

Introduction

Read: Mark 12:28-34

1. Love makes people excited, happy and thrilled. Some of us dream about getting married, having children and living happily ever after!
2. Indeed, God's plan is for us to have successful relationships. Yet, we must want to build healthy relationships that give life and prepare ourselves for their success.
3. In this series, we will be discussing how we can work towards having successful relationships. Not all relationships give us genuine contentment, peace or joy. It is important to evaluate our relationships so that we can set boundaries to protect ourselves and others.
4. Today, we will be exploring how to evaluate the different relationships in our lives.

I. Start By Focusing On God

A. The key to successful relationships is *first* having a close one with God (v30).

B. Have a close relationship with God by spending time in His presence.

God loves us and enjoys simply being with us! We don't need to "earn" His approval through good works.

C. Align our thoughts with His word whenever we need answers.

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

– Psalm 119:105

D. Pray and wait for God's appropriate time for each of our relationships (Read Ecc 3:11).

We honour God when we wait for His timing, and obey His directions!

II. Work On Ourselves

A. Learn to love ourselves before entering into a romantic relationship (v31).

B. Identify areas in which we can develop ourselves.

E.g. Prayer life, using our spiritual gifts, reading our Bible daily (Proverbs 4:23)

C. Make our time fruitful by serving God and others around us.

E.g. Serve the community/church, build strong friendships, etc.

- D. Evaluate practically whether we are in the right season for relationships.**
E.g. Should we be focusing on our studies now? Are we financially capable?
- E. Make a list of characteristics we want our future partner to have.**

Discuss!

Connect group leader to facilitate sharing with the Connect Group members.

Share reasons why people sometimes jump into relationships without carefully evaluating them.

- *Peer pressure, filling the void of emptiness, curiosity, fear of the future.*

Make a list of characteristics/values we wish to look out for in a future partner.

III. Simply Love Others

- A. Before we can love someone in a romantic relationship, we need to understand what it means to love others purely as friends (v33).**
- B. Be accountable for our emotions, and stick to boundaries in relationships.**
Be mindful of the effect of our words and actions on others (Read Ephesians 4:3). E.g. Do not send wrong signals, be patient, focus on pursuing God as a single.
- C. Seek godly counsel and invite leaders to look into our relationships.**
- D. Think of long-term effects instead of the short-term pleasures of a romantic relationship.**

Conclusion

1. We are created for relationships, and we must first be accountable for our own pursuit of a relationship with Christ.
2. Before entering relationships, we need to work on ourselves and love ourselves first.
3. Lastly, we should learn to love others as equally as ourselves and respect the boundaries set to protect healthy relationships.

Prayer Points:

- a) Pray for a wholly committed heart to love Jesus.
- b) Pray that we will surrender our desires and put our trust in His plans for us.
- c) Commit to being accountable and seeking God before making any decision.

**Give opportunities for visitors to receive Christ and members to re-dedicate their lives to Jesus.*