

Dating: God's Way

by Joshua Harris

To experience God's best, we must wait for His timing, focus on becoming whole and holy, and reserve commitment and loyalty for marriage.

Duration: 48:41

Scripture: 2 Samuel 11:1, Psalm 51:10, Ecclesiastes 3:1, John 4:14, John 13:35, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Peter 2:2

Topics: "Christian Dating", "Purity Matters"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of living differently in order to avoid negative consequences in relationships. He shares a story about a young boy who cheats a girl out of her candy by hiding his favorite marbles. The boy feels guilty and struggles with his actions throughout the night. The speaker also shares a personal story about a broken engagement and the pain it caused. He emphasizes the need for commitment to purity and living differently to achieve different outcomes in relationships.

Transcript

You know, the thing about relationships is that when you're in the middle of one, and I can stand and give testimony of this, when you're in the middle of it, that can consume your focus. Romance has the ability to just kind of overwhelm your perspective. There was this 19-year-old guy who was going to college in Florida, and he was engaged to be married to this girl named Emily Cavanaugh.

It's this beautiful girl, very much in love with her. Well, a few months into their engagement, she called off the wedding and basically said to him, I don't think that you have a very promising future. I think there are more promising young men out there.

This young guy was broken hearted. He was just overwhelmed and at a loss of what to do. He went over to a friend's house that night and just cried his eyes out.

Wrote another friend a letter that said, a very melodramatic letter that said, all of the stars have fallen out of the sky. She has broken up with me. There is no reason to go on.

Well, that young guy's name was Billy Graham. And I think we can all agree that at 19, Billy still had a lot to live for, as a matter of fact. But you see, he couldn't see that at the moment, because at that moment, all he could see was the fact that he had lost this girl that he loved.

He couldn't see that God was going to use him to take the gospel to more people than any man in history. He couldn't see that a few years later he was going to bring into his life Ruth Bell, this incredible woman who ultimately became his wife and has supported him throughout his ministry. She is an amazing woman.

A loss of perspective. You know, there was a time in my life where I was consumed with relationships and I love girls, which is a terrible combination. But I remember the first time, well, my first girlfriend.

I was 13 years old. I was at this church junior high party. It was a Christmas party.

We were playing a very spiritually charged game of Chubby Bunny, where you stick, you see how many marshmallows you can stick in your mouth and still say, Chubby Bunny? Well, we're playing this game and somebody leans over to me, one of my friends, and says, Josh, Carrie likes you. And I was like, all right. You know, Carrie was cute.

She was fun. But then I was like, well, what should I do? What am I supposed to do? And my friend's like, ask her out. Ask her out.

Whatever that means when you're 13, when your mode of transportation is a skateboard, I was going to ask her out. So I'm trying to get the nerve up to ask her out. And finally, her mom is picking her up.

She's getting in her van and I run out of the house where this party's being held. And I catch the sliding door on this van and I lean in and I say, Carrie, will you go out with me? And she said, yes. And I was like, okay, all right.

Well, the relationship lasted two weeks. And during that time, I don't know if you remember junior high relationships, we didn't talk to each other once because we were so embarrassed to be when we were around each other and we'd be at church and we'd talk to everyone else, but we wouldn't talk to each other. And we'd get on the phone and tell all of our friends how we were going out.

And yeah, you know, we're going out, but we couldn't get the nerve up to actually call each other on the phone. Well, she finally called me at the end of two weeks and basically said something like, maybe we should see other people for a while. You know, something like that.

And that was the end of the relationship. I remember getting off the phone and being like, I just went out and broke up with my first girlfriend. Cool.

But now I'm 21 years old and I grew up with the mentality that a lot of us do, that having a girlfriend or having a boyfriend in a girl's case is a nutritious part of this complete teenage experience. This is what we do. This is how it works.

And if ever there were a time in my life to pursue romance, pursue a relationship, now would be the time because I've gotten more freedom. I have a car now that other people consider a car. And I could take a girl out.

I could show her a good time. Now would be the time to get into a relationship. And yet I've made a decision not to date, not to be pursuing short-term romance with anyone, waiting until I'm ready for marriage to get anything started beyond friendship with girls.

