

The New Rules for Love, Sex & Dating

Week One - The Right Person Myth

■ BOTTOM LINE

When it comes to relationships all we have to do is look around us to agree with the statement that something is wrong with the way our culture makes decisions about what is right and wrong in our approach to dating and marriage relationships. What are the 'rules' that we follow? Rules are everywhere, even in relationships. In this series, we'll take a hard look at why those rules *don't* work and learning about what rules *do* work.

■ GOAL OF THE GROUP

To create meaningful conversation that stretches our faith and draws us closer to the heart of God. As you read through scripture, share personal reflection and life application, God will reveal new things that you might not have grasped without group discussion. Everyone should feel safe to share openly knowing the group will listen without judgement and confidentiality.

■ SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 13:4-6

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Remember, if *you're not single or dating, you know someone who is! A single friend, relative, maybe the children you're raising. Process the questions below with those relationships in mind.*

1. Identify and share current rules for love, sex and dating based on things in our culture such as movies, songs, TV and the internet. Which 'rules' do you agree or disagree with and why?
2. There isn't such a thing as a 'marriage problem' but there are marriages with problems. This is a result of people bringing problems from the past into their marriages. What are some reasons that these problems aren't identified before marriage?
3. The 'right person myth' says 'if I meet the right person, our marriage will be great'. Can you relate to this way of thinking? Have you approached a relationship with this same thought in mind? Did this approach work for you?
4. Are you the 'person you are looking for' is looking for? This question is the solution to the 'Right person myth.' How does it feel to change your approach from finding the right person to *becoming* the right person? What challenges you in this approach?
5. When it comes to finding the right person, the Bible isn't much help. But when it comes to *becoming* the right person there is lots of help. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-6. If this is the 'to do' list to *becoming* the right person for someone else, how challenging is it to accomplish?

Pastor Andy Stanley from North Point Church in Atlanta, GA originally created this series in 2011 and most of what Kensington is teaching and writing is based on that series. It's that good!



TRY THIS

Becoming the person you're looking for is hard. But not as hard as getting married and being unprepared. If you are single or dating, think about two things you can do this week to become 'the right person'. If you are not single or dating, think about who you could share 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 with. Share with this person any insight gained through discussing question 5 with your group.

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Week Two - Gentleman's Club

■ BOTTOM LINE

Women are viewed, presented, talked about, and sung about like a commodity: an article of trade or commerce. As men, how do we rise above that need and treat women the way God has called us to treat them? As women, how do we change the way we see our value not only in a relationship, but outside of relationships?

■ GOAL OF THE GROUP

Last week we talked about the 'Right Person Myth' that says if I meet the right person then my life will be great! We challenged ourselves to stop looking for the right person and start becoming the right person. This week we'll explore how our view of women is defined by culture and not by God. Jesus' teachings about women were extremely counter-cultural in the first century. They remain so today. We'll explore how we can transform our thinking.

■ SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 13:11, 1 Peter 3:7, John 13:34-35

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Remember, if you're *not single or dating*, you know someone who is! A single friend, relative, maybe the children you're raising. Process the questions below with those relationships in mind.

1. Think of a woman that you would be honored to meet. Why would you want to meet her? Describe her characteristics.
2. Do you agree with the statement that women are viewed as commodities in our culture? What evidence do you see to support this statement? How has this belief crept into your own mindset?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 13:11. What stands out to you and why? In the context of this discussion, how can men 'grow up' in their attitude and treatment of women?
4. Marriage in the Greek/Roman world of Jesus' day was at an all-time low. Men were refusing to marry. Prostitution was legal and encouraged as an alternative to marriage. Sex with slaves was common. Marriage and children were burdens. Do you see similarities to our current culture at all?
5. Read 1 Peter 3:7. The term *treat* is found only here in the New Testament. It means to grant, assign, impart, attribute. The terms *respect* and *honor* mean to recognize dignity. This verse tells men to leverage their strength for the weak (wives). Just as Jesus leveraged His power for the weak (us.) Discuss the ways that men can leverage their strength. Share how you've seen these ways demonstrated in current relationships.
6. What does the 'school of porn' teach men to think about women? Why is erotic imagery so dangerous? If men neglect to deal with their addictions to these images, how will their present and future relationships be impacted?
7. Intimacy is fueled through exclusivity. Here's the truth, we are sexually compatible with millions of people. Yet, we are not relationally compatible with nearly as many people. Our culture presents sex at 100% physical. It's not. Discuss what happens in a relationship over time with only sex as the means for intimacy.
8. Think back to the woman whom you would be *honored* to meet. How would you act in her presence? What would it look like to treat all women you know with that kind of respect?

