



Personal & Group Study Guide: February 13, 2022

Message Series: In Search of a Soulmate (Part One)

Message Title: *Tear Down That Wall*

Series Introduction: Dating was hard enough for single people *before* Covid, social distancing, lockdowns, mask mandates, and the politicization of this pandemic rocked our world. But now, for many single people, it feels all but impossible. Under pressure from their friends and family inside and outside the Church, many single Christians who long to find love are quick to build a wall between their faith in God and their desires for romance and intimacy. The Bible, however, couldn't be clearer: those desires we all experience are from God, and as far as He is concerned, our universal longing for love and commitment is a feature, not a bug.

How can Christians learn to date, relate, and marry in ways that reflect God's design and intention for our lives? By choosing to tear down the walls we build between our faith and our desires, we will see more clearly how to seek, choose, and cherish true love according to the principles of the One who hardwired us for romance.

Today's question: *How Should Christians Satisfy Our Desire for Romance and Intimacy?*

What evidence do we have that the Bible is "romantic"? (ex., Gen. 2:18-24, Song of Songs 4:1-7)

If the Bible makes it clear that God hardwired human beings to desire love, romance, and intimacy, why do you think Christians so often erect a proverbial wall between our faith in God and our desire for romance?

There are two big reasons why that WALL must come down:

- 1. The wall must fall so the Church can once again become a community where unmarried believers can _____ in their _____.**

How do churches, pastors, and married members inadvertently treat single believers like "Minor League Christians", and what effect does this have on the Body of Christ?

The STORY CHURCH

In light of our modern-day obsession with romance and marriage, why is it important to remember that Jesus, the Apostle Paul, and other key biblical figures were single by choice?

But if [single Christians] can't control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn with lust...if you do marry, you have not sinned...but those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and *I want to spare you this.*

1 Cor. 7:8-9, 28

How does Paul's marriage advice in 1 Corinthians 7 differ from most of what we hear about singleness and marriage in the Church today? Why do you think things have changed so dramatically?

2. **The wall must fall so that unmarried Christians on the dating scene are encouraged and equipped to date, relate, and marry according to their _____, instead of feeling pressured and tempted to date according to the _____.**

What are some of the problems with dating/relating according to the ways of the world?

What are the key biblical principles we can apply to our pursuit of romantic relationships and intimacy?

1. **Your highest purpose and calling is to _____, regardless of your _____.**
2. **Refuse to _____.**
3. **Even in disappointment and despair, _____.**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. - Prov. 3:5



Personal & Group Study Guide: February 20, 2022

Message Series: In Search of a Soulmate (Part Two)

Message Title: *Finding Romance in the Friend-Zone*

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Why is it so important, whether you're single or married, to have a VISION for your life that you're striving toward?

ANSWER ONE of the following two questions:

If a single person's *mental image of their preferred future* (aka *vision*) is to meet "the One," fall in love, and get married, what should their strategy be on the dating scene?

OR: If a married person adopts a *vision* to strengthen their marriage and stay married long-term, how might they change their approach to day-to-day life with their spouse?

What is the "friend-zone" and why is it widely considered to be *unromantic*?

Read: Genesis 2:18: *The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."* What Hebrew word is translated as "helper suitable", and how is this word typically used throughout the Old Testament? (see: Exodus 18:4, 1 Samuel 7:12, Psalm 33:20)

The STORY CHURCH

What is the significance of the fact that God, throughout the Bible, is called EZER - a helper, friend, and ally? How should this lead us to reconsider the role of **friendship** in our lives today?

Read Genesis 4:6-9. When Cain asked God, “Am I my brother’s keeper,” what Hebrew word is the root word that was translated into *keeper*, and how is it used throughout the Old Testament? (See Gen. 2:15 and Gen. 17:9)

“A biblical friend is an _____ who chooses to _____.”

In the Gospel of John, chapter 15, Jesus called his disciples *friends* and said this: *This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.* - Jn 15:12-13

In light of this message series on *romance*, what should it say to us that Jesus *literally* said there is **no greater love than friendship**?

In the same passage from John 15, Jesus commanded his followers not only to accept *him* as a friend, but to *become* friends who love others the way he first loved us. **How can we learn to become Christ-like friends?**

How should a biblical understanding of friendship change what single believers are searching for while dating? And how should it change the way that married believers strengthen and heal their marriages?

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12



Personal & Group Study Guide: February 27, 2022
Message Series: In Search of a Soulmate (Part Three)
Message Title: *Three Ways to Strengthen Your Marriage*

Series Intro: Dating was hard enough for single people *before* Covid, social distancing, lockdowns, mask mandates, and the politicization of this pandemic rocked our world. But now, for many single people, it feels all but impossible. Under pressure from their friends and family inside and outside the Church, many single Christians who long to find love are quick to build a wall between their faith in God and their desires for romance and intimacy. The Bible, however, couldn't be clearer: those desires we all experience are from God, and as far as He is concerned, our universal longing for love and commitment is a feature, not a bug.

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What is a *soulmate*, and why isn't the *Soulmate Philosophy* compatible with a biblical understanding of love and marriage?

Check out this quote on marriage from Dr. Stanley Hauerwas:

"Destructive to marriage is the self-fulfillment ethic that assumes marriage and the family are primarily institutions of personal fulfillment, necessary for us to become "whole" and happy. The assumption is that there is someone just right for us to marry and that if we look closely enough we will find the right person...[but] it fails to appreciate the fact that we always marry the wrong person. We never know whom we marry; we just think we do. Or even if we first marry the right person, just give it a while and he or she will change...The primary challenge of marriage is learning how to love and care for the stranger to whom you find yourself married."

What does he mean by "we always marry the wrong person" and why does it matter?

Why is marriage important to any society? And why should Christians hold marriage in high esteem (see Genesis 2:23-24, Proverbs 31, Hebrews 13:4)



3 Ways to Strengthen a Marriage (& 3 Questions Every Married Person Should Ask)

1. **Your** _____. (*What are you* _____?)

What was the real meaning behind the fig-leaf underwear that Adam and Eve made for themselves?

Read Genesis 3:21. What did God do when He saw their fig-leaf coverings, and what was the meaning behind His response?

When we're living in sin and selfishness, what sorts of "clothes" do we put on? (see Colossians 3:5-9) How can God give us something better to "wear"?

2. **Your** _____. (*Who are you* _____?)

Read Colossians 3:12-14. What are the new "clothes" God gives believers, and how can putting on these new clothes affect us over time?

For Paul and the first-century Christians, what important ritual involved literally taking off your old clothes and receiving new ones? What did that ritual represent for new believers?

3. **Your** _____. (*Why should you* _____?)

What is a covenant, how were covenants usually sealed, and what are some examples of covenants being made in the Bible?

Read Gen. 18:9-12. What promises did God make to Abraham and Sarah in Genesis, and why might they have doubted whether God would keep His promises?

Why is it important for married people to wait on the Lord to heal and renew their marriage covenant, instead of treating their marriage like a contract that can be rendered null and void? What might we miss if we choose to cut and run?