

Where's the Line Part 3 – physical intimacy

Gav will go through a story and scenario first with the youth then give short background to topic of physical intimacy. From there it's up to you where you go. Below you will find a whole load of resources and questions for you to choose from. You will though need to find some of your own scriptures that you believe to be relevant and think what line of questioning to take with your group. This one will take you some prep time but hopefully the below will give you a good base to go from and some ideas. Feel free to give me a yell with any questions and be prepared to share your others verses of scripture and ideas with the leadership team at the meeting beforehand. Should be a good discussion this one! We will finish with a quick sum up from me.

Some key verses to look at – add your own too that you think are relevant!!!

- I Corinthians 6:9-7:19 (command to be pure, seriousness of sexual sin and instructions regarding marriage)
- Thessalonians 4:1-8 (do not wrong or defraud one another in relationships — by implying a relationship or commitment by your words or conduct that does not actually exist)
- Song of Solomon 2:7 ("do not awaken love before it pleases" — i.e. before the proper time, meaning marriage)
- Proverbs 6:20-7:27 (warning to avoid sexual sin and foolish relationships)
- James 1:13-15 (temptation is to be taken very seriously)
- Romans 13:8-14 (love others, work for their soul's good; don't look to please self)
- Romans 14:1-15:7 (favor others, not self ... value what's good to their souls)
- I Timothy 5:1-2 (treat single women as sisters in Christ, with absolute purity)
- Titus 2:1-8 (young men and women should focus on self-control/godliness)
- John 14:15 (if you love Christ, you will obey His commands — read: above your own desires — and live biblically)
- Philippians 4:8-9 (whatever is pure... think about such things)
- Ephesians 5 (tells us that there must not be "even a hint of sexual immorality" among the followers of Christ)

A Physical Intimacy Scale

1. Embracing and hand-holding.
2. Cuddling and gentle caressing.
3. Polite kissing on the lips.
4. Passionate total mouth kissing.
5. Kissing away from lips (neck etc.)
6. Touching above the clothes line underwear areas
7. Touching under the clothes but not underwear areas
8. Intimate touching around underwear areas
9. Sex of any form

Interesting information, stats, thoughts

- 8 out of 10 first-time teen sexual experiences last six months or less
- less than 1% of high school sweethearts end up marrying
- Physical intimacy outside of marriage seems to breed a lack of trust in the couple. The divorce rate in people that live together before marriage is over 75%, possibly because there was no commitment or trust when the intimacy began?
- An online survey asked 1,000 females between the ages of 16 and 24 about their sexual habits and attitudes. The research was conducted for a pharmaceutical company.
 - o About 83 per cent of those surveyed said they were having sex.
 - o 45 per cent said, when they decided to have sex, it was a very last-minute decision or they didn't think anything about it at all beforehand."
- What is it that fuels our desire for physical intimacy in the first place?
 - o We have a need to feel good about how our bodies look and feel and what they can do
 - Body image
 - sensual pleasure from taste, touch, sight, hearing, and smell as part of being alive.
 - Satisfying skin hunger—The need to be touched and held by others in loving, caring ways is often referred to as *skin hunger*. Adolescents typically receive considerably less touch from their parents than do younger children. Many teens satisfy their *skin hunger* through close physical contact with peers. Sexual intercourse may sometimes result from a teen's need to be held, rather than from sexual desire.
 - Fantasy—The brain also gives people the capacity to have fantasies about sexual behaviors and experiences. Adolescents often need help understanding that sexual fantasy is normal and that one does not have to act upon sexual fantasies.
 - o We have need for sexual intimacy which is the ability to be emotionally close to another human being and to accept closeness in return
 - Sharing & caring intimacy is what makes personal relationships rich and that brings emotional closeness. To have true intimacy with others, a person must open up and share feelings and personal information.
 - Intimacy requires emotional vulnerability, on the part of each person in the relationship.
 - Often we try to get more emotional closeness by getting physically closer yet this cannot satisfy these emotional needs

Biblical Dating vs. Modern Dating

We may define biblical dating as a method of introduction and carrying out of a pre-marital relationship between a single man and a single woman:

1. That begins (maybe) with the man approaching and going through the woman's father or family;
2. that is conducted under the authority of the woman's father or family or church; and
3. that always has marriage (or at least a determination regarding marriage to a specific person) as its direct goal.

We may basically define modern dating as a method of introduction and carrying out of a pre-marital relationship between a single man and a single woman:

1. that begins with either the man or the woman initiating with the other;
2. that is conducted outside the formal oversight or authority of either person's family or church; and
3. that may or may not have marriage as its goal and is often purely "recreational" or "educational."

