



BY **JOSHUA MYLES**

INTRO



GUARDING YOUR **HEART**

THE **TRUTH** ABOUT DATING & SINGLENESS

OVERVIEW

WEEK 1 - SINGLE SATISFACTION

- CONTRARY TO POPULAR OPINION, YOU DON'T NEED A ROMANTIC PARTNER TO FEEL COMPLETE.
- IN FACT, YOU SHOULD SEEK TO BE A COMPLETE AND WHOLE PERSON, PERIOD, BEFORE LOOKING FOR SOME ONE ELSE TO ENTER YOUR LIFE.
- WHAT CAN THAT LOOK LIKE?

WEEK 2 - HIGHER THAN HORMONES

- ATTRACTION IS ONLY SUPERFICIAL, EVEN IF IT GOES BOTH WAYS.
- IF EVERY PERSON ON EARTH LOOKED THE SAME, WHAT WOULD MAKE *THIS* PERSON UNIQUE?
- ASK YOURSELF, "WHY AM I DOING THIS? WHAT AREN'T JUST MY INTENTIONS; WHAT IS MY ENDOGOAL?"

WEEK 3 - READY...SET...STOP.

- ARE THIS PERSON AND I HEADING DOWN THE SAME PATH IN LIFE? AND IS THAT PATH GOOD, GROWING, AND GOD-CENTERED?
- WHAT IS THIS PERSON LIKE WITH ME? FRIENDS? FAMILY? OUTSIDE OF CHURCH?
- WHAT WOULD BE THE LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR OF OUR RELATIONSHIP

WEEK 4 - PURSUING WITH PURPOSE

- GOD LOVE YOU THE MOST (AS IN MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE ON THE PLANET; "WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS?")
- WHAT'LL BE LOUDER: BUTTERLIES, OR GOD'S WORD?

WEEK 1

SINGLE SATISFACTION

SINGLENES... IT SOUNDS LIKE SUCH AN UGLY WORD, DOESN'T IT? MOST PEOPLE VIEW IT AS A BAD THING, SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO GET THROUGH IF YOU WANT TO BE A REAL MAN OR WOMAN.

THE FUNNY THING THOUGH, IS HAVING A "BETTER HALF" IN THE FORM OF A SIGNIFICANT OTHER WILL NOT MAKE YOU FEEL WHOLE AND COMPLETE AS A PERSON.

THE BIBLE TELLS US THIS. BUT IT ALSO *SHOWS* US THIS THROUGH THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS.

SEE, WE OFTEN FORGET THAT JUST AS JESUS IS ABSOLUTELY GOD, HE'S ALSO ABSOLUTELY HUMAN. AND WHAT THIS MEANS IS THAT JESUS ONCE WAS A TEENAGER, *JUST LIKE ALL OF US*. WHICH MEANT HE HAD ALL THE URGES, QUESTIONS, AND DESIRES YOU FACE ON A REGULAR BASIS

BUT JESUS NEVER WENT ON A DATE. HE NEVER GOT A GIRLFRIEND. AND HE NEVER GOT MARRIED. WHY DO YOU THINK HE CHOSE THIS? HE COULD'VE JUST *MADE* A GIRLFRIEND THAT FIT WITH HIS PLAN IF HE REALLY WANTED TO, RIGHT?

"THE THIEF COMES ONLY TO STEAL AND KILL AND DESTROY; I HAVE COME THAT THEY MAY **HAVE LIFE, AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL.**"

JOHN 10:10

WELL, JESUS SAID THAT HE CAME SO THAT PEOPLE COULD HAVE "LIFE TO THE FULL" HE SHOWED US THAT SINGLENES ISN'T ABOUT YOU WAITING FOR THE "RIGHT" PERSON, BUT INSTEAD EXPLORING HOW YOU CAN FULLY EXPERIENCE GOD IN THIS SEASON OF LIFE, "RIGHT" NOW.

SO... WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?
WHAT *COULD* THAT LOOK LIKE?

BECAUSE THE GREAT SECRET OF THE UNIVERSE IS THAT YOU CAN BE **MORE** THAN "JUST" SATISFIED IN YOUR SINGLENES; YOU CAN FIND BOTH **LOVE, AND PURPOSE.**

DISCUSSION

WHEN IS A TIME YOU HAD TO **REALLY LONG** FOR AND NOT GET RIGHT AWAY SOMETHING YOU WERE **REALLY** EXCITED FOR? WHAT WAS IT LIKE WAITING FOR THAT THING? WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE MEANTIME?

