

# Cuffing SZN: Before the DM

**Key Text:** 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

**Big Idea:** Look to become someone rather than merely look to be with someone.

## Series Intro:

This week, we are beginning our new dating series called Cuffing Szn! “Cuffing Season” is when a single person suddenly feels interested in finding a romantic relationship, typically during cold months or holidays. We will spend the next several weeks discussing the topic of dating.

Tonight’s message is called “Before the DM,” because DMing (direct messaging) is one of the ways relationships can begin, or attempt to begin, in today’s culture. Tonight we are focusing on the kind of person we are before we open those kind of DM’s.

## “Not There Yet”

Maybe you’re thinking, “I’m not there yet. I just can’t relate with the overwhelming desire to date someone.” If that’s you, then...

- 1) You are not missing out on much. Instead, you are sparing yourself plenty of heartache and emotional rollercoaster rides.
- 2) You might be swayed the moment you encounter a beautiful someone who is interested in you.

No matter your current interest in dating, dating experience, or lack of those things—at some point, you’re going to have to ask yourself, “What do I believe about dating?” “How do I want to go about dating?” and “What will be the things that are most important to me in dating?”

In this series, we want to help you think through these questions. We’re going to help guide you not merely in how to go about looking for someone, but in something far more important: **how to go about becoming someone**. And becoming someone is not contingent on dating. So, whether you are emotionally “in” or “out” of “cuffing season,” this series can help you in all seasons.

There are two categories we will talk about today when it comes to the beginning stage of dating

1. Common mistakes made in looking
2. Common successes in looking.

## Common Mistake #1: Buying in to the “Right Person” Myth

- The “right person” myth, - *“There’s a right person for you, and once you find your right person, everything will be all right”* (Andy Stanley, *The New Rules for Love Sex & Dating*).
- Once you find “your person,” your emptiness will be filled and your life will be made complete.
- You think life’s problems will fade in the light of the glory and beauty of that special someone.

Ladies, you know you’ve bought this lie when you spend a significant amount of your emotion and energy looking for a guy to sweep you off your feet, especially a guy with the looks and charm of Ryan Reynolds or Chris Evans.

Guys, you know you’ve bought the lie of the “right person” when you spend a significant amount of your time and energy looking for a girl who can captivate you like Ariana Grande or have the looks of Kylie Jenner.

The bottom line is this: If you believe that finding this right and perfect person will make everything alright, then you are buying into the common “right person” myth.

- There’s nothing wrong with looking for the right person.
- It would be terrible if we were committed to finding the wrong person!
- The problem is when we start believing that once we find our “soulmate,” then everything will be alright and we’ll ride off into the sunset like characters in a fairy tale.

There’s so much more to a relationship than merely finding the right person. There’s nothing wrong with looking for the right person, but there’s so much more to having a healthy and God-honoring relationship than merely finding “the right person.”

## Common Mistake #2: “Abandoning Our List”

Most of us have at least a mental list of things that would draw us toward someone in a romantic way. Some of our lists are very solid and maintain a high standard. For example, your list might look like this:

Ladies:

- Loves Jesus
- Respectful
- Hard worker
- Treats his mother well

Guys:

- Loves Jesus
- Dignity
- Smart
- Show cares for others

Most of have or could have a list of the values/virtues you want your significant other to exemplify, and it would be pretty solid!

- Most people will have a list
- The common mistake is sticking to the list
- Our list doesn't matter that much of we are willing to abandon it for the sake of attraction.

For example: Imagine a girl in your small group says, “I’ll only date a guy who is committed to following Jesus, and if he has big arms, then hey, that’s a plus!” Then a couple weeks later, you’re back in small group and they are saying how there’s this guy in their life who they have been texting with and they are pretty sure they like him. Someone in your group asks you, “Do you know much about his faith?” They respond, “Oh no, we haven’t really talked about that ... but I’m pretty sure he believes in God, and he’s always been there for me, plus he has big arms!”

- They had a list, and you had set priorities and qualities
- But once they experienced attraction, they dumped the list.

Attraction is important in dating someone. Nobody would date someone they think is ugly. However, attraction can be very misleading. Very few people are shallow enough to admit they would date a terrible person as long as they were hot. However, many people will date a person they know they shouldn’t because of physical attraction.

## **Common Ingredient for Success: Looking to Become Someone**

What’s the biggest difference between someone who experiences healthy and God-honoring relationships (understanding that nobody is perfect!), while minimizing regret, and someone who wants a “re-do” on many of their dating relationships?

