

The Concurrently Companion



Episode 57: Teen dating and the family of grace (with Amy Auten and Rob Patete)

Topic introduction

This week, we're laying a foundation for a conversation that is sure to have multiple parts: relationships in the internet age—how do we have healthy in-person relationships (including dating). In a future episode, we'll push further into how we have healthy online relationships.

Key terms and figures: *dating, making a bid, John Gottman, love or attachment style: pleasers/victims/controllers/avoiders/vacillators, Debi Pearl, missional relationship*

Questions

What is a biblical framework for dating? Where does the Bible speak with clarity, requiring obedience? What goodness and brokenness do we observe in scriptural models? Where is there liberty, requiring us to show charity towards one another?

What is the biblical pattern we follow regarding all that we do in the world? How is that reflective of the Father's posture and method with His image-bearers? Does one set of guidelines work for every individual? How does that both encourage and challenge you?

How do we get to know people (including our own family members)? What does it require of us? How do we determine an individual's maturity, for example?

What kind of etiquette or manners do you want to instill in your children (ideally, before they are young adults) in the hope that they will care for and honor those with whom they spend time (both friends and romantic relationships)? What do you hope to see from those who are in relationship with your children?

How does history inform our understanding of romantic relationships? How is today's society decidedly different from even 100-150 years ago? How does that affect the tensions and pressures we experience?

How can we provide safe places for (be hospitable towards) our young adult children and students in order for them to get to know one another and practice healthy relationships?

What structures can you create and agree upon (welcome your older children into this process)? What support can you offer?

What basic psychology can I help my children understand, to help them avoid blindly or naïvely walking into a dysfunctional relationship?

How can we be community-minded, missional even, in our dating expression? How can we as the church draw other lonely teens in for the sake of transformation, and for the ultimate relationship that transforms all other relationships?

Ask your teens and young adults:

What pressures do you feel in relationships as you get to know others?

How does technology affect the way you interact with people?

What guidelines would you come up with for dating?

What questions would you want to use to examine the potential of the *real* people in your life (not just the way they interact online or the ideas that blossom in your head)?

Scriptural anchors/provision

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases. — Song of Songs 2:7

God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. — 2 Timothy 1:7

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