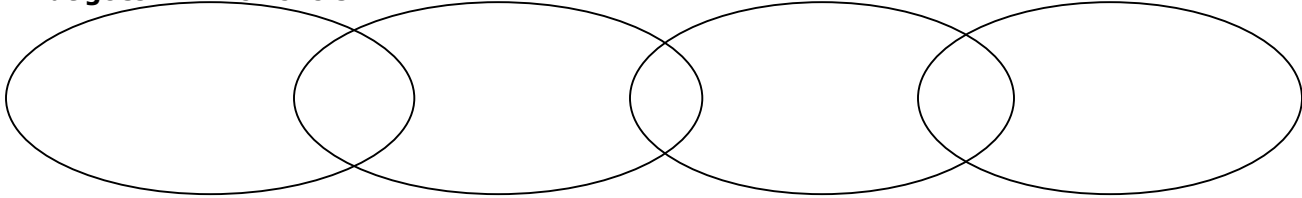


**Master | Mission | Mate**

From Randy Pope’s book, Million Dollar Mate, you must get your Master figured out first. This answers the question “Whose am I?” Then you need to figure out why you’re here on this earth. What are God’s purposes for you. Then you are ready for a mate. Sure, your mate bears on and somewhat changes your mission. But you need to be headed in a direction before you find your mate.

**What goes in which circle?**



The above circles are only meant to be a graphic to visualize how covenants work. There are different things that go in each covenant in all of our lives, but especially true to our topic of dating, sex and marriage. These circles are – left to right – friendship, dating, engagement and marriage. The operating thought is that the Bible says sex is reserved for the marriage covenant alone. That when you pass from engagement to marriage through vows, you are then able to give freely of your body, in fact you are commanded to do so. If you backtrack from there using that as a paradigm, what should go in the other circles? We discussed this in our last session.

**What is Dating?**

Enjoying the comforts and pleasures of the opposite sex?

A tryout for marriage? Like finding a good pair of shoes with more “fun” along the way?

The intimacy of romance – both physical and emotional – is one that binds two people tightly together. This involves both joy and pain. This is what a relationship is, however. You can’t escape that part of it.

Dating is about intentionality. Are you moving forward toward something? There are only two outcomes – break up or get married.

**CS Lewis**

Eros > Sturges > Agape > Philos

Philos > Sturges > Agape > Eros

**Randy Pope puts it this way:**

Physical/personality > Spiritual

Spiritual > Physical/Personality

So often we start with the wrong things. I suggested last week that we should start with friendship and then move from there toward marriage. That progression is indicated in the second (right-hand) of CS Lewis’ words. Sturges means “cool factor” or what you are into what that person – he’s a skateboard dude, she’s a computer nerd, she loves old sweaters, he is kind to animals and that you have a connection or comfort with that. We too often start with eros and struges and then try to marry that person and make him or her our friend later.

Pope says a similar thing, but says instead of the physical or personality indicators, you should be looking at spiritual indicators to see if you like that person.

These top ten lists would be an interesting exercise if you would think through them. The first is what you really want. I would guess if you are really honest, you’d be more shallow than you think. Red hair, cup size, how tall, etc. Your idealized top ten is what you would say you want. Even that isn’t very thoughtful, but there might be some good stuff on there.

**Actual Top Ten – what you really think**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**Idealized Top Ten – what you would say you want**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Here is more of what I want you to be looking for. Notice there are no physical characteristics on this list! We are very caught up in the physical so much so that we miss people who would be great matches for us because they don't match what we want for eros or sturges. But those things won't last. Look for things that will last, the true character of believing in Jesus and walking with him. I could put another 10 or 20 on here but these are the ones that came to mind.

### **A Better Top Ten**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Loves Jesus                         | 2 Cor 6:14, Julie story, see last comment in "advice" section |
| 2. Is in church and community          | Hebrews 10:24-25, Galatians 6:1                               |
| 3. Kindness and respect                | Ephesians 5, 1 Cor 13   |
| 4. Generous with time and money        | 2 Cor 9:7, Matthew 6:1-4                                      |
| 5. Industrious, has a plan and mission | Genesis 2   |
| 6. Loves kids                          | Matthew 19:14   |
| 7. Repents early and often             | 1 John 1  |
| 8. Teachable, has integrity            | James 1:21  |
| 9. Character and self-control          | Fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-24                        |
| 10. Displays gospel confidence         | Ephesians 2:8-9, Galatians 4:1-7                              |

### **REPENTANCE | REPENTING | REPENTER? 1 John 1:7-10**

I think, aside from loving Jesus, the biggest thing you should look for is – Is this person someone who repents. Does he say he's sorry. Does she say, "Will you please forgive me"? When confronting with something by the Bible or at church or with a mentor or with others, do I see a pattern and attitude of repentance or do I see defensiveness, bitterness, lashing out, anger or ignoring? Does this person boast in her good works or in Christ alone for salvation in a day to day living?

