

Being > Getting – The Little Black Book Series (Week 4)

HOOK

“3 Signs You’re Not Ready to Date” according to eHarmony, written by Melanie Schilling – “the relationship strategist.”

1. Sign 1: Your inner voice says “No.”
 - Problem: Your inner voice = your feelings. What does your “inner voice” know that you don’t? It’s as ignorant as you are.
 - Problem: Too many have an inner voice saying “Yes” for all the wrong reasons.
2. Sign 2: Dating feels wrong.
 - Problem: (Redundant of #1) Basing life decisions on feelings.
3. Sign 3: You keep making the same dating mistakes.

The world offers us weird, subjective, ambiguous toilet mold advice on love and relationships when the God of love offers us wisdom and direction.

BOOK

(This is immediately following, “Love is patient...” The context is the value of love.)

1 Corinthians 13:8-13 - *Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part (incomplete), 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. 13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

- V8 - Comparing **durable** love to **temporary** things.
- V9-10 - We don’t fully understand real love. What we know is incomplete, partial. Many of the puzzle pieces are missing and it won’t be whole until eternity. But we can grow in maturity filling in some of those pieces here.
- V11 – Paul is saying he’s grown in maturity and understanding of love itself and has grown from a spiritual child into a spiritual adult.
- V.13 – These are the marks of a believer, but the chief of them is love.
- Paul wants us to experience that same spiritual maturing.
 - Even Jesus grew (**Luke 2:52**) – “*And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*”

This is our topic for tonight: Maturing out of childish ways into mature Christians.

LOOK

Are you willing to do whatever it takes to have the marriage you always hoped for?

- Week 1 – Are you willing to unlearn and redefine what love is?
- Week 2 – Are you willing to embrace someone else's differences?
- Week 3 – Are you willing to sacrifice your own wants?
- Week 4 – Are you willing to grow... first?

Are you **maturing, stretching, developing**? Our enemy wants to handicap our growth – PARTICULARLY in our relationship with Jesus. He wants you to make adult decisions with teenage maturity, adult choices looking through childish spiritual eyes. His goal is to steal, kill, and destroy YOU, and **romantic relationships** are one of the most vulnerable places where he can disassemble your spiritual walk. **Why?**

- Romantic relationships are saturated with powerful feelings. Most of us are highly influenced, even dominated by our emotions.
 - Frank Herbert (Dune) – “Reason is the first casualty to strong emotion.”
 - Satan hopes you'll ignore reason and the power to choose wisely to chase an emotional high above all else. He wants to make you ineffective for Jesus and he doesn't have to destroy you, only distract you.

Each week, we're tearing down cultural norms concerning romantic relationships. We should! It has a 47% failing grade at marriage.

- **Cultural Myth**: To have true love and a fulfilling marriage, you must find the RIGHT person.
- Your relationship success will not be based on WHO you GET. It will be who YOU ARE that will matter most.

The bible is more concerned with BEING the RIGHT person than GETTING the RIGHT person. It discusses romance very little, but spiritual transformation constantly. God's wants to put us on His Potter's wheel, and with many big and small changes, mold us into a clearer image of Jesus. He intends to work on you first BEFORE trusting you with someone else.

Student: “God, why haven't you given me my spouse yet?”

God: “Because you still speak, think, and reason like a child. Instead of putting your focus on me, you're consumed with the idea of love. Instead of trusting me, you're judging your value based on your relationship status. Instead of waiting on me, you're trying to force romance by rashly giving yourself away.

- Of course, choosing a compatible person to be your “one” is important. But, if they were standing right in front of you, and YOU’RE not already the right person, you’d never know it was them.
- So, we’ll begin our discussion on dating with putting the focus where the bible does: developing mature, God-fearing Jesus followers.

Part of giving up “childish ways” is to give up self-dependency and surrender our limited view to His eternal view. A spiritual adult trusts their Heavenly Father.

Proverbs 3:5-6 - *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.*

Stop Trying So Hard: If you begin to get anxious, stop and ask, “Why am I feeling this pressure? Is it from loneliness, feeling incomplete, or needing validity?”