Why? Why would anyone make that choice? This might seem simplistic. Do you know what my motivation is? My reason? You just have to take this at face value. That I want God's best.

I want God's best. I want God's best I want to experience God's best. It's easy for us to say that.

We can all raise our hand. Yes, I want God's best. But what I realized the past several years is that while I wanted God's best, I had never submitted the area of romantic relationships to his lordship.

I wanted his best, but I wasn't really willing to play by his rules. And in the process, I was settling for second best. I remember being at the True Love Waits stakeout in Washington D.C. several years back.

True Love Waits is an awesome thing. I'm sure many of you are familiar with this, where young people are signing commitment cards, saying that they are going to remain pure. They're not going to have sex until they're married.

And at this stakeout, over 210,000 of these cards were placed on the lawn from the Capitol. And I walked up and just took all this in this sea of cards. What an awesome sight.

What an awesome sight. And yet, I could not help but feel a tinge of fear, asking the question, how many of these cards is the enemy of our soul going to burn in the next couple of years? Now, by the grace of God, every single one of those commitments will be kept. But here's the problem.

A lot of us can make a commitment to purity. A lot of us can see the negative consequences of other relationships around us. But what is not being said is that if we want a different outcome, we are going to have to live differently.

That's what's missing. I remember sitting in on a session being taught by a very well-known youth pastor. And he was telling this story.

He was speaking on the topic of love, sex, and dating. He was telling the story of a couple that he knew in his youth group who had started going out. And he was actually seeing this in retrospect, years later.

But this couple started going out and, you know, dating just real innocently, going and, you know, playing putt-putt golf and going to the movies together. But they got closer and closer emotionally. And like it is so easy to do, God designed this, that they became intimate sexually.

And they violated each other's purity. And they broke up not long after this, disappointed and discouraged. And he was seeing them at a high school reunion years later.

The young lady was now married to a guy, had a child. The guy was still single. But they both came to him separately and said, when I see her or when I see him, all of the memories come back.

The pain is still there. Now we were listening to this story in this audience and really on the edge of our seat, waiting for a solution. Because we've seen that happen in our friends' lives.

There are people here that have had that happen to them in their own lives. We wanted something different. But you know, that day no alternative was given because basically what the pastor said, and I respect him, but what he said grieved me, that you're going to go out and you're going to get into those same dating relationships.

You're going to go along. And at that moment of temptation, you need to have more self-control than they did. I would just like to say that that is not working.

It's easy for us, it's easy for us to look around and say, oh no, we don't want sexually transmitted disease. No, we want to maintain our purity and be virgins when we're married. Oh, we don't want a pregnancy.

We don't want all these different things. But are we willing to get off the road that is leading so many people towards those consequences? There's a story that's told by Ravi Zacharias that really aptly illustrates the dilemma that we face. Very simple story.

A young boy has a bag of marbles and this little girl that he knows has a bag of candy. And so he goes to the girl and says, I'll trade you my marbles for your candy. She thinks about it and says, that sounds like a great idea.

They go to get their marbles and their candy. But while he's getting his marbles out of his room, he realizes that there are some of them that he just can't bear to part with. He just can't give these up.

And so he takes three or four of his favorite ones out, rather dishonestly, hides them underneath his pillow, goes and makes the trade, and the girl never knows that he cheated her. But that night, when that little girl is fast asleep in bed, the little boy is wide awake. And you know the question that is rolling over and over again in his mind.

I wonder if she kept her best candy. Now a lot of us go through life. We go through our single years.

We get married. And the question we have for God is, God, is this your best, Lord? Lord, is this your best? Am I experiencing all that you want for me? God, I want your best when I'm single. I want your best when I get married someday, when I have a family.

God, is this your best? But you know something? You and I will never experience God's best until we are willing to give Him our all. Are we willing to make that trade? What I want to look at with you in the remainder of this session, what it means to get back to truth in the areas of love, purity, and singleness. There are five things we want to look at.

Getting back to truth, number one, God's definition of love and His model for relationships is completely different than the one the world works from. God's definition of love and His model for relationships is very different from the one that we're used to seeing in our culture. If you look in the scripture, you open up the Bible, you're going to see that God's model for relationships basically gives you two categories.

You can be here as a single person. Being single is a state that God looks at and says, that's good. I can use that person in my kingdom.