Now, the biblical support for the modern approach to dating, well, there isn't any. The very idea of extended romantic or sexual involvement outside of marriage doesn't even appear in Scripture unless it is described as illicit (sinful). Furthermore, it doesn't even appear in any society, western or otherwise, in any systematic way until the 20th century! While the principles supporting biblical dating have their beginnings with the very structure of the family, modern dating has its origins with the sexual revolution of the 1960s. It is brand new, and yet, seemingly, it is all we know.

So what's the real difference? Here are some fundamentals:

Modern dating philosophy assumes there will be several intimate romantic relationships in a person's life before marriage. It advocates "playing the field" to determine "what one wants" in a mate. The goal of Biblical dating is to be emotionally & physically intimate with only 1 member of opposite sex, your spouse.

Modern dating tends to be egalitarian (no differences between men/women in spiritual/emotional "wiring" or God-given roles). Biblical dating is 'complimentarian' (God has created men & women differently & has ordained each of these spiritual equals to play different & valuable roles in the church & family).

Modern dating tends to assume that you will spend a great deal of time together (most of it alone). Biblical dating tends to encourage time spent in group activities or with other people the couple knows well.

Modern dating tends to assume that you need to get to know a person more deeply than anyone else in the world to figure out whether you should be with him or her. The biblical approach suggests that real commitment to the other person should precede such a high level of intimacy.

Modern dating tends to assume that a good relationship will "meet all my needs and desires," and a bad one won't — it's essentially a self-centered approach. Biblical dating approaches relationships from a completely different perspective — one of ministry and service and bringing glory to God.

Modern dating tends to assume that there will be a high level of emotional involvement in a dating relationship, and some level of physical involvement as well. Biblical dating assumes NO physical intimacy, and more limited emotional intimacy outside of marriage.

Modern Dating assumes that what I do and who I date as an adult is entirely up to me and is private (my family or the church has no formal or practical authority). Biblical dating assumes a context of spiritual accountability, as is true in every other area of the Christian life.

Basically, we can make three general statements about modern dating vs. biblical dating in terms of their respective philosophies:

1. Modern dating seems to be about "finding" the right person for me (as my friend Michael Lawrence has written on this site); biblical dating is more about "being" the right person to serve my future spouse's needs and be a God-glorifying husband or wife.
2. In modern dating, intimacy precedes commitment. In biblical dating, commitment precedes intimacy.
3. The modern dating approach tells us that the way to figure out whether I want to marry someone is to act like we are married. If we like it, we make it official. If we don't, then we go through something emotionally — and probably physically — like a divorce. In biblical dating, Scripture guides us as to how to find a mate and marry, and the Bible teaches, among other things, that we should act in such a way so as not to imply a marriage-level commitment until that commitment exists before the Lord.

Some question ideas

NB: add your own that are relevant to your group. Think through what their answers might be and how to follow those up, how to push deeper and get them thinking and questioning what many perhaps have never really thought through before

- 1) Talk in your groups about what decisions you made in the story as Tom or Jessica. Why did you make those decisions, what influenced you?
- 2) What are your thoughts on dating? What is the purpose of it for you? Do you think it's a good thing to have had multiple girlfriends/boyfriends before you marry?
- 3) Do you already have a line in the sand, if so, where is it? Is there anything that would change that line for you?
 - a. What if you had been going out for 5 years?
 - b. What if you were engaged but not getting married for another yet?
 - c. What if there lines were different and it was causing your relationship a lot of grief? Would you bend your line at all?
- 4) Ask those whose line is kissing or beyond questions such as:
 - a. What is the purpose of that kissing or intimate touching?
 - b. Are you really doing it to care for the other person, to honour God? Or is it because you want the gratification, your physical desires to be fulfilled?
 - c. Do you think the person you eventually marry (assuming it is someone different) would be glad that you have shared yourself in that way?
 - d. Do you think you need to have this level of physical intimacy for them to feel loved, for you to feel loved? If so, why is it that you can feel so loved and accepted by a friend and have a real intimate friendship without any kissing or sexual contact?
- 5) One writer suggests that the motive for dating or courting should be marriage. His practical advice that he gives the singles at his church is, if you cannot happily see yourself as a married man (or woman) in less than one year, then you are not ready to date. What do you think about this and where he is coming from?
- 6) In many cultures today and in western cultures as little as only 30 years ago, who you married or went out with is/was your parents' decision and while feelings of love and connection may have come into it, they weren't and in many cases still aren't the primary factor deciding who you marry or go out with. Why do you think this was? What are the benefits of this approach. What are the things you don't like about it and what does this say about your motives?