IMAGINE IF THE THING YOU WERE WAITING FOR NEVER HAPPENED. HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT THE ACTIONS AND CHOICES YOU DID UP TO THAT POINT? WOULD YOU HAVE DONE ANYTHING DIFFERENTLY?

READ **EPHESIANS 5:15-17**. WHY DO YOU THINK GOD LEFT THIS COMMAND FOR HIS FOLLOWERS? WHAT'S THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN "MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY" AND "UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WILL"?

READ **JOHN 10:10**. HOW MIGHT JESUS WANT TO SPEAK INTO AN AREA OF YOUR LIFE YOU'RE DEALING WITH OR HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT? WHAT COULD IT LOOK LIKE TO INVITE HIM INTO THAT AREA?





HIGHER THAN HORMONES

IMAGINE... YOU FIND SOMEONE YOU LIKE. AS IN, 'LIKE' LIKE. WHAT NOW? EVERYONE IS GOING TO GIVE YOU DIFFERENT ADVICE ON "HOW-TO-DATE" - SOME OF IT WILL BE REALLY WISE AND PRAYED THROUGH, WHILE OTHERS WILL JUST SPOUT IDEAS OUT OF THEIR OWN BACK-AND-FORTH EXPERIENCES. THERE IS SOMETHING YOU COULD ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND AS YOU FIGURE OUT *WHAT* TO DO WITH THIS PERSON, LET ALONE **HOW** TO DO IT.

SEE, IN ANY RELATIONSHIP, YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE GETTING INTO IT FOR THE RIGHT REASONS. FOR EXAMPLE: WHAT LED YOU TO BE "CRUSHING" ON YOUR CRUSH IN THE FIRST PLACE? ODDS ARE, YOU FOUND THEM KIND OF CUTE OR ATTRACTIVE, OR REALIZED THAT YOU GET ALONG WITH EACH OTHER **REALLY** WELL.

AND LET'S BE CLEAR: IT ISN'T BAD TO LET THIS CHEMISTRY HELP INFORM WHY YOU MIGHT DATE SOMEONE. YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE WITH SOMEONE YOU DIDN'T ENJOY BEING WITH, RIGHT?

THE KEY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP, HOWEVER, IS IF YOU'RE LETTING THAT ATTRACTIVENESS SERVE AS **PART** OF THE REASON YOU'RE PURSUING THAT PERSON, OR IF IT'S THE **MAIN** REASON.

IT'S LIKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HAVING A BOWL OF ICE CREAM FOR DESSERT, OR AS THE MAIN COURSE. ONE MAY TASTE AND FEEL "NICE" IN THE SHORT TERM, BUT WON'T BE HEALTHY AND SUSTAIN YOU IN THE LONG TERM.

THIS IS WHY IT'S SO KEY TO INVITE LEGIT JESUS-FOLLOWING PEOPLE TO SPEAK INTO YOU IN THIS SEASON.

PEOPLE WHO WON'T JUST TELL YOU, "YEAH, HE'S/SHE'S HOT" OR



"I THINK HE/SHE IS PROBABLY 'CLOSE ENOUGH' TO BEING A CHRISTIAN" BUT WILL GO THE EXTRA MILE, DARE TO LOOK AT THE DEEPER PICTURE AND SHOW YOU WHAT YOU MAY NOT ALWAYS WANT TO SEE.

AND ABOVE IT ALL... GOD HAS STUFF TO SAY, TOO. AFTER ALL, HE CREATED THIS SPECIAL SOMEONE YOU HAPPEN TO LIKE SO MUCH. SO FEEL FREE - LITERALLY, FEEL **FREE** - TO TAP INTO HIS WORD THROUGH SCRIPTURE AND PRAYER. AND AS YOU DO, KNOW THAT YOU'RE INVITING HIM AND HIS PERSPECTIVE... WHICH ARE BOTH LOVING AND ETERNAL.

DISCUSSION

IMAGINE YOU WERE GOING TO RUN A MARATHON. WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO PREPARE FOR THE RACE? IF YOU GOT TO ASK ONE PERSON FOR ADVICE, WHO WOULD YOU ASK AND WHY?

READ HEBREWS 12:1-2. GENERALLY SPEAKING, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS THAT COULD SLOW SOMEONE DOWN FROM HIS OR HER WALK WITH JESUS? ON THE FLIP SIDE, WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS/LOOKS LIKE PRACTICALLY EACH DAY FOR SOMEONE TO "KEEP HIS/HER EYES ON JESUS"?

