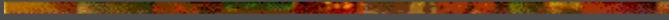




Friendship, Dating, and Facts of Life



Friends and Friendships

"I was here. Did anybody notice?"
(carved into a lunch table in a school cafeteria)

The Power of Friends

- who are your best friends?
 - have you told them that they are your best friend? (why?)
 - how did the friendship develop?
 - what qualities do they have that makes them a friend?
 - how is your daily behavior different because of your friendships?
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Five things that partly explain the power of friendships

- **Companionship:** Adolescents are moving out of the family as exclusive social environment
- **Belonging:** friendships give them a sense of belonging in the social world
- **Identity:** teenagers interact with each other to bounce off ideas about who they are becoming
- **Culture:** adolescents learn about the larger society as well as themselves
- **Experimentation:** Friendship environments allow youth to try behavior that is not allowed in adult world.

Three ways to view friendship

- Peer pressure (positive or negative)
 - Influence shift from parents to peers (and back to parents)
 - Faux Family
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What God desires of our friendships

- that we choose our friends wisely
 - that we be the kind of person who would make a good friend
 - "A man who would have friends must show himself friendly" (Proverbs)
 - "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (Jesus)
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Negative Peer Pressure

- No respecter of age
 - Most intense in adolescent years
 - Parental absence allows peer pressure to fill the vacuum
 - Parenting style plays a peer pressure role
 - Lack of self-confidence makes a teenager more susceptible
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Peer pressure pressures to:

- Have a perfect body
 - Dress and groom in style
 - Be socially active
 - Use alcohol or drugs
 - Be sexually active
 - Get bad or good grades
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Good peer pressure: peer ministry

- How many youth do you come in contact with on a daily basis?
- How many youth do your youth come in contact with on a daily basis?
- Unless you work in a high school or middle school, you probably come in direct contact with less than 10 teenagers a day

Rationale for Peer Ministry

- The ministry is theirs when they are involved in the process
 - It is excellent training for them for current and future involvement in church leadership
 - It will utilize the talents and gifts which God has given them to use for the common good of the body
 - We need them to be involved for our sake. Leaving a legacy is an important part of youth ministry.
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10 tips for starting a peer ministry (think small groups or Sunday school)

- meet regularly with student leaders
 - provide each leader with list of names and contact info for students in their care
 - assign projects and visitors to specific care group leaders and provide contact info
 - remind leaders to call/contact all students in their care
 - ask student leaders to report crises, celebrations, special needs to you
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10 tips for starting a peer ministry

- provide time at the end of a youth program for care group leaders to meet with their ministry groups
 - rotate youth-wide responsibilities (e.g. fellowships) among care groups
 - involve care group leaders in planning special projects (or have special project lead teams)
 - enlist teenagers to welcome people
 - train care group leaders in how to share their testimonies
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Why bother looking at dating?

- Because we are in a culture that insists on it.
 - Not to prepare for dating is to prepare for disaster.
 - Because God will ask us (and our teenagers) about relationships.
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Why do youth date?

- Sexual/Physical contact (FWB)
 - Companionship
 - Pre-marriage
 - Peer Pressure (be like everybody else)
 - Psychological void
 - Recreation
 - Status
 - Social relationships
 - Intimacy
 - Relationship evangelism
 - Experimentation
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Dating is a 20th Century thing

- These things used to be arranged by parents or community leaders!
 - Illus: Fiddler on the Roof
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Food for thought: Courtship

- not just "Christian dating"
 - primary difference lies in the intent of the relationship
 - dating may or may not end in marriage-- partners are probably not considering it at the beginning of a relationship
 - courtship has a long term end in view
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"When a couple begins a courting relationship, the purpose of the relationship is to consider marriage. Conversely, dating is a romantic linking of a couple simply to enjoy each other's company for the present."

- source: Comparing God's Best, p. 20

Assumptions of courtship

- the marriage relationship is not a contract between two people, but as a covenant between a couple and God
- the practice is not for a couple to "shop around" but to save themselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually for the one person God would have us to marry
- individuals concentrate on being the right person rather than finding the right person
- once an intimate friendship is developed, the courtship is begun, knowing that marriage is the expected end result

- because courtship is a relationship with a view toward marriage, the couple may have to wait until they are in a position to marry and have laid a responsible foundation
- a courtship is started with full approval of both sets of parents, or if parental involvement is not possible, a spiritual accountability couple
- in the early stages of courtship, the couple begins by spending only limited amounts of time together and very little one-on-one time
- the couple realizes that the engagement phase of a relationship is usually shorter than most engagements in a dating relationship

Online Dating

- Primarily a young adult discussion, but age aspiration makes us want to at least have the discussion
- **In 1992 in the United States**, in a survey out of Chicago, it found that 68% of adults met their spouse through a family member, friend or other mutual acquaintance.
- In the last year 17% of couples who married met on a dating site.

■ Source: www.datingsitesreviews.com/

Online Dating Services- look at the cross polination

- Date.com - Owned by Avalanche, LLC (find info for Matchmaker.com and Amor as well)
- Chemistry - Owned by InterActiveCorp (IAC)
- eHarmony (find info for Compatible Partners as well)
- FriendFinder.com - Owned by FriendFinder Networks (find info for other FriendFinder dating sites as well)
- Lavalife (Coming Soon)
- Match.com - Owned by InterActiveCorp (IAC)
- PerfectMatch.com (Coming Soon)
- PlentyOfFish.com
- SingestNet.com (Coming Soon)
- Spark.com - Owned by Spark Networks (find info for JDate.com and MingleMatch dating services as well)
- Yahoo! Personals
- Zoosk

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- In 2010 it is estimated that Craigslist will earn \$122 million with \$88 to \$99 million being profit. The Adult Services listings make up 30 percent of the revenue
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General Online Dating Industry 2010--General Information

- Married couples who met online have an average courtship period of 18.5 months. Married couples who met offline courtship period last on average 42 months
 - The Better Business Bureau in the US said in 2009 they received 2,660 complaints about dating services. In 2005 they received 824 and only 126 in 2004
 - The online dating industry is now worth \$4 billion worldwide
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- 1 in 5 singles have dated someone they met on a dating site.
- 1 in 5 singles are currently in a committed relationship with someone they met on a dating site
- According to mobile research group Ground Truth, mobile dating saw a 92% increase in users since the summer began.
- The average user of a mobile phone spends 12 minutes and 44 seconds on mobile dating sites per week.
- According to Ground Truth, Flirtomatic was the #1 visited dating site this summer through a mobile phone. Match.com was ranked 7th and eHarmony was 17th.

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- Online dating nationwide increased 15% from May 2009 to May 2010. In the Bay area (San Francisco, San Jose and Oakland) it increased 22% in the same period of time.
 - New York State passes an Internet Dating Safety Act. It is the second state to do so.
 - Traffic to dating sites in the U.S. rose over 13 percent in 12 months, ending in July. Internet use only increased by 9%
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My favorite Bible Study on Dating: Judges 14

- Get out a Bible and look up the passage
- List all the principles of dating that emerge from the mistakes made by Samson and his wife-to-be
- What advice would you give teenagers as a reflection on this text?
- What other Scripture passages come to mind when you think about dating?

Sex and Sexuality

- Statistics are constant: 60% of boys and 40% of females have engaged in sexual intercourse by the time they graduate from high school
 - Other stats
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Issues for churches/ministers

- Modesty
 - Date rape
 - Contraception
 - Reproductive technology
 - Divorce and remarriage
 - Homosexuality
 - Abortion
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Consequences

- Lost innocence
 - Lost opportunity
 - Pregnancy
 - STD's
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