They're flexible. They can go and do all of these different things. But then He also has this other category, this incredible thing called marriage, where two single people actually in His sight become one.

And God looks at marriage and says, this is established by me. This is a good thing. And in this union of a man and wife, I can build a family and build my church.

And that is something that is good. Those are the two categories for relationships that we see. Single with no commitment, married in a lifelong commitment.

But we come along and we are sort of a 31 flavors society. We don't want just chocolate and vanilla. We want chocolate, vanilla and strawberry.

And what we've done is we've sort of inserted a new category of relationships. Instead of being single with no commitment or married in a lifelong commitment, we're in a short term relationship. A relationship that is really for the sake of the relationship.

Now, I understand that there has to be a transition where two single people get to know each other well enough to figure out whether or not they want to get married. That is very true. But the majority of the dating relationships that we get entangled in before we're ready for marriage have nothing to do with moving towards marriage.

They're relationships that are for their own sake, for the sake of enjoying romance without being fully committed. And that is where the majority of our problems take place. In relationships, in a category of relationships that God never really wanted us to get bogged down in.

God's definition of love is also very different. So often our definition is based on feeling while God's is based on commitment. I want to read to you 1 Corinthians 13, 4 through 8. I know you've heard this before.

I want to invite you to hear it as if it were the first time and ask yourself the question, am I living this kind of love? Is this the kind of love that the relationships I see around me or the relationship I'm in is based on? Listen to how God describes love. Love is patient. Love is kind.

It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud.

It is not rude. It is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered.

It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. And listen to the words that describe it.

It always protects. Always trusts. Always hopes.

Always perseveres. Love never fails. Now this is the frightening thing about our dating relationships.

This is true in Christian marriages as well, just as much. That we as Christians have the opportunity to misrepresent God's love for us. God's love to the world.

John 13, 35, Jesus says, by this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. The thing that's going to distinguish you from the world, the factor that's going to set you apart and point to me is the way you love. And the question I want to ask you is what definition of love are you modeling in your short-term dating relationships? That's the question that I want to ask.

What kind of love are you practicing? What definition of love are you basing your lifestyle on? Getting back to truth number two, follow me on this one. The right thing at the wrong time is the wrong thing. The Ecclesiastes 3, 1 says, there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven.

This is the problem. God has things that he wants to give you. He wants you to experience.

I believe romantic love and marriage and relationships are part of that. God has these good things, but the mistake we make is that we take this good thing out of its appropriate season that God wants it to take place in. We take it out of its appropriate season and think that it's still a good thing, when often it can become destructive.

I think dating is really a great idea. I remember reading this article in Focus on the Family magazine where they were talking about how important it is to date your wife. That is exactly what I'm going to be doing.

I've got about five years of pent-up dating I'm going to release on that poor girl. We take it out at the right timing. It can be destructive and distracting.

It can be dangerous. The timing of most high school dating relationships is a lot like going shopping when you don't have any money. You're looking for heartache basically, because even if you find the right thing, you can't do anything about it.

Girls, you can relate to this. You go to the mall and you don't have any money, but the idea is that you want to look. That way, when you do have money, you'll know what you want.

Isn't this true? It makes sense. Let's just say you're walking through this mall and you come to this store and in this window is an outfit and it's called in your name. You think, I'll just try it on.

You go in, but you don't have any money, but you go in and you try it on and let's say it is you. It fits perfectly. What are you going to do about it? One lady in the audience shouted out, charge it.

Or you can do the thing where you go to the clerk and you say, I was wondering if I could put this on hold for about five years. We can laugh at that, but that is exactly what a lot of us have done in dating relationships. We're not content with friendship.

We're not content with being a brother or sister in the Lord. We want something more and yet we're not ready to do anything about it, so we're out shopping around in short term romantic relationships. And even if we find the right one, we can't do anything or we end up trying to hold on to this person for five years through college until we can graduate and get married and end up doing God and them a disservice.

It really all comes down to faith. That's what it's about. Would you be willing to look to God and say, God, I believe in your goodness.

I believe in your sovereignty Lord. And I believe that by passing up something good now, because it's the wrong time, you would give me something better when it's the right time. That's the faith that's involved.