READ HEBREWS 12:3. WHY DO YOU THINK WE FEEL ENCOURAGED WHEN WE KEEP OUR FOCUS ON JESUS? HOW DOES THIS CONNECT TO THE HEART AND LOVE GOD HAS FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US?

PRAY TO GOD, BUT PHRASE YOUR THOUGHTS AND RESPONSES IN SUCH A WAY AS IF YOU WERE TALKING TO YOUR BEST FRIEND WITH THAT KIND OF ENERGY, SLANG AND MORE. SPEAK FROM THE DEEP AND SURFACE PARTS INSIDE OF YOU. YOU CAN PRAY ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE PROCESSING IN LIFE, AN AREA YOU NEED ADVICE IN, OR EVEN JUST ABOUT DAILY LIFE.

IF YOU DID THIS IN A GROUP, ONCE EACH OF YOU HAS HAD A TURN TO PRAY, TALK ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE (OR, IF YOU DID THIS ON YOUR OWN, SHARE ABOUT IT WITH SOMEONE). WHAT FELT NATURAL OR UNNATURAL ABOUT IT? HOW COULD THIS SPEAK INTO HOW YOU VIEW/INTERACT WITH GOD MOVING FORWARD?

SAME TEAM DIFFERENT PLAYERS

SO... YOU FINALLY MUSTER UP THE COURAGE AND CONFESS YOUR TRUE FEELINGS TO THAT 'SPECIAL' SOMEONE. AND TO EVERYONE'S SURPRISE - *THEY LIKE YOU BACK!* CONGRATS! GO MAKE IT OFFICIAL, YOU WONDERFUL PERSON, YOU!

HOLD ON A SEC. JUST... WAIT. BECAUSE, SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE, THIS IS WHERE SO, SO MANY WELL-MEANING CHRISTIANS GET STUCK. HEAR ME OUT. OR ACTUALLY, HEAR GOD OUT.

"DON'T BECOME PARTNERS WITH THOSE WHO REJECT [ME]. HOW CAN YOU MAKE A PARTNERSHIP OUT OF RIGHT AND WRONG? THAT'S NOT PARTNERSHIP; THAT'S WAR."

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14:

OKAY... WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

WELL, IMAGINE IF YOU WERE A FOOTBALL COACH, AND YOU HAD ONE PLAYER WHO ALWAYS SHOWED UP FOR PRACTICE, AND MEMORIZED EVERY PLAY. MEANWHILE, IMAGINE YOU COACHED ANOTHER PLAYER WHO ONLY SHOWED UP FOR PRACTICE ONCE A WEEK, AND BARELY MADE ANY EFFORT ON THE FIELD.

JUST TO BE CLEAR: THE TWO PLAYERS ARE ON THE SAME TEAM. BUT THEIR PRESENCE ON THE FIELD WILL BE VERY DIFFERENT. IN FACT, ONE PLAYER'S PERFORMANCE MAY ACTUALLY HURT ANOTHER PLAYER'S PERFORMANCE.

IN THE SAME WAY, WHEN YOU **PURSU**E JESUS, YOU WILL EITHER FIND PEOPLE WHO WILL SLOW YOU DOWN, OR PUSH YOU FORWARD. AND THE BEST PERSON TO TELL YOU THE DIFFERENCE IS THE HEAD COACH (GOD), WHO **KNOWS AND CARES FOR EACH PLAYER ON HIS TEAM.**

TRUST HIS JUDGMENT. LET HIM HAVE YOUR BACK. AND AS YOU DO, FIND THOSE PEOPLE WHO WILL MOTIVATE YOU FORWARD. WHICH MEANS... DON'T GET INTO A DATING RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMEONE WHO GENUINELY WON'T.

DISCUSSION

IMAGINE YOU COULD BE THE BOSS OF ANY COMPANY IN THE WORLD. WHICH COMPANY WOULD YOU CHOOSE, AND WHY?

IF YOU HAD THREE PEOPLE TO CHOOSE FROM TO HIRE, AND COULD ONLY CHOOSE ONE), WHAT WOULD BE SOME OF THE QUALITIES YOU WOULD LOOK FOR IN A POTENTIAL EMPLOYEE?

IMAGINE NOW THAT THE THREE PEOPLE YOU HAD TO CHOOSE FROM WERE THREE OF YOUR BEST FRIENDS. HOW MUCH HARDER WOULD IT BE TO CHOOSE ONE TO HIRE, OVER THE OTHERS? WOULD YOUR DECISION-MAKING PROCESS CHANGE AT ALL?