### **Advice from your peers – these were students of mine who were just where you are but are now married.**

*Steve* That it is a waste of time if marriage is not a serious possibility with that specific person.

*I'd probably be more intentional in my friendships with Christian females. I'd also feel less sorry for myself.*

*Think carefully about your future goals and pick partners it wouldn't be hell to live with. Be confident and try to understand that getting turned down isn't the end of the world - though it's basically impossible to learn until after the knowledge is useless without also becoming a total jerk.*

*Date nerds.*

*Deborah* My expectations (mostly unrealistic and/or unacknowledged by me) not being met. This is true in marriage too. Figure out what your expectations are, figure out if they are realistic or fair, conform them to a Biblical worldview and share them with the other person.

*I dated to feel good about myself, or to feel wanted by someone. This is a totally insecure and bad reason to date. I regret spending so much time fantasizing about it. I didn't necessarily think about sex, but about what the emotional intimacy would be like. Being known.*

*It's easy to turn dating/marriage into an idol. Don't do this.*

*Give the boys a break. Don't read into everything. Be cool. Hang out with girls.*

*Hang out in groups a lot. Group dates (even if they are not labeled as such) are well worth the time.*

*Spend a lot of time with married couples, so you get to see pictures of working and/or non-working relationships. Talk to married women a lot.*

*To the guys: Ask girls out. Tell them if you like them. If you call her a lot, assume that she thinks that you like her. "Friends don't hold friends hands." Man up.*

*What's true about you, and your nature, is true about anyone you are going to date. They are not going to be perfect. That should open up some of your choices. Anyone that acknowledges that, is worth a date or two.*

*If you have a "regrettable past", don't cling to it, learn from it. Cling to Christ and the new you that He is creating. Do the same for the new person you are dating.*

**Kim** We basically became so absorbed in one another and the excitement of what was going on, that we neglected all other friendships. We became a world unto ourselves and thought we were self-sufficient. We still struggle with this, actually.

That I'm not a product of my past, that I can't use the excuse of "that's the way I was raised, that's the way I was brought up, that's the way we communicate in my family...". That's one way that my husband sanctifies me. He teaches me about grace and the gospel and reminds me that I'm not who I once was and that I don't have to "perform" in order to fit into whatever box or mold someone may think they have me in.

Guard your hearts. Pursue friendships with guys, but don't be constantly wondering if this one is "the one." I wasted so much time and energy and heartache following after or just dreaming about what/who I thought was best for me. God knows so much better than we do what we need.

Be gentlemen and treat us like ladies. Find someone who treats his wife well and learn from him. Be vulnerable with your guy friends so you will know how to be vulnerable with your future wife

**Bob** Date friends. Be involved with other Christians and find someone who has a similar heart for seeing the kingdom advance. Not to say that you are marrying/dating someone just like yourself, but kingdom vision is important. It gives you both something to look forward and work toward together.

- really not much good happens past midnight.

- if your friends don't like her, you don't need to either

Being too quick to make decisions, say things that I couldn't possibly know if they are true or not (like, "I love you"). The various physical relationships are also not something that I look back upon with great excitement. It also affects your spouse, which is even less fun.

I wouldn't try and date the hottest girls I could find. I would listen to those wiser/older than me who were telling me that looks change. By the time your 40, everyone looks the same anyway. I would date girls that I knew something about rather than just going primarily on looks.

It is good to take a risk and ask girls out. None of the texting/IM'ing crap for 4 weeks and then asking her out over text/IM. That is cheap and the girl would rightly feel that way (or maybe not, b/c maybe a girl has never been asked out face to face or even through audible words?). It is good to date so that you can find out what things are important to you. If you start talking about important issues (family, various theological stances/issues, ethical issues), you will learn more about yourself, and also the type of person the Lord may be calling you to be with.

