

Leader Training, Feb. 22

De-brief Thursday, Feb. 19th

- Longer group time - shifting study to the groups [no message]
- Feedback - mostly positive: fostered conversation; had lots of involvement in group
 - Every month/bi-monthly? End of each series?
 - Was a little harder - they had to dive in more to their own thoughts - can create awkward silence
 - Vicki's win - spent intentional time in prayer - round robin/popcorn - every gal prayed - even the ones that have refused to pray out loud before
 - Put the responsibility on the group members - created its own conversation, instead of just going through the questions
 - Careful to not overprescribe application - allow the Spirit to work in their life
- Potential to shorten large group time every week to allow for more time in groups

Table Discussion - Dating Relationships

Tell the group about your dating relationship with your spouse - what did you do? What were the thoughts/feelings you had? What was your experience?

If you haven't dated much/are single, what are you looking for? How do you see dating? How would you approach dating? How have you seen it done well? Not done well?

Ministering to Young Adults

Today we want to spend some time discussing how to minister to the young adults in our care - not just how to facilitate a group discussion. One of the main topics that will come up in conversation and in ministering to a young adult is that of dating and relationships.

How to Help YAs Navigate Dating/Relationships

Observations:

- Young adults are dating for a very short window and then diving into engagement/marriage
 - Often, one reason is to avoid fornication ['cherry pick' 1 Corinthians 7:9]
 - See them stay the night at each other's houses - aren't having sex, but staying over
- Guys like girls, but don't have the confidence to go up and talk to the girls
 - Partially because there is a lot of eyes on it and pressure
- Girls don't allow themselves to be open, or pick the wrong guys to like
- Guys thinking they need to 'lead her spiritually' very early on
 - It is a husband's job to lead spiritually NOT a boyfriend's job to lead a girlfriend
 - It is a wives' job to be submissive to her husband NOT a girlfriend's job to be submissive to her boyfriend
 - As leaders, our job is to clarify what it means in a dating relationship to have different roles and to grow together spiritually

- Men - it IS your job to not lead her into sin
- The responsibility for spiritual growth and 'leading' is still on the individual at this point
- Young adults have a very serious attitude about dating - misapplying the idea of 'dating is for marriage', which can put so much pressure on each person
 - YAs feel shame/failure over a date or relationship that doesn't end up in marriage
 - We can and need to re-frame 'successful' v. 'failed' relationships. If dating is a vetting process, then marriage is not the only 'successful' outcome - a relationship that does not in marriage can indicate that the process worked.

What would you look for in a Young Adult in order to know that they might be ready for a relationship/to pursue marriage?

- There is no set timeframe, or magic formula, but a good rule of thumb when giving advice to a YA would be encourage them to see the other person through 1 year/4 different seasons . This provides a key ingredient, time, to have its work in a relationship - for the couple to have a good foundation and to know one another well enough to make informed decisions.
 - Time is the 'proving ground'
 - Reminder: this does depend on age, maturity, and spiritual maturity and can be different for every couple
- Before marriage - do you see that they have an understanding of each other's family dynamics? Do they have experience navigating those dynamics together?
- Shared ministering/serving area can be a great way to see the person's character
- Asking questions like: Where is your joy? Where is your contentment? Do they know where that is found/placed? Are they living in way that indicates that their joy comes from the Lord, or from their significant other?
- Remember that they don't have to have it all figured out, but that you see that they are WILLING to grow (trajectory)- to have humility to move towards each other. Areas that this can be important to see include (but are not limited to): family dynamics, vision for life, purpose in life, theology, etc.
- Humility - lack of humility is a red flag
- As leaders, we can help 'take the pressure off' a little - encourage young adults that:
 - Dating is VETTING for marriage
 - It is better to be single than in the wrong marriage

3 Important Things to Keep in Mind

- Be careful to not put the weight of Biblical marriage roles into/onto a dating relationship
- Ask open-ended questions over making definitive statements
 - DO ask - What do you see in them that makes you think they would make a good husband/wife? Do you feel encouraged in your walk with the Lord?
 - Don't start with saying - He's narcissistic; she's manipulative....
- Share observations without judgement - share and then ask
 - I noticed....xyz; I heard you say....xyz
 - I care about you, here's what I'm seeing, tell me about that/do you feel that? (etc.)