Be willing to wait for God's timing. Getting back to truth. Number three, any season of singleness is a gift from God.

Any season of singleness is a gift from God. I'm not talking about a lifelong condition or state where God has called you to be single. The majority of the people here will get married.

But what we need to realize and recognize is that any season of time, whether it's a year, whether it's five years, is a gift from God. Paul writing in first Corinthians seven thirty two. I'm reading from a paraphrase.

I want you to live as free of complications as possible. All right. When you're unmarried, you're free to concentrate on simply pleasing the master.

Marriage involves you in all the nuts and bolts of domestic life and then wanting to please your spouse, leading to so many more demands on your attention, the time and energy that married people spend on caring for and nurturing each other. The unmarried can spend in becoming whole and holy instruments of God. Paul is not ripping on the institution of marriage, but what he's trying to get through are thick skulls, is that if you are single, don't view that as some sort of purgatory.

It is a gift from God. And what I want to challenge you with and ask you is, are you using this time to become a whole and holy instrument of God? Is that your focus? John Fisher writes, as a single young man at the time, God has called me to live now, not four years from now. He wants me to realize my full potential as a man right now, to be thankful for that and to enjoy it to the fullest.

I have a feeling that a single person who is always wishing he were married would probably get married, discover all that is involved and wish he were single again. He will ask himself, why didn't I use that time when I didn't have so many other obligations to serve the Lord? Why didn't I give myself totally to him then? Someone has said, don't do something about your singleness, do something with it. That's precisely the spirit that we need to have.

And I would be remiss if I did not say that if you have the mentality that somewhere out there, there is a human being on this planet that is going to be that ultimate relationship, even if it's in marriage that you're looking to, that will always be there for you to pick you up when you're feeling down. You are looking in the wrong place because only Jesus Christ can fill that in your life. When God is your strength, when he is your sustenance, then it's all right if once in a while those human relationships let you down because he is your source.

Getting back to truth number four, you cannot own someone outside of marriage. We have to realize that there's more to save for marriage than just sex. There is a claim of time and focus and loyalty that is to be reserved for that covenant of marriage.

And we really have no business demanding that or asking for that from someone else until we've made that commitment. I have a lot of friends that are going out and I love them. I do not at any moment think I am better than them because I'm not dating and they are or anything like that.

I don't know if you have friends like this, but you know, couples that are going out and for all intents and purposes, they might as well be married in terms of the way they act with each other and they spend their time. And I'm assuming I'm not talking about being impure in their physical relationship. That may be completely fine, but they monopolize each other's weekends and their time and they can't do anything unless they're together.

I really don't believe that we have any business making that kind of claim on another person's life or letting someone else make that claim on our life until we have both committed ourselves to them. Elizabeth Elliot in *Passion and Purity* writes this. Oh, this is potent.

Unless a man is prepared to ask a woman to be his wife, what right has he to claim her exclusive attention? Hello, did you hear that? Unless a man is prepared to ask a woman to be his wife, what right has he to claim her exclusive attention? Unless she's been asked to marry him, why would a sensible woman promise any man her exclusive attention? And then she gets a little harsher on the boys. If when the time has come for a commitment, he is not man enough to ask her to marry him, listen closely, girls. She should give him no reason to presume that she belongs to him.

She should give him no reason to presume she belongs to him. And yet that's exactly what we do. Giving away pieces of our heart one by one, giving ourselves completely to someone when we are really not committed to each other, when that relationship is not even completely defined.

You know, a lot of people have this idea that being in a dating relationship, a long-term relationship or whatever, is sort of like getting the best of being single and the best of being married. Because you still have the freedom of being single and you're still pretty flexible, you don't have all the responsibility, but you sort of have the intimacy and the romance and the relationship of being married. You're living in the best of both worlds.

I would like to argue that you are living in the worst of both worlds. Because you not only are really wasting the true freedom of singleness, you're not able to utilize that, you're distracted. At the same time, you're never able to have the true security of a marriage relationship.

You are living in the worst of both. You know, my hope, my prayer is that somewhere out there, God has a girl that He is preparing for me, preparing each other, both of us for each other, to serve Him. But you know, if I spent all of my time right now trying to hunt her down or having found her to try and hold on to her, I would not only be doing God a disservice by wasting this season of singleness when I know I'm really not ready to get married yet, I would not only be doing God a disservice, I would be doing her a disservice.

