

WISE RELATIONSHIPS: WEEK 4

WHAT DO YOU ON A DATE?

BIG IDEA

Dating can be helpful or hurtful, and we've got to acknowledge that it's a big deal.

LESSON OVERVIEW

This week we'll talk about fun things to do on a date that deepen relationships, while avoiding things that are destructive to us as individuals and couples.

- Big Idea - Dating can be helpful or hurtful, and we've got to acknowledge that it's a big deal.
- Bible - Proverbs 3:5-6, Luke 17:5-6, Hebrews 11:6, Matthew 5:28, 1 John 1:9
- Building Blocks - Scripture, Video, Object Lesson, Discussion, Question, Brainstorming, Prayer.

WHAT?

VIDEO 

{This video is 5 minutes. We would recommend previewing it and showing a little each week of this series. The interviews are cute, and the continuity between lessons will be effective and endearing to your students.}

PROP: Ice Cream or Kale

[Follow these instructions, but play things up with your students. If you can pull this off without speaking, you'll add a cool humorous effect. If your group is large, you may need to narrated for those who are too far from the action.]

- *Set out two matching bowls, side-by-side.*
- *In one bowl, put a big handful of plain kale. (You can use something else, but kale gives you the funniest bit.)*
- *In the other bowl, put a few big scoops of ice cream. (You can add some yummy toppings for extra effect.)*
- *Ask students which bowl they would prefer.*

- *Riff on how kale is the "healthier option," how it's "good for you," and it's something you "should eat."]*
- If you asked the average person, they would describe God's plan for sex like a bowl of kale, and the world's plan for sex like a bowl of ice cream.
 - Kale is better for you, it's safe, plain, and bland.
 - Ice cream is a treat; it's celebratory, exciting, and better.
 - We **should** eat kale, but we **want** ice cream.
 - Even when we're eating kale, we're wishing it were ice cream.
 - We eat kale because we're disciplined, but we feel like we're missing out on something better.
- The truth is just the opposite.
 - God created sex.
 - God created humans to enjoy sex in a way that honors Him.
 - God's plan for sex involves intimacy at three levels: physical, emotional, and spiritual ... and it's fantastic!
- The kale/ice cream metaphor breaks down, because sex is not something to be consumed; but the metaphor does illustrate how upside-down our culture's thoughts about sex may be.
 - The world's understanding of sex is physical only, with some marginal understanding of the emotional aspect, and virtually zero understanding of the spiritual aspect.
 - Healthy Christ-followers understand all three dimensions of sex.
 - In our culture, sex is reduced to being one dimensional, but we're told it's fun and exciting and wild.
 - **But people have sex outside of God's design and experience temporary pleasure, yet they still feel unfulfilled, empty, distant, and shameful.**
 - In our culture, we're told a Biblical understanding of sex is old-fashioned, outdated, and repressed.
 - **But Christ-followers enjoy sex at a much more significant level, with as much physical pleasure as the world, but with added emotional, and spiritual fulfillment as well.**
- Culture gives us kale and tries to convince us it's ice cream. God gives us ice cream.

Transition

- Today's lesson isn't only about sex, but you can't talk about dating without some discussion of sex.
- We're going to talk about trusting God, setting good boundaries, and dating creatively.

SO WHAT?

It's About Trust

1. The word "faith" is super important in the Bible, but it's a complex word to understand in English.
2. If you substitute the word "trust" every time you read the word "faith," you'll understand what God is really asking.
 - *[Read Proverbs 3:5-6 and Luke 17:5-6. THEN read Luke 17:5-6 again but substitute the word "trust" for "faith" to illustrate the difference.]*
 - Jesus was saying that if we trusted Him just a tiny, little but, that would open up our lives to experience Him and the Kingdom of God in ways that would blow our minds.

SCRIPTURE - Faith and Trust

- Get in group of 3-5 - make sure no one gets left out - and find 5 passages in the New Testament *[You may need to explain/remind your students where the NT begins]* that talk about faith.
- In a moment we'll have you read them aloud twice - the first time as it's written, but the second time substituting the word "trust" for "faith."
- *[Give 1-2 minutes, then spend a few more minutes inviting student to share their verses.]*
- *[If no one quoted Hebrews 11:6, end with it.]*

[Continuing from "IT's About Trust" above:]

3. God says that we should trust Him, and we should trust that living the way he tells us is the best way to live.

4. If you don't trust him, the next few minutes will seem really silly to you. That's OK, I would just ask you to give some honest, mature thought to what we're saying.