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TRY THIS

Renew your mind to think differently; make up your mind to behave differently. Identify one area in your life you can change and do it. Eliminate any media (movies, TV, music) that reinforces the idea that women are commodities. End your relationship with erotic imagery. Do some house cleaning. Cancel some stuff. Give a friend your passwords. If any of this makes you uncomfortable, then you are a slave to something. Pray about taking the first step. Together with God we can set a new standard for this generation.

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Week Three - If I Were You

BOTTOM LINE

Promises are no substitute for preparation. Every Saturday people all over the country make promises to other single people that they are unable or unprepared to keep—wedding vows. They are sincere and their intentions are good but they are unprepared. Preparation for the commitment is just as important as the commitment itself.

GOAL OF THE GROUP

Last week we explored how our view of women is defined by culture and not by God. Jesus' teachings about women were extremely counter-cultural in the first century. We took a hard look at how we can change our thinking. This week we'll look at how we can ensure we are as prepared as possible for a healthy marriage or relationship.

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 14:8; 22:3; 14:15 and 1 Corinthians 7:2

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Remember, if you're *not single or dating*, you know someone who is! A single friend, relative, maybe the children you're raising. Process the questions below with those relationships in mind.

1. Have you ever made a promise to do something but then you were unable to follow through because you didn't prepare properly? (think of athletic, academic, professional, family, etc.) Share with the group.
2. Read Proverbs 14:15 and 22:3. Solomon addresses the fact that when it comes to marriage, commitment is over-rated. He says the paths we choose trump the promises we'll make. What signs might a couple ignore because they are headed down the path of the simple? How can this type of thinking be avoided?
3. Saying 'I Do' doesn't make you ABLE. It only makes you accountable. Being accountable for something you are unable to do will make you miserable. Share some specific consequences of bringing your unresolved past into your marriage?
4. Studies show that living together before marriage is actually detrimental to your marriage. Why do you think so many people make the decision to live together? How have you seen this play out in your own life or with your close friends and family? Why do you think it doesn't work?
5. What a fisherman uses for bait, is determined by what he is fishing for. Discuss how the way a woman dresses can be applied to this concept. Discuss the effect of a pornography habit on a relationship using this concept.
6. Read 1 Corinthians 7:2 The apostle Paul describes any activity outside of marriage as 'sexual immorality.'" This includes sex before marriage. Purity before you are married trains you for faithfulness after you are married. Why is it so hard for people to embrace the idea that a physical relationship is something God created to be enjoyed under the covenant of marriage?
7. Instead of looking for someone to commit your life to...commit now to becoming someone who can keep his/her commitments later. What path can you make a commitment to that will prepare you for a long-term successful relationship?

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TRY THIS

If you don't want your marriage to be like the majority of marriages, then don't date like the majority of daters. You will not be in the majority now. But you won't be in the majority later, either. Think of one change you can make to prepare to commit so that when you do commit you will be in a position to keep your commitment. If you're already married and there is a commitment related struggle, consider one change you can make to overcome this situation. If you're unable to accomplish that first step on your own then reach out to Kensington's Marriage Mentor team for help: kensingtonchurch.org/marriage