



## Daily Devotionals: Dear Church | October 9, 2022

### Week 6 | Honoring God While Dating

Dear Church,

In some ways, I feel ill-equipped to write a letter about dating. For one thing, it's been a minute since I dated. For another thing, my dating life was quite simple...some might even say boring. I met my wife when I was a child, I got to know her in high school, asked her out before my senior year, and we were married right after I graduated college. She's the only person I've dated, and we've been together since 1997. Here is what I do know: Jerry Maguire got it completely wrong. Sure, "You complete me," sounds like the most romantic thing a girl could ever want to hear, but in the context of Christian dating, nothing could be more harmful than looking for *any person* to complete you.

Let me start with this: what a crazy time to be dating! If you're looking for a special someone in today's culture, I don't envy you. From hookup culture to online dating to people "speaking their truth", the process of finding someone can feel overwhelming. And as you look around at the world, it seems you have to set the bar pretty low just to find (or swipe) a potential match. I'm sure the whole situation can seem kind of helpless, and for that I want to say I'm sorry. I'm sure, at times, it can feel quite disheartening.

So, what wisdom does the Bible have for us in this realm of dating relationships? Or how about for those of us who aren't dating or who are already married? What does this topic have for us? There are the more obvious scriptures about sexual immorality that are often applied here, but what about other wisdom?

**Read each of these scriptures and reflect on how they apply to dating relationships. If you're currently dating, what perspectives do they reinforce or challenge? What might God be inviting you to reconsider? If you're not dating, how do these encourage you to help those who are?**

- 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8
- 1 Timothy 5:1-2
- Philippians 2:3
- Galatians 5:13



I found an article on [boundless.org](http://boundless.org) to be very helpful in thinking through this. It's called *Is Christian Dating Broken?* In it, the author makes a case for how to approach the idea of Christian dating through three main areas.

**Learn to see.** Jesus was great at seeing people, and when he saw them, he had compassion on them. His ability to see people drew them to him. When we apply this to dating, perhaps it will change our evaluation mindset. It can be easy as a single person to look at a crowd and evaluate if we think someone is a good fit because of their looks, their personality, etc. But when we can see everyone in the room and appreciate that each person is an image bearer of God, we become more like Christ and open possibilities of rich relationships, whether we date someone or not.

**Learn to value.** Closely related to seeing is valuing. Truly seeing someone is seeing their inherent value while keeping yourself humble. In the world of dating, it means you get the opportunity to know people in an authentic way, rather than picking and choosing who you think might be most advantageous as a partner. It prompts us to use intentionality to build relationships and to pursue our own relationship with Christ.

**Learn to serve.** As we discussed last week, singleness is a gift that opens possibilities of serving others in a way that you wouldn't otherwise be able to. As we pursue those opportunities and as serving grows as a way of life, we treat others differently. When we embrace the values of purity, love, and sacrifice that God calls us to in His Word, we naturally become people who serve.

It's so easy to approach dating (or other relationships) as consumers; we look for ways that others can meet our needs. As we become more complete in Christ, we become the kind of people who love others the way Christ loves them. And the more complete we are in Christ, the less we rely on any other relationship to complete us. Even if we aren't dating or looking to date, learning to see, value, and serve others aligns so closely with how Jesus instructed us to interact with the world around us.

Spend some time with God and reflect on the questions listed below. Give Him the space to guide and encourage you.

- If you're dating, how might God be inviting you to be more intentional with your relationship?



- How does learning to see, value, and serve change your approach to how you think about dating? How does it change your approach to how you live?
- If you aren't dating and have friends who are, how can you be an encouragement to those friends as they pursue Godliness in their relationship?
- What does it mean to become more like Christ in order to be a better partner to someone? In what areas of life outside of dating is that the case?
- Take a few minutes to examine your motives in dating – whether currently dating or as you examine that period of your life in the past. How can you celebrate those motives? How might you need to seek healing and forgiveness in those motives?

I've listed a few supplemental resources I found helpful on the topic. I hope they provide additional guidance to you, too!

- *Is Christian Dating Broken?* By Suzanne Hadley Gosselin is the article I mentioned earlier from [boundless.org](http://boundless.org).
- *Single. Dating. Engaged. Married.* by Ben Stuart. This book is available on Sunday mornings at our resource center.
- The video *Single Dating Engaged Married Part 3 Dating WHO* on YouTube is a great talk given by Ben Stuart in conjunction with his book listed above.

Blessings,

Brock