Because guys, she doesn't need a boyfriend. What she needs is a young man who, by the grace of God, will be mature enough to use his season of singleness to prepare to be a godly husband and father someday. Getting back to truth number five, we've looked at love, we've looked at the season of singleness, and now I want to touch briefly on purity.

This is something that fortunately has been a focus lately in the church, and this is awesome. But I think it's important to realize, and this is number five, that purity starts in the heart and is expressed in a lifestyle that avoids settings of temptation and compromise. I realize that we have some really messed up ideas of what purity is.

We have this mentality that purity is sort of a line in the sand. This is the line right here, right there. And everything on this side is pure, and everything on that side is impure.

Purity is a line. So you know what we do with that mentality? We get just as close to the line as we can. Oh yeah.

Whoa, I'm still pure. I am all, oh yeah, I'm pure. Uh huh.

Whoa, I'm pure. Yes, I'm still there. But you know something? That is not God's description of purity.

What is his admonition? Do not let your heart turn in that direction. Keep yourself far from it. There's a story in the life of David that graphically illustrates this principle.

We all know the story of David and Bathsheba. This is the black spot on this godly man's life, where he not only committed adultery, but he murdered the woman's husband to cover up his sin. Well, you think about David.

Here is a man who loves the Lord, who communed with God and had a relationship and intimacy that most of us can only dream about. And yet, how did he fall so far? How did it start out? Well, let me tell you how it didn't start out. It didn't start out with David waking up one morning and saying, I really want to sin today.

I am so sick of being a goody two-shoes, psalm-singing, God-fearing shepherd king. I'm going to go sin. Now, you know where it started? The story starts here.

In the spring, when kings go off to war, David stayed home. Now, it's not as if you and I can say, well, God should have put that in the Ten Commandments. In the spring, thou king, thou must go off to war.

No, but the point is, he was not doing something really wrong. It was just a small step. He was not where he was supposed to be.

A small step in the wrong direction. And then he's on this rooftop, looks out, sees a woman bathing. Just a side note to the girls.

Please, do not take baths on your roof. Thank you. A thought process is kicked into gear.

Instead of rejecting it, he lets it linger. He calls for the woman, commits adultery. And then to cover up this sin, he has her husband murdered in cold blood, one of his most loyal soldiers.

And it's not until the prophet Nathan has his finger pointing in David's face saying, David, you're the man, that David finally wakes up and realizes just how far he's come. He's not only a homewrecker, he's not only an adulterer, but the blood of an innocent man is on his hands. And the question that must have been burning in his heart at that moment is, how in the name of all that is holy did I get here? The answer is just one little step at a time in the wrong direction.

At the conferences that we do, I meet a lot of 12, 13, 14, 15-year-old girls that come up afterwards and say, what are you talking about? Not dating? You are nuts. And what's the big deal about going out with somebody or holding somebody's hand or kissing them? What is the big deal? And it's not as if I can look at them and say, oh, no, it is a big deal. You are going straight to the pit of H-E double hockey sticks if you do that.

It's not a big deal. It's just small steps. Small steps in the wrong direction.

Because you see, I'm meeting 16, 17, 18, 19-year-old girls. And after a few of those relationships, a few breakups, that heart that once was so soft is starting to get hard. Or one night, he didn't stop when she asked him to, and she took that test, and she's going to have a baby.

I remember being in Pennsylvania, a beautiful 16-year-old girl walked up afterwards. She had just found out that she was pregnant by her 19-year-old boyfriend. Good family, good Christians.

You know the question that's hard at that moment? How did I get here? How did I get here? And you know what the answer is? It's the same as it was for King David, just one little, little, little step in the wrong direction. The purity that God asks for in your and my life is not a purity that sees how close you can get to some imaginary line. It is a purity that has you running as fast as you can in the opposite direction.

That's what he's asking for in your life. In the heart. It's because of these five principles that I've made the following commitments.

I call this a commitment to pursue God's best. These are the commitments that I've made based on what we've talked about. I will recognize that intimacy and that closeness and that trust in a relationship is the reward of commitment.

