



FULL SERMON RECAP

Sunday – February 10, 2019

Series: Navigating Relationships

Sermon Title: Dating With Purpose

Today's Focus → We will look at the topic of dating with purpose by examining what criteria we have set to determine success.

For those of you who are looking to post something sweet this Valentine's Day, just make sure you look at all the angles before you put your words in writing. Since I'm a pastor, let me just give you a couple of tips when sharing Bible verses.

Proverbs 31 is the proverb whose content we usually refer to as "The Virtuous Woman". Now some of the wording may get lost on how important it was in that culture but there are still some great principles for men and women alike to lift up as beneficial to relationships. At the end it gives a couple of verses I've seen used by men to show their affection for their wife but like we said in last week's sermon, always think twice before posting.

Proverbs 31:29

"There are many virtuous and capable women in the world, but you surpass them all!"

That one is pretty good. Not sure if calling the love of your life "capable" is what she's looking for in the way of romantic talk, but still you're saying she surpasses them all. How about the next one...

Proverbs 31:30

Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly praised.

So you would share this one, especially if you've been together a long time, to talk about how you love them for who they are. Your love only grows stronger with time. You find her more beautiful now because of the life you've shared together than you did when you first started. But guys, what 4 words did she stop on? Yep – "BEAUTY DOES NOT LAST". You're toast. In your best efforts to tell her how much she means to you above everyone else, in your attempts to let her know how attractive you think she is after all these years, you just told her that her beauty has faded. Better go grab another dozen roses quick and do some damage control. Maybe even hit a jewelry store.

You see the great thing about relationships is that you have them with another person who you will never completely figure out. And they'll never completely figure you out either. It's always a give and take. Never perfect. Even the best marriages are filled with love, joy, strain, stress, happiness, and conflict. So if even the best marriages have their peaks and valleys, how well are we going to fare when it comes to dating? Better yet, what is the purpose of dating? What are the rules? What determines success or failure? Is there a way to date that will help us be more successful if we end up in marriage? The answer to that last one is yes and we'll get to the others.

So where can we look to find guidelines on how to approach dating? First off, the Bible doesn't say much at all that we can consider directly talking about dating. So what then? Well here's a verse that you won't see on many Valentine's day cards...

Jeremiah 17:9

"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?"

(continued...)

(...sermon recap continued)

Now this verse has been butchered a lot over the centuries, stretched to fit whatever point we're trying to make. So, is the heart always wrong? Of course not. But it's a gamble if all we are basing our decisions, our "right or wrong", purely on how we feel. Our heart or emotions can be a huge help at times but on other days, cloud our vision of what path we need to take. To understand what Jeremiah was saying a little better let's go back and read verses 7, 8 and then 9.

Jeremiah 17: 7-9

"But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit. "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?"

In the army there's a saying that goes "you fight the way you train". So, the way they address that is to train the way you fight. In essence, for a soldier, if you don't train well or don't take it seriously, there's little expectation that in battle you will somehow become an outstanding soldier. So why is it that we sometimes take dating so haphazardly and expect in the end that we're going to end up with a perfect outcome?

Or do we not care about the outcome? Is it simply a process where we don't really care about all of those we "date", you know at least not until later when we decide to get serious?

I've titled today's message "DATING WITH PURPOSE".

Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

POINT #1: We must realize dating isn't the goal. Marriage isn't even the goal. Being focused on the things of God should be our goal in everything we do.

Colossians 3: 1-3

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.

2 Corinthians 6: 14-15

Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever?

Boundaries in Dating (pg27)

- "Many of the struggles people experience in dating relationships are, at heart, caused by some problem in the areas of freedom and responsibility.
- By freedom, we mean your ability to make choices based on your values, rather than choosing out of fear or guilt....
- By responsibility, we mean your ability to execute your tasks in keeping the relationship healthy and loving, as well as being able to say no to things you shouldn't be responsible for.... They don't tolerate harmful or inappropriate behavior.

(...sermon recap continued)

POINT #2: We should strive to not compromise our morals during dating.

Colossians 3: 4-5

And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.

- If our criteria for success is "to have fun" then our goal is to please our earthly desires.
- If our criteria for success is "to be loved" then we will often compromise to reach that goal.
- If our criteria for success is "to honor God" then we can enjoy the relationship and find true love without giving up on our values.

2 Timothy 2:22

Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.

POINT #3: We should only date those who we believe exhibit Christ-like characteristics and only stay with those who prove they will over time.

Colossians 3: 8-10

But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.

Colossians 3: 12-14

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

1. <https://www.christianbook.com/boundaries-in-dating-henry-cloud/9780310200345/pd/00342>
2. <https://www.christianbook.com/single-dating-engaged-married-navigating-modern/ben-stuart/9780718097899/pd/097899>