

# *“Dating” Friendships*

## How the Gospel Affects Romance

“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever, Amen.” Romans 1:25

**Anything to which we say, “I cannot be happy without \_\_\_\_\_,” will enslave us, ruin us, and we will ruin it.**

We see many sad situations in marriage relationships:

- Divorce
- “Love-less” marriages
- Hurting each other, but “staying married for the kids”
- Unfaithful, desert marriage for work, other friends, other lovers.


Did you know, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, God essentially commands and teaches that His people must be very careful to have Gospel-Centered Friendships?

*When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you... You shall make no covenant with them ... <sup>3</sup> You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, <sup>4</sup> for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Deuteronomy 7:1-4*

*Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 2 Cor 6:14*

These commands have to do, not with racial or ethnic “purity” but with devotion to God Himself! We are prone to follow small “g” gods. Finding and making Gospel-centered friends is essential to nurturing a vital, growing walk of faith with Jesus!

So, one of the most important things you can do is to make sure you are paying careful attention to discovering and making Gospel-centered friendships!



*Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Proverbs 13:20*



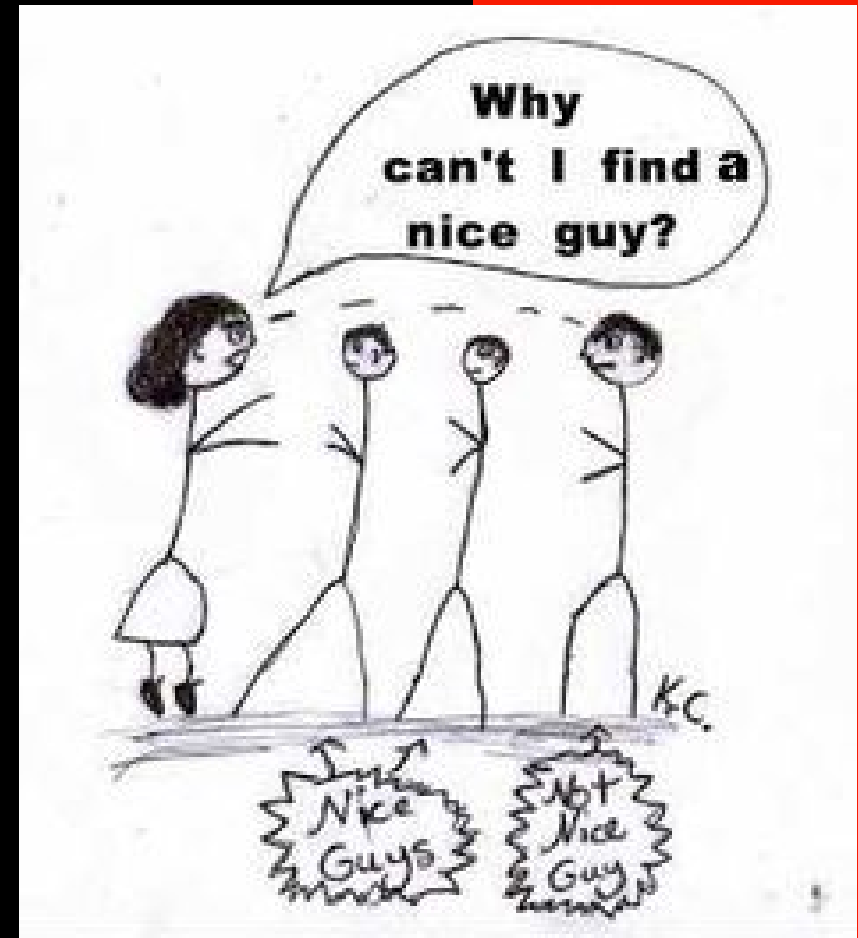
Being in a group of friends growing in being Gospel-centered, discovering Gospel Renewal Stories, you find the wisdom of the Gospel changing you from the inside out.

# Created Things

- **Enslave us**
  - Temporary satisfaction
  - Tyrannical demands to upkeep
- **We ruin it**
  - Gradual disenchantment (with thing, with people)
  - Eventually discarded (lose relationship)
- **It ruins us**
  - Depression, anger, jealousy, exploitation, manipulation, control issues, etc.
  - These begin during dating, continue into marriage – lead to either bad marriage or divorce

**A boyfriend, girlfriend, lover, spouse... is a created thing!**

- How can we pursue this good gift from God in a way that we don't ruin it and it does not ruin us?



# The Urge to Merge

## Trust in self with urge to merge = “Religious/Irreligious Pendulum”

- **Religious** -> “Submerge the Urge”
  - Religious = keeping strict control, very careful for fear of messing up
- **Irreligious** -> “Splurge the Urge”
  - Irreligious = appetites rule, if it feels good do it, deal with consequences when forced to
- **Gospel** says: “Fear” God or “fear” god little “g” -> freedom vs slavery
  - *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. Pr 9:10*
  - *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. Pr 14:12*
  - *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight. Pr 3:5-6*

### A “Third Way” to handle the Urge to Merge:

- Embrace the tension, wait on the Lord – rest in His love, be led to His best.
- *“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want, He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” Ps 23:1*

# How the Gospel Affects Romance

The Gospel, where God demonstrates His love, trustworthiness, goodness, faithfulness – you can wait on His best, do it His way!

- *Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you. Matt 6:33*

Two sayings for applying the Gospel to seeking romance & dating:

“Be married to God’s will, get married in God’s will.”

“Happiness in romance is a log we stumble upon on the path of duty.”

# The wisdom of the Gospel applied to Dating Friendships

**Gnawing Thought:** “I need to have a romantic relationship because I can’t miss out on having intimacy, friendship and sex! I need the excitement and security of being with someone who I really like, and who really likes me!

**Truth:** I need to rest in God’s love for me in Christ, and trust that as His love fills my heart, He will enable me to love and be loved in all the ways for which He made me, to my highest delight. I can trust Him and wait for Him to give me what He has made me to desire.

*Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Ps 37:4*

- **How do I handle my urge to merge?**
  - **Matt 6:33** – happiness in romance is a log we stumble upon on the path of duty.
  - **Daily time** of friendship with The Friend who makes friendships possible
  - **Gospel-centered friendships** with others, where you are repenting & believing the Gospel – identifying little “g” gods and turning from them back to Jesus and His promises.
  - Regularly being renewed with Jesus and friends in Grace Renewal stories
- God will change you inside – change your character, which will become increasingly wise, and blessed.
- You will begin to sense in others, and in yourself, the “Godly Aphrodisiac.”



## What is the “Godly Aphrodisiac”?

- Aphrodisiac – “a food, drink, or other thing that stimulates sexual desire.”
- Godly Aphrodisiac – “The Lord and His ways filling and renewing a person, making them increasingly attractive to Gospel-centered people.”
  - Increasingly secure in Christ – waiting for the Lord to give you what He pleases.
  - Self-control in relationships (2 Tim 1:7, Gal 5:22-23)
  - Increased capacity to live for Jesus & others instead of self (2 Cor 12:15, 2 Cor 5:15)
  - Capacity to love, give, serve instead of take, insecure, control, jealous.

*The Lord himself will set you free, make you secure in Him,  
so you can serve Him & others, wait on Him, content. That is attractive!*