"I HAVE THE RIGHT TO DO ANYTHING,' YOU SAY
BUT NOT EVERYTHING IS BENEFICIAL
"I HAVE THE RIGHT TO DO ANYTHING"
BUT I WILL NOT BE MASTERED BY ANYTHING."

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12

RELATE THAT TO PEOPLE YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN DATING, AND READ **1 CORINTHIANS 6:12**. HOW MIGHT GOD WANT TO PERSONALLY GUIDE YOU REGARDING THE PEOPLE YOU CHOOSE TO PUT IN YOUR LIFE? WHAT COULD IT LOOK LIKE FOR YOU PERSONALLY TO ACCEPT THAT HELP IN THIS AREA OF RELATIONSHIPS?

GOD LOVES YOU...MORE

OKAY. LET'S SAY YOU'RE PLANNING TO GO ON YOUR FIRST DATE WITH THIS PERSON TO TAKE THAT FIRST STEP TOWARD MAKING IT "OFFICIAL." WHAT NOW?

WELL, IF NOTHING ELSE, REMEMBER THIS: GOD LOVES YOU. MORE SPECIFICALLY, GOD LOVES YOU MORE THAN ANY OTHER HUMAN BEING EVER CAN, OR EVER WILL (EPH. 3:19-21).

"AND TO KNOW THIS LOVE THAT SURPASSES KNOWLEDGE THAT YOU MAY BE FILLED TO THE MEASURE OF ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD."

EPHESIANS 3:19

GOD **LOVES** YOU **MORE**. HE'LL **ALWAYS LOVE** YOU MORE.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? WHAT **SHOULD** IT MEAN?

FRANKLY... IT'LL MEAN AS MUCH AS YOU LET IT. BECAUSE IT ALSO APPLIES TO THAT OTHER PERSON, TOO. IT'S YOUR OPPORTUNITY ON THAT DATE NOT TO JUST WIN THEM TO WANT TO BE IN A DEEPER RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU, BUT TO JOIN JESUS (EVEN ON THAT DATE) IN WINNING THEM TO HIS HEART EVEN MORE.

THINK ABOUT IT VISUALLY. IF THE FOCUS OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP IS EACH OTHER, THAT'S WHO YOU'LL POINT TO. AND WHILE YOU MIGHT HAVE A NICE RELATIONSHIP, YOU'LL NEVER PUSH EACH OTHER BEYOND YOURSELVES. **IT'S A DEAD-END.**



ON THE FLIP SIDE, IF BOTH OF YOU SERVE EACH OTHER WITH GOD AS YOUR CENTER, THERE IS NOW A *PURPOSE* BEHIND YOUR RELATIONSHIP. ONE THAT IS BOTH GREATER THAN YOURSELVES, YET SO, SO PERSONALLY INVESTED INTO YOU. IT'S A JOURNEY.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? **WHAT COULD IT MEAN?** GOD OFFERS HIS LOVE AND GUIDANCE WITH AN OPEN HAND. AND I, FOR ONE, DARE YOU TO ACCEPT IT. :)

DISCUSSION

IF YOU COULD GO BACK IN TIME TO TALK WITH THE "YOU" FROM THE PAST, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE ABOUT DATING, GUY/GIRL STUFF, ETC?

THINK FORWARD NOW. IF YOU HAD TO GUESS, WHAT COULD BE SOME OF THE THINGS THE "YOU" FIVE YEARS FROM NOW WOULD NEED TO REMEMBER AND NOT GIVE UP ON ABOUT DATING, GUY/GIRL STUFF, ETC?

READ **EPHESIANS 2:4-5 & JOHN 10:10**. HOW DO THESE VERSES SPEAK INTO NOT ONLY "HOW" JESUS SPEAKS INTO YOU, BUT "WHY" HE SPEAKS INTO YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE?

CONSIDER HOW JESUS **NOT ONLY** WANTS TO HELP YOU IN AND THROUGH YOUR FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS, BUT ALSO RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW, IN THIS CURRENT SEASON OF LIFE YOU'RE IN. WITH THAT SPIRIT IN MIND, SHARE WITH YOUR GROUP (OR WRITE DOWN IN A JOURNAL) AN AREA OF LIFE YOU COULD REALLY USE JESUS' PERSPECTIVE. TAKE TURNS PRAYING FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR FRIENDS. WHAT IS AT LEAST ONE THING IN THIS DEVOTIONAL THAT STUCK OUT TO YOU PERSONALLY? HOW MIGHT JESUS WANT TO ADD ONTO, OR SPEAK INTO YOU THROUGH THIS *THING*?