power of bad company.
- God reminds us that relationships shape character
- The best relationships help us become more like Christ.