- God’s plan is worth waiting on. Take it easy.

Reasons to Stop Trying So Hard

1. Pushing too fast results with being with the wrong kind of person.
 - a. DON’T give your heart away to the first person who makes you feel special, beautiful, wanted, popular asking yourself desperately, “What if this is my only chance!?”
2. You come across as desperate and needy.
 - a. It’s a repellent to people looking for maturity and value.
3. You’ll go emotionally broke.
 - a. Wasting your time, energy, money, and emotions can leave you hardened, calloused, and depressed.
4. It throws off your priorities.
 - a. You end up seeking fulfillment instead of seeking Jesus (who gives it).
 - b. You’ll allow other important relationships to suffer (ex. friends, family, mentors). Ever been ditched by a friend in a new relationship?
5. It shows a lack of faith in your heavenly Father.
 - a. Do you actually trust Him with all your Are you willing to point your life toward Him and let Him make your paths straight?
 - b. Trying too hard is a sign you’re not spiritually mature enough for a romantic relationship.

Proverbs 3:5-6 - *Trust in the LORD. Stop leaning on your understanding. Put Him first, and He will direct your steps.*

Parable of the Two Bridges: Once upon a time, a king had a river horseshoe around his small but wealthy country. He commissioned two engineers to design and each oversee the building of a bridge, one on the east side and one on the west. Both proposed a 24-month plan. The first was an old man who built on the west and the other a young man to worked on the east. Time elapsed, and unrelated to the construction, the ruler of their neighboring country to the north proposed the king hold a banquet and invite all the leaders of the neighboring nations to display and celebrate their alliances. The king was thrilled and visited the young man on the east and asked him to finish his bridge in two weeks - just in time for the banquet. However, it was 8 months before the projected bridge was to be finished. The young man desiring wealth and notoriety for appeasing the king agreed. The king visited the old man on the west and ordered him to do the same. The old man refused. The king pointed at the structure and said, "Look, I see many pylons and the walking path will suffice. Surely it's finished enough." The old man replied that he would not open his bridge a day early. The king was furious and told him, not only would he receive no wages, he would work until the bridge was completed or he would be put in the dungeon. The old man agreed to work without wages and continued toward his original deadline. The day of the banquet arrived and royalty from all around came to their city. The bridge on the east was open while the bridge on the west stood closed. Many marveled at the beauty and design of the young man's bridge as they crossed. Come sunset, all were dining in the king's great hall, but that night, there was an assassination attempt on the king by the ruler from the north. The saboteur and his men escaped over the east bridge. The king rallied his very best soldiers and pursued the fugitive, but as the army crossed the bridge it collapsed. Because of the weight of their armor, most of the king's men were lost to the river. The king's army was painfully depleted, and by the time the west bridge would be completed, the ruler of the north would be safe and his city well-fortified against attack.

Becoming a spiritual adult takes construction by the Holy Spirit. Building maturity takes time especially if it will need to hold up under **heavy** weight. A romantic relationship is a **heavy** responsibility. Have the humility to admit you're under construction and wisdom to choose growth. Yes, we are all under construction, but there are some places you'll need to be complete if you desire a healthy relationship and the marriage you've always hoped for.

Here are some areas you may still be incomplete. Most are traits of still being spiritually childish, but take a breath. Every mature Christian you know has grown through where you are presently.

Signs You're Not Ready to Date

1. Your parents feel you're not ready (age, maturity, resources, etc)
 - a. If you won't honor your parents, you're not honoring God.
2. You have no resources (ex. No job, car, and few goals beyond the weekend.)
 - a. If you're having to use Elevate as date night, you're not ready to date.
3. You don't have a purpose bigger than yourself yet.
 - a. "If you don't have a purpose bigger than yourself, you become your own purpose." – Ron Luce
 - i. Your saying, "Welcome to my world where I live for me. You can live for me too!" = Selfishness
4. You're ingenuine/not yourself when you're around the person you like.
 - a. A sign of immaturity that you're not comfortable with who YOU are yet.
5. You have a significant problem with lust.
 - a. You'll never be able to see someone's real value – or ever love purely – with an iceberg of lust in your life.
6. You believe a dating relationship will make you feel fulfilled.
 - a. **Symptom 1:** You're willing to plunge immediately into a romantic relationship with the first person who likes you back.
 - i. "Someone finally likes me! They're obviously the one forever!"
 - ii. Be careful. People that desperate often compromise themselves to be "loved". If you're not willing to take it slow, you're not ready.
 - b. **Symptom 2:** You're convinced having a g/b friend will make you happy.
 - i. "I'm just not happy when I don't have a girlfriend." (needy, selfish, leach-like = it's their unspoken job to keep me happy)
 - c. This stems from not being whole yet. Whole = can support weight.
7. ***Jesus isn't the CENTER of your life.***
 - a. He must be your #1 and you are choosing your #2.