And I will not pursue a romantic relationship before I'm ready for marriage. Second, I will view my single years as a gift from God. Third, I will recognize that I cannot own someone outside of marriage before I'm ready to get married and commit myself to a young lady.

I have no right to try to control her life or monopolize her time. Fourth, I will view every relationship as an opportunity to model the love of Christ. Finally, I will avoid situations that could compromise the purity of my body or mind based on these commitments.

Why is it that I'm not dating? Well, what I found to be true in my own life is that when I pursue a short term relationship where the focus of the relationship is the relationship itself, before I'm ready for commitment, it encourages me, number one, to practice a wrong definition of love. It focuses on the moment. Second, no matter how hard you try, it distracts you.

It distracts you from fully using your singleness to be tying yourself up in a short term relationship. And finally, and this is true no matter how strong you might both be as Christians, and this has been true in my life, is that typical dating that has two people focusing on each other, becoming intimate before they're ready for commitment, going off alone, places you in situations and environments that encourage compromise, encourage small steps in the wrong direction. And that is why I made the decision not to date and I'm waiting until I'm ready to make the commitment of marriage, to pursue romance.

Now, I want to talk to you about what it means to some steps in living this kind of commitment. I don't know what you think of anything I've said, but I want to ask you to step back and ask the Lord to help you see this from his perspective. I'm not concerned with whether or not you agree with me or like the way I presented something or agree with every single point.

But the thing I want to beg you to do today is forget about me. And if God is saying something to you, if he is speaking to your heart, then answer that and obey that voice. That's the primary concern right now.

If you would respond to his prompting in your life and not turn your back on it. And so if you've been listening and you've been thinking, yes, I see that that point is true. I've seen that prove true in my relationships.

I want that to change. I want to live that same kind of commitment. How do I do that? Well, this is, these are some steps that can help you live that kind of commitment.

Number one is important to start with a clean slate. Repenting of past behavior, ending a relationship that you know is wrong. You might be in the middle of something that you know is distracting you, has a wrong focus.

I know that that's not easy to get out of something like that. I, when I was 15 to 17, I was in a serious relationship. I went out with this girl for two years, cared deeply about her, but there was a point at which I began to realize that our focus was wrong, that we were distracting each other.

We were hindering our walk with the Lord. It was the wrong time. And I do not want to try and make it sound as if it's just the easiest thing to go and end that kind of relationship.

It is not easy at all. But I'm here to tell you that if God asks you to do something, he will walk through the path of obedience with you. He will not leave you alone.

And I stand as a witness to tell you at the moment that we ended that relationship, it was as if God looked down and said, all right, now I can use you both. Now that you are fully available to me. This girl is still one of our family's closest friends.

She is very close with my mother. It was very hard to do. And yet it was the path of obedience.

Second step in living this commitment is to make your parents your teammates. And I cannot emphasize this enough. You need them on your side.

You need them on your team for accountability to answer to and also for wisdom so that you can ask questions. There was a time in my life where the area of relationships and who I liked and so on was something that I did not talk about with my mom and dad because I knew if they got involved, they would mess it up. And I regret that to this day.

And one of the most awesome things in my relationship with my mom and dad now is the ability we have to sit down and I can just talk about girls with them. You know, I don't need to be thinking about this girl. I should not be thinking about this girl.

I am not thinking about this girl. And my mom and dad will get on both sides of me and say, that's right. But just being honest with them, just sharing my struggles, just sharing when I'm feeling attracted to someone.

And there have been so many instances, even in the last year where I was allowing a relationship to become intimate when it going beyond friendship and it was their love and counsel to just say, wait a second, Josh, does this line up with what you've committed to? Does this line up with what you believe? And being able to say, oh, you're right. I'm going off track with this. This is the wrong time.

How can I say this to you? I know there might be those things in your relationship with your mom and dad that are barriers, walls that have been built up. Maybe there's a need for humility and repentance on both sides. But all I can say to you is nobody wants you to have a better marriage than your mom and dad.

Nobody cares more about that. Nobody wants to cheer you on as you use these years for God, as you experience all he has for you. And be humble enough to go to them and say, mistakes have been made in the past.

It has not been right in the past, but I want to work and make it right. I need you during this time. Establish that team.

Next, establish protective boundaries. Rules will not save us. They cannot be the starting point.