The common ingredient is a person who is focused on becoming someone rather than merely being with someone.

There are many passages in Scripture that we can look at to help us understand how to become someone, but let’s look at a pretty popular chapter called “the love chapter” of the Bible: 1 Corinthians 13.

In this chapter, the writer, Paul, offers perspective on what “true love” looks like, and what we can strive for, as we look to become someone, rather than merely looking to be with someone.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 pg. 559

*4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

- *Love is patient ...*

A person who is patient is a person who is willing to wait—a person who doesn’t push someone into something or into quick decision-making. A patient person is one who doesn’t view decision-making as a race against time, but instead takes the time to think things through and talk things over. They are patient in trusting God’s timing in their life.

- *... love is kind...*

A person who is kind views someone else as more important than themselves. A kind person is a person whose decisions are no longer just based on their desires, but their decisions are in the best interest of someone else.

- *...It does not envy ...*

In order to know what love is, we also need to know what love is not. Love does not envy. A person who does not envy, doesn't make decisions based on what others have or want. A person who does not envy understands that a person they date does not belong to them permanently, so they treat and respect them accordingly.

- *... it does not boast...*

Boasting can be common in relationships. It's OK to be proud of your significant other in order to build him or her up. However, we often boast to build ourselves up, and that's a problem. This trait is very much tied into the next trait listed by Paul: pride.

- *...it is not arrogant...*

A person who is arrogant is proud, someone who constantly looking for ways to make themselves look better, especially at the expense of others. A person who is not proud seeks to add to or help others. A proud person seeks out a relationship based on what they can get from them.

- *...It is not rude...*

The opposite of being rude is to show respect. Love shows respect for another person because you treasure or value them or something they have done. Being rude is to not show them the respect they deserve.

- *...it does not insist on its own way...*

A person who is not self-seeking does not continue to push the physical boundaries of a significant other because he or she selfishly desires to "explore." Instead, a selfless person recognizes that the person they are dating is not their own but is instead a son or daughter of God. As a result, a selfless person treats others with the highest respect, simply because it's in the best interest of the other person.

- *...it is not irritable or resentful...*

It's OK if there is irritation from time to time, but it's not OK to be characterized by irritation, resentment, and anger. Love is not easily angered. In a healthy relationship, there's far more peace than there is anger or resentment. Become the person who is not easily angered and doesn't date people who are!

- *...Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

This is what true love looks like. Maybe some of us are thinking, "This type of love seems perfect ... and unrealistic." The reason this kind of love doesn't seem realistic is because our understanding of love is based on a flawed imitation of what true love is. True love is loyal to protect, trust, hope, and endure even when the other person does not deserve it.

## Conclusion

### 1 John 4:10

*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

- Jesus didn't date anyone, yet He embodies what true love looks like.
- Jesus didn't live His life looking for a soulmate, but He gave up His life so that we could experience true love from God.
- The more we seek to understand and embrace the love Jesus offers us, the more we'll be able to detect true love in the midst of poor imitations.

How cool would it be if you knew that right now your future spouse is a person committed to becoming a person of "the list" in 1 Corinthians 13? What if you knew that your future spouse is currently choosing to be fixated on becoming a person of the list, rather than merely finding someone who matches his or her own list? Wouldn't that be awesome? Wouldn't that motivate you to also focus on becoming someone for your future spouse?

What if we flipped lists today? What if we went from having a list describing "what I want in someone else" to a list describing the person I want to become myself?

You don't need a girlfriend or a boyfriend to become someone. In every relationship, you can strive for these characteristics. If you strive for the characteristics on this list, you'll begin to develop interest in those who are pursuing the same list, and you'll lose interest in those who aren't. Who knows? Maybe God will use your pursuit to become someone to eventually enable you to be with someone.

## Small Group Questions

- Why is important to think about dating relationships even in your not currently in a relationship or looking for one?
- In your own words what is “the right person myth?” In what ways do you sometimes believe this myth?
- What virtues or characteristics are on your “list” that you want your significant other to have?
- Would you say that is dangerous to abandon your “list”?
- Have you ever abandoned your “list” for the sake of being with someone? How did that turn out?
- What stood out to you most in the 1 Corinthians passage we read today?
- Of the two categories 1) looking to be with someone or 2) looking to become someone, which currently takes up more of your energy and emotion?
- Why is “becoming someone” more important than “looking for someone”?
- What is one characteristic of true love you have seen modeled by well by a parent, teacher, friend, etc?
- How can focusing on becoming someone instead of just looking for someone lead to better and healthier relationships?