But don't be stressed! You aren't failing at life. You're just having to admit you're under construction. In fact, in this season of waiting and growth, there is VERY good news about **singleness**. Singleness sounds scary because culture obsesses about the feelings of romance, but remember that culture is a loser at love.

SINGLENES

1 Corinthians 7:26-28, 32-35 - *Because of the present crisis, I think it is best to remain as you are. 27 If you have a wife, do not seek to end the marriage. If you do not have a wife, do not seek to get married. 28 But if you do get married, it is not a sin. And if a young woman gets married,*

it is not a sin. However, those who get married at this time will have troubles, and I am trying to spare you those problems.... 32 I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord's work and thinking how to please Him. 33 But a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. 34 His interests are divided. In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has never been married can be devoted to the Lord and holy in body and in spirit. But a married woman has to think about her earthly responsibilities and how to please her husband. 35 I am saying this for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions as possible.

- A Jesus-follower's goal in life = to serve the Lord our very best. Will you serve the Lord best as married or single?
- The purpose of singleness = To be free from distractions.
 - Better focus; less interferences; less demand on time, energy, and money; can take more risks; undivided resolve for ministry.
- It's not a biblical rule everyone is supposed to marry. In fact, you should be surrendered enough to the Lord your willing to ask if He's calling you to marry.
- **Jeremiah 29:11** – “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

Singles Myths Busted

Have you ever heard that single people are miserable and lonely and die alone in their empty apartments where they are eaten by their cats?...It's not just the cat thing that's a myth. All of those insulting claims about the lives of single people are wrong!

Myth #1: Singles are less happy than married people

First, most single people are not miserable - not even close. On the average, single people are always on the happy end of the scale; that's true in every study I know of. Second, getting married hardly changes someone's happiness at all. Some married people experience a tiny blip in happiness around the time of the wedding. On an 11-point scale, they are about 1/4 of 1 point happier. But that is just a honeymoon effect. They go back to being as happy or as unhappy as they were when they were single **[being>getting]**.

Myth #2: Single people favor solitude

Sometimes people say that single people are “alone,” that they “don't have anyone.” But that's just a myth. Research shows that single people often have many people in their lives who are important to them. Often, they have a whole network of friends and relatives, and they stay connected with them for decades. After all, they have the time to forge many diverse relationships which married sorts often don't.

Myth #3: Single people don't live as long as married folks

The longest running study of longevity on record started in 1921, with more than 1,000 11-year-olds. Scientists have kept track of these people for as long as they lived. The people who lived the longest where those who stayed single and those who married and stayed married. People who divorced, or who divorced and remarried, had shorter lives. It was consistency, not marriage, that mattered.

It may be God's plan for some to stay single their whole lives, but EVERYONE at some point(s) in their lives is called to a season(s) of singleness...and it's a blessing not a curse. It can be a very healthy season of growth and spiritual honing.

This hopeful promise was spoken to God's people amidst a long season of uncomfortable waiting. **Jeremiah 29:10-11** - *This is what the Lord says: "You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.*

- God was doing something in the middle of their wait.
- Take advantage of it! Embrace the freedom to serve Jesus without restraint and with fewer responsibilities and distractions.
 - Ask, "Heavenly Dad, during this season of singleness, how do you want me to grow? How can I serve you to the fullest?"
 - These are questions of spiritual maturity.