There has to be a heart change, an attitude change. But once you've made that heart change, those boundaries can help remind you of what you believe and help keep you on course. I remember getting to know this one girl in my church.

When we were first getting to know each other and I was spending time with her family, her dad called me up out of the blue. And he said, Josh, I'd like to go to breakfast with you. And I'm thinking, hello? That sounds really serious.

What's going on here? So he took me out to breakfast. I think this is the most nervous I've ever been eating a fried egg. And he just wanted to say to me, you know, we, um, I talked to every guy that's a friend of my daughter's.

I know that you guys are not romantically interested in each other, but I just want you to know that these are certain guidelines that we've established. We've got a team with Rebecca. I just want you to understand what these are and respect these.

You know, I was not, ladies, I was not turned off by that. It was awesome to see a dad who loved his daughter and was not going to let just any, any Joe waltz in and do whatever he wanted to do with his daughter. Be back by 12 o'clock, Mr. Smith.

Thank you. No, they had a team. They had boundaries that they expected me to honor.

Next, it's important to check who's whispering in your ear, check your influences, whether it's what you're reading, what you're listening to. If there are those things that are pulling you down to your commitment, be willing to turn it off. Be willing to look for alternatives.

And finally, probably most importantly, trust God with the details. Trust God with the details. So often we want to know everything that's going to happen and exactly how it's going to unfold for the next, hey, 10, 15 years of our life.

People come to me, well, Josh, if you don't, you aren't dating, you know, checking girls out. How are you going to know what you like? What's going to happen? I mean, what if you blah, blah, blah, blah, blah? They go through all these different scenarios. I don't know.

I don't know how it's all going to unfold. I don't need to know how it's all going to unfold. All I need to know is that God has called me to trust him.

I want to trust him in the details. Elizabeth Elliott writes about her relationship with Jim Elliott. We were being asked to trust, to leave the planning to God.

God's ultimate plan was far beyond our imaginings as the oak tree is from the acorns imaginings. The acorn does what it was made to do without pestering its maker with questions about when and how and why we have been given an intelligence and a will and a whole range of wants that can be set against the divine pattern for good are asked to believe him. We're given the chance to trust him when he says to us, if any man will let himself be lost for my sake, he will find his true self.

When will we find it? We ask the answer is trust me. How will we find it? The answer again is trust me. Why must I let myself be lost? We persist.

The answer is look at the acorn and trust me. While listening to this tape, perhaps God's spirit has been talking to your heart. If you felt the need to draw closer to your creator, why not start today? God has provided a way for man to enter into a relationship with him forever through his son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, I'm the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the father but by me. The Bible says that as many as receive him, to them give he power to become the children of God.

You too can receive him right now by asking him to forgive you of your sins and asking him to come into your life and to be Lord and savior of your life. If you'd like to receive Jesus Christ in your life today, you

can do so through a simple little prayer. Just open up your heart and repeat this prayer with me.

Lord Jesus, I admit to you that I am a sinner. I believe that you died on a cross for my sins. Please forgive me of all of my sins.

Please come into my heart and into my life. Please make my life acceptable unto you. Thank you Lord for your gift of eternal life and I receive you this day.

In Jesus name I pray. Amen. Now if you prayed that prayer with me right now, you are a new person.

All your past sins and faults have been forgiven by God and in his eyes you are a brand new creature. The Bible says that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away and behold all things become new.

Now as a newborn spiritual infant, you should seek the sincere milk of God's word so that you may grow by it. So read your Bible and pray to the Lord often and seek out other Christians and enter into fellowship with them. We'd love to hear of your decision for Christ and we'd love to give you a free study of the book of John on cassette by Pastor Chuck Smith.

Jesus never turned a spiritual or hungry or thirsty soul away but filled everyone who asked. So we'd like to do the same for you in his name. So please write to us at the address on this tape and tell us of your needs and what the Lord has done for you today.

May the Lord bless you now and keep you in everything you do and everything you say. Welcome to the family. We want to see Jesus, Jesus.

To reach out and touch him and say that we love him. Open our ears Lord and help us to listen. Oh we love him.

We want to see Jesus.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/2/SID2519.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/joshua-harris/dating-gods-way/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net