Scenario responses

Letter 1: Ann

Dear Ann,

I've gotten myself into a mess. I'm a 16 year-old girl who is having sex with my boyfriend, who is 18. I'll call him Ed. I'm what you'd call a nice girl, I think. I don't smoke or do drugs or any of that stuff. My grades are good. After Ed and I had been dating for a few months, it just seemed natural to have sex with him.

He didn't pressure me. I wanted it as much as he did. We're using birth control pills and condoms, so I'm not worried about getting pregnant. What I'm worried about is how I feel now about Ed and me. I don't want to keep on doing this. I told Ed I want to stop, but he doesn't. I don't enjoy going out with him anymore, because I know every date will mean more sex.

My parents know what's going on, and my dad can hardly look at me. The other day, he said he wanted to have Ed arrested for statutory rape. Some days, I wish he would. It looks as if it's the only way I can get out of this situation. I thought I was in love with Ed, but now I know it was more physical than anything else. I had heard people say it's dumb to have sex at my age, but I wouldn't listen. I'd do anything to undo what I've done.

Amy

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1. Give Amy words of encouragement and support. Often a person in this situation feels a bit hopeless, like they might not be able to stop even though they want to. They may even feel like "damaged goods." Part of your job also is to point out the positives, the benefits of relationships that leave sex out.
2. Offer concrete and practical advice and information. If she continues the relationship with Ed, what will she have to say and do? What risky situations will they need to avoid? What policies or strategies will they need to follow? Be specific. If she breaks up with Ed, what advice can you give her for future dating relationships? What should her personal policies be? Be specific.

Letter 2: Dwayne

Hey man, I still can't believe it that I got it, you know... herpes. What a drag. I get blister-like sores on the skin of my groin and partly at the base of my penis every couple months now, and it hurts like h___ for a week or two. I've been told by a doc that I'll have to deal with this for the rest of my life. Man, I thought this would never happen to me. And I'm only 15!

I've only had sex with Jess ,and we're not even together any more. Now there's a girl I really like. Her name's Alyssa. She's not like the others. She's got a lot of self-respect. What should I do? Should I tell Jess? Do I tell Alyssa if we start going out? When should I tell her, and what will she think of me then? Will she even want to be with me?

I know I pushed pretty hard with Jess. I'm afraid I'll do the same thing with Alyssa. I'm a normal guy with feelings. How could something that seemed so simple make my life so complicated? Wondering about it all in Cleveland,

Dwayne

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1. Give Dwayne some words of wisdom and support. What does he need to know? What does he truly think about girls who want to maintain their virginity? What are the advantages for teen guys with relationships not in a hurry? What are the disadvantages and risks of sexual relationships for guys?
2. Offer concrete and practical advice and information: If he starts to go out with Alyssa, what will he have to say and do, and when should he tell her? What risky situations will they need to avoid? What policies or strategies will they need to follow? Be specific. What does he need to do about Jess?

Letter 3: Elesha

Dear Jena, I don't like the way things are. But who am I to complain—and it's not like anyone else is doing anything different than me. But somehow I think it should be different. Sometimes I have this dream about having a man who really treats me well, that lets me know I'm precious all the time—not just when we're alone and having sex.

And about sex—I don't know. I always thought it should be beautiful, but it doesn't feel that way. I thought it would keep him with me, but I know he's got his ho's on the side. You just can't expect a guy to be loyal. Can't trust nobody these days—not even your girlfriends. My friends say they are all sick of guys playing them. They say it's their turn to play these guys. They even trying to get my man.

It's messed up. And this relationship is just so complicated. If I had the chance to go back in time, I would have waited for sex.

Wishing for something better,

Elesha

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1. Give Elesha words of encouragement and support. Plant seeds of hope. A person in this situation can feel a bit hopeless, like there's no way to change and go against the current. It may seem like there's no options in her world. Part of your job also is to point out the benefits of relationships that leave sex out, and how others, even guys, may secretly admire a girl who respects herself and says no. What messages does she need to tell and retell herself?
 2. Offer concrete and practical advice and information. If she continues her relationship, what will she have to say and do? Be specific. If she breaks up with him, what advice can you give her for future dating relationships? What should her personal policies be? What risky situations will she need to avoid? Be specific.
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