That I say too much without filtering it or running it by friends/pastors. I learned that I thought with my dinky and not with my head. I learned that I took a lot of advice from others and failed to consider it/think through it/pray about it before going and talking to the girl about the issues. Not good. That made for a lot of weird conversations. I learned that I was in most dating relationships to make myself feel/look good. If she wasn't making me feel good, then I didn't see a good reason to stay. I learned, in a good dating relationship (=the only good one I've had, the one that worked!), you respect and care for the person you date above your own desires. I also learned that I may not win every argument, and that is a good thing. I learned that you may have to be patient and fight for the best thing

Don't look at porn, and don't mentally undress every girl you see. This ruins you. Look at your shoes if you have to. I remember you rebuking me for walking into a room and assigning a number to every girl in the room and only talking to the 7 and ups. It was true. I got my identity from who I surrounded myself with. I had to repent. I still have to repent of this.

Ask a guy's friends about his relationship with the Lord. The guy is going to lie to you in order to get into your spiritual pants. He needs to love Jesus more than he loves you. If he is infatuated with you, then he likely doesn't have too much energy to give to his relationship with the Lord.

Repentance and forgiveness is THE way of life. If you can't apologize and realize that you screw up while you date, then that is not good practice for marriage. The gospel calls us to a life of good works, and that includes laying down your life for others, and not sinning against others as it comes to physicality. The gospel also frees you up to date and screw up and realize that there is grace if you find yourself having sinned against someone. That said, repentance requires turning from sin and fleeing from every hint of immorality.

**Joseph** Lack of accountability is a terrible idea and we certainly lacked accountability. I think dating could be done well if it's done within the context of a community who knows both parties and both parties are willing to be known.

Talk to men who aren't your age about dating. Make them take you to coffee and ask every question you've wanted to ask. Don't leave anything out. Put yourself out to be known by the men of your church and ask them to say pointed things to you. Get to know your session, and your pastor if possible; let them know you. Confess your sin, thoughts, doubts, struggles, etc. Be open to discipline.

**William** What advice would you give college students of your same gender?

Spend more time with your buddies. Allow the girl that you date to cultivate the friendships that she has. Slow down. Tell someone you trust everything that is going on in your dating relationship. Involve others in this part of your life.

- What advice would you give college students of the opposite gender?

Calm down. This is not that big of a deal. You will probably get married. Maybe not to the guy you think you will. Take the pressure off of yourself for a little while. Become more of a Calvinist. It will relax you.

Never, never, never, never spend the night at a guy's house. Tell someone you trust (not 9 sorority sisters at a time) all about your relationship. Preferably someone who can tell you hard things. Ask for advice.

- Do you think how you dated affected your marriage (if you're married)? If so, how?

*How my wife and I dated has affected our marriage a great deal. We began to pretend we were married within a few months of beginning to date. The tension that resulted from that disconnected reality can still be felt today. The tension of sleeping together was why we fought so much while dating. It helped establish the communication patterns that we are still trying to shed.*

*We really didn't think that we'd act the same as a married couple relative to how we acted as a dating couple. That was stupid. We were the same people, only with more opportunity to show what was really in our hearts: Instability, Mistrust, Unbelief, Unsurety, Anxiety.*

*- How does the gospel apply to dating?*

*The gospel defines our identity. How we view who we are in X points us toward a course of action in dating. Jesus' death and resurrection with my name on his heart means that all my past dating missteps are washed away. When I believe that, I have a chance to refuse to act like old Wade would have acted, relative to a gf.*

*The anxiety I had about having/keeping/not having a gf was directly related to my identity. It certainly was the gospel + gf that made me feel whole. Oftentimes, it was just gf + nothing that made me feel that way. But it obviously didn't satisfy me. I kept cheating on my gfs, looking for new ways to find acceptance. It was much like porn. Needing to conquest again and again. The gospel is the cure for all of that wandering.*

**Jane** *Trust God and don't date non-Christians. I speak from personal experience of being highly tempted to date an amazing non-Christian guy when I was a grad student and feeling like this was my chance at "love" and if I passed it over I would probably never get married. The Christian guys I knew were totally uninterested in me and I was basically only ever asked out by non-Christians during my 7 years at school...and this guy was really extraordinary and we got on like a house on fire...but I spent about 2 years saying no and then he finally went back to America. 2 years later, God sent me a Christian guy who was also a scientist, also American, also tall and thin and blonde and on the same scholarship...and now we are married...and we live in the same town as the non-Christian guy and hang out regularly! God has a sense of humor.*

**What is the chief end of man?** Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

**What is the chief end of dating?** Dating's chief end to glorify God and enjoy him forever.