It's About Lust

- Lust is a desire to do something that you can't fulfill in a Godly way.
 - One of the reasons looking at pornography is wrong is because it causes you to lust.
 - *[Depending on your group, this moment may lend itself for an "aside" about the legitimate danger of pornography. Maybe don't go into a lengthy discussion, but offer help for those who are struggling.]*
 - Looking at a girl's/guy's butt ... same thing. (Matthew 5:28)
- Sometimes people say, "I can't help it."
 - Martin Luther said, "You cannot keep birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair."
 1. Look away.
 - Maybe it's someone in person, maybe it's a TV show, maybe it's a social media post.
 - Make the choice to look away.
 2. Don't look back.
 - Sometimes we're blindsided by lust before we can react.
 - Repent, and don't look back.

DISCUSSION - How Far is Too Far?

- Before we discuss this question, let's get honest about the progression of physical intimacy: *[Feel free to tweak this as needed.]*
 - In-person intimacy
 - Knowing look
 - Innocent touch
 - Holding hands
 - Closed-mouth kiss
 - Open-mouthed kiss
 - Touching body parts with clothes on

- Touching body parts with clothes off
- Kissing body parts
- Intercourse
- If we're really honest, technology has changed this conversation, and we should also acknowledge the progression of virtual intimacy: *[Feel free to tweak this as needed.]*
 - Virtual intimacy
 - Show interest
 - Innocent flirting
 - Vague sexual comments
 - Explicit sexual messaging
 - Photos of body parts

We believe, "How far is too far?" is the wrong question on two levels:

- A more honest question is, "How far can I go before I lust?"
 - Reminder: lust is a desire to do something that you can't fulfill in a Godly way.
 - How far can I go before I have a desire to do something that I can't fulfill in a Godly way?
- For some of you, you've sexualized people for so long, you might not even be able to have a conversation without beginning to lust.
- In a dating relationship, for most of you, your "how far is too far" line is probably:
 - Physical - closed-mouth kissing
 - Virtual - innocent flirting
 - Anything beyond those has the potential to push you to a place that no longer honors God

We believe the best question is, "How can our relationship most honor God?"

- This question may seem ... old-fashioned, but at some point, we all must decide if we're serious about our relationship with God and if we really trust Him.

It's Really About Grace

- Dating is a sensitive subject, because many students have minimal guidance on Biblical dating habits.
- Some of you are in this conversation before your dating life begins.
- Many of you are in this conversation, but you've already made bad decisions, and you're wondering how you make sense of this.
- God is a God of forgiveness.
- *[Read 1 John 1:9. Read it again. One more time, slowly, emphasizing words like "forgive us" and "all."]*
- There are NO points of no return with God. God always forgives and restores.

PRAYER

[Students are likely dealing with stuff ... this is a great time to do a hard stop and pray for the students who carry shame about their past mistakes. Pray that they would receive God's forgiveness, they would forgive themselves, and they would accept God's offer to start over.]

NOW WHAT?

ACTIVITY - Dating Brainstorming

- We've spend a lot of time talking about what you should NOT do on a date. Let's spend as much time talking about what you COULD do on a date.
- *[Provide copies of http://homeword.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/101_Creative_Date_Ideas.pdf or create your own "Date Ideas" handout.]*
 - Take 60 seconds and circle all the ideas that you think would be fun to do.
 - *[Give them 1 minute.]*
 - Now get in groups of 3-5 - make sure no one gets left out - and compare your lists.
 - *[Give them 2 minutes.]*
 - Now see if you can come up with 10 more date ideas that are specific to where we live.
 - *[Give them 3 minutes to work. Then spend some time disucssing together. This can be a lot of fun, and an opportunity for you to connect with students in a different way.]*

PRAYER

- Each week of this series we closed by meditating on our identity in Christ.
- This week, I'd like to open a time to pray, and I'd like us to take 60 seconds and invite the Holy Spirit to remind us of things we've learned or commitments we've made through this series. Then, as many of you who feel comfortable, I'd like you to share a one sentence prayer - whatever you want it to be. When it seems like we're done, I'll close our time.
- *[Feel free to customize this time to make it most relevant for your group ... you know your student best!]*