It May be Wise to Choose a Season of Singleness if you recognize you're not ready to date or feeling led by the Lord to it. Maybe He's calling you to get your priorities straight or the Holy Spirit wants you to focus on something bigger than yourself.

- **KEY:** You're dealing with sexual sin in your life. Examples: pornography, lust around the opposite sex, homosexual desires.
 - At DUMC – gay student – "I want Jesus more than a relationship, so I'm choosing to be single."
- **Truth:** Marriage doesn't fix a lust problem.

BEING THE RIGHT PERSON – Areas to surrender to the Potter for construction. You're building a bridge to support the weight of a heavy responsibility.

1. Priorities in Order

- a. **Matthew 6:21** - *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

- b. If you can't make a wise decision between social media and school work, you won't make a wise decision between work, family, and play.
 - i. Time, Money, Energy = treasure
 - ii. #1 relationship with Jesus, #2 your family, #3 work/ministry

2. Respect for authority

- a. **Romans 13:1** - *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.*
- b. If you can't respect authority, you won't respect an equal. You'll try to run over them after the big emotions settle.

3. Humility

- a. **Philippians 2:3-4** - *In humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*
- b. Allows room for selflessness, forgiveness, and honesty.
- c. The only way to healthy resolutions in arguments is through humility.
- d. Pride will believe it's easier to start over than to reconcile. One lawyer charges \$499 for a divorce.

4. Self-Control

- a. **1 Corinthians 9:26-27** - *So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control...*
- b. You can't just do what you feel – that's childlike
- c. A lack of self-control leads to abuse, infidelity, pain, loneliness.

5. Predetermined Boundaries in being Physical with the Opposite Sex

- a. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** - *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body.*
- b. What/How much of your body are you saving for your spouse only? What are your boundaries? Are you willing to communicate them? What if the person you're with doesn't have self-control?

6. Integrity – “same strength throughout.”

- a. **Proverbs 28:6** - *Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is crooked in his ways.*
- b. Predefined values; honesty; consistent character and ethics; guarded words, actions, and thoughts.

7. Relationship with Jesus

- a. The rest of these traits are side effects of maturing in the presence of Jesus. Make Jesus your #1 and He'll honor the relationship with your future #2.
- b. **1 Corinthians 13:11-12** – *When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*
 - i. "Face to face," "know," and "been fully known," suggest that love is more than a 'what', but a **Who**.
 - ii. This pursuit of spiritual maturity is not chasing spiritual inner peace, but growing in the knowledge of God. Knowledge we grow in now which will be fully unveiled when we meet Him "face to face."

Are you willing to do whatever it takes to have the marriage you've always hoped for? **Are you willing to grow first?**

RECAP

- Becoming a spiritual adult is more than age, but surrender to the Potter.
- It's more important to be the right person than to get the right person.
- Stop trying SO hard and trust your Heavenly Father.
- Singleness is beautiful and should be embraced.
- Pursue Jesus and all the other character traits will follow.

TOOK

Challenge 1: Begin the habit of daily God times.

Challenge 2: Select one of those 7 to grow in and surrender it to the Lord in your quiet times daily for the next week.

eGroup Questions /// Being > Getting – Week 4 of the Little Black Book Series

Pray.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:11-12 – *When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

Questions:

1. Have you ever been ditched by a friend who just got a new girl/boy friend? How did it make you feel?
2. What do you think are some signs that someone isn't ready to date?
3. Pastor Dominick said he's seen more students leave the faith because of romantic relationships than any other reason. Do you think that could be true? How could having a boyfriend or girlfriend have anything to do with your spiritual walk?
4. What was the main point of the parable of the two bridges?
5. Why is it more important to BE the right person than GET the right person?
6. Why do you think some people are so desperate to date someone and afraid of being single?
7. What are some PROS to being single?
8. Which of the seven areas of development do you feel you need the most growth in? They were: Priorities, Respect for authority, Humility, Self-control, Physical boundaries, Integrity, and a Relationship with Jesus.
9. How will you be intentional this week to stretch in that area?

Ask for prayer requests. Pray.

Fill out student contact sheet in your folder with anyone new.