Love, Dates & Heartbreaks:
Five Rules for Dating

Success is usually the result of preparation— not the product of good intentions or mere promises to succeed— and relationships are no exception to this rule. This is why it's so important to get serious about becoming the kind of person the person we're looking for is looking for, rather than simply hoping that once we find "the right person," everything will work out. But to do so, we'll have to examine the fine print of what Jesus asks of his followers in relationships. Because if you don't want a relationship like the majority of relationships, you can't date like the majority of daters.

Start Talking

1. When you find yourself "people-watching," in a restaurant or shopping center, what qualities immediately stick out to you about the relationships you observe?
2. I once tried to run a half-marathon with almost zero training, and needless to say, things didn't go very well. Have you ever found yourself completely unprepared for a performance of some kind?
3. When you see a couple in public, how can you tell when they're on a first date?
4. What's the dumbest pickup line you've ever used/had used on you?

Looking Back

5. For those of us in relationships, when did you find opportunities to intentionally believe the best about your partner this week?
6. Did you make any progress in viewing situations from the perspective of other people, reminding yourself that their behavior makes sense *to them*?
7. Reviewing Paul's description of the qualities of love, what did you do to address your weaker points (for instance— impatience, selfishness, irritability, a tendency to "keep score," etc) this week?

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What About You?

8. If you could go back and speak to yourself right before you first entered the dating scene, what would you tell "you?" What positive principles would you pass on? What would you advise yourself to avoid?
9. What qualities probably serve as the best indicators of long-term potential in a dating partner? On the other hand, what qualities should be classified as, "red flags?"
10. Why do you think so many early dating relationships devolve into what Ayden Avery classified as a game "to see who can care the least?"
11. While the rituals around picking a partner have probably been difficult since the beginning of time, why do you think dating has become so much more complicated recently?
12. Where do you see current dating culture deviating from practices that lead to human dignity and relational flourishing? Where do you see dating culture improving on some of the harmful practices from the past?

Look It Up

Read the Following Passages: 1 Corinthians 13: 4 -11

13. How can the qualities that Paul defines as "love," translate into actions in dating relationships?
14. When you view Paul's definition of love, where does it differ from the ways our culture defines love? On the other hand, where do the two definitions converge?
15. Andy said that telling the truth is almost always better than protecting somebody's feelings by avoiding uncomfortable conversations. Why do you think this is the case?
16. Are there any exceptions? In what situations do you think it might be better to protect feelings than tell the truth?
17. Why do you think dating tends to surface our worst insecurities?

Putting It All Together

1. Fear of risk and rejection dominate much of our dating behavior, causing us to communicate without clarity or engage in relational power struggles to purvey the impression that we "care the least." What can we do to avoid letting fear take the driver's seat?
2. Which of your relational 'muscles,' need to get in shape? The courage muscle? Self-control? Honor? Planning and Prepping? What can you do to exercise it?
3. How can you communicate more clearly this week in order to honor the dignity of other human beings? Where has your language been sloppy or evasive? What would it look like to do better?
4. Are there any areas of life in which you are mistreating someone, even if they don't seem to notice or mind? What would it look like to make it right?

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