

“Should I Date With Marriage in Mind?”

*Remember: The goal of small group is 100% participation. Everyone talks.



OPEN IT

- If you could create a dating profile for yourself based on one completely non-romantic quality—something funny, quirky, or unexpected—what would you put in your profile?
- Kendall did “two-a-days” to find a church. If you had to visit two completely different churches this Sunday, what would you be looking for before deciding, “This is a place I could belong and contribute”?

READ IT:

- **Timothy 4:12** — Godly character: speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity
- **2 Corinthians 6:14** — Being “yoked” with unbelievers
- **Philippians 2:3–4** — Humility and considering the interests of others
- **Galatians 5:22–23** — The fruit of the Spirit
- **Ephesians 4:29** — Speech that builds others up
- **1 Thessalonians 4:3–6** — Holiness, sexual purity, self-control, and honoring others
- John 8:10-11 – Grace, forgiveness, and repentance
- **Proverbs 4:23** — Guarding your heart
- **Matthew 19:4–5** — Marriage and “the two becoming one flesh”

EXPLORE IT:

- **Character Before Chemistry. 1 Timothy 4:12** 1 gives five qualities: speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Which of these would be easiest for someone to

appear to have while dating, and which would be hardest to fake over time? What does that teach us about discerning character?

- **The Fruit Test.** Read **Galatians 5:22–23**. Imagine you're interested in someone and they're attractive, funny, successful, and really easy to talk to—but you're beginning to notice very little patience, kindness, gentleness, or self-control. How much should that matter? What might the passage teach us about looking beyond chemistry?
- **Running the Same Race to the Same Place at the Same Pace.** **2 Corinthians 6:14** uses the picture of being “yoked” together. What do you think that image helps us understand about choosing someone who shares your faith? For those who aren't dating, where else in life does being “yoked” to someone with very different values create challenges?
- **What Does Love Actually Look Like?** Read **Philippians 2:3–4**. What would a relationship look like if both people genuinely asked, “How can I look out for this person's good?” rather than primarily asking, “What am I getting from this relationship?” Where could you practice that kind of love in your relationships right now?
- **Listen to Their Words.** Read **Ephesians 4:29**. What can someone's everyday speech reveal about their character? Think beyond how they talk to you—how they talk about waiters, exes, parents, friends, people they disagree with, or people who can't do anything for them.
- **Purity Is About More Than a Rule.** Read **1 Thessalonians 4:3–6**. The message described God's boundaries around sexuality as God's care for us, not merely God's control over us. How does that change the way you think about sexual boundaries? Why can physical intimacy make discernment more difficult?
- **Grace and Truth.** Read **John 8:10–11**. Jesus tells the woman both “**neither do I condemn you**” and “**go now and leave your life of sin.**” Why do you think we sometimes find it easier to emphasize one of those statements without the other? What might it look like to receive Jesus' grace while still taking His invitation to repentance seriously?
- **Discernment vs. Consumption.** The message repeatedly contrasts discernment with consumption. What do you think it means to approach dating as discernment rather than consumption? Where else in life are we tempted to ask, “What can I get?” rather than “Is this something I should commit myself to?”
- **Independence Without Isolation.** The message says we should date as individuals, but not in isolation. Why is it important that parents, friends, pastors, and small groups don't choose our spouse for us—but that we also don't ignore the people who love us as we choose? What can healthy accountability look like?

- **Stop Dating Jesus.** The message ends by saying that Jesus doesn't want to be treated like a casual relationship we maintain only when it's comfortable or convenient. What are some ways Christ followers can unintentionally treat Jesus that way? What might wholehearted commitment to Jesus look like in an ordinary week?

DO IT:

- **Take a Character Inventory.** Spend 15 minutes with **1 Timothy 4:12** and Galatians 5:22–23. Instead of evaluating someone else, evaluate yourself. Choose one quality God may want to develop in you and identify one concrete way you can practice it this week.
- **2. Have the Clarity Conversation.** If you're dating, identify one area of your relationship that feels unnecessarily ambiguous—expectations, exclusivity, future direction, boundaries, communication, or something else. Have an honest, respectful conversation rather than allowing assumptions to make the decisions for you.
- **Invite Someone Into Your Circle.** Choose one trusted, spiritually mature person who loves you enough to tell you the truth. Ask them: “Is there anything you see in the way I'm approaching relationships that I might not be seeing?” Listen without immediately defending yourself.
- **Practice “Discernment, Not Consumption”** This week, notice one area where you instinctively ask, “What can I get from this?” Turn the question around: “What would it look like to contribute, serve, or commit here?” Practice the shift in your family, church, work, friendships, or dating life.
- **Receive Grace and Walk Forward.** If there is an area of your relational life where you carry regret, shame, or failure, spend time with **John 8:10–11** this week. Thank Jesus for His forgiveness, confess anything He is asking you to leave behind, and identify one concrete step toward repentance and healthier relationships.

PRAY IT:

God, thank You for caring not only about who we love, but about the kind of people we are becoming as we love others. Give us wisdom to recognize what is true, courage to establish healthy boundaries, humility to receive the counsel of people who love us, and patience to trust Your timing. Help us become people marked by faith, love, self-control, purity, and genuine concern for others, so that in every relationship we can honor You and move toward the kind of commitment You desire for us. Amen.