



SESSION 12: KEEPING YOUR FOCUS ON GOD

1—REPUTATION

What's the value of a good name? Turn to Proverbs 22:1.

From a young age, Jenny wanted to follow the Lord, live with integrity, and maintain a good reputation. But in eighth grade, she became interested in a guy named Max. Max didn't have a good reputation, and he was certainly not a Christian. But pretty soon, Jenny and Max were dating.

Jenny's friends were concerned about their relationship. What could these two possibly have in common? "He's just got a messed up home life," Jenny would say. "He's going to start coming to church with me. It's just hard for him to get up early in the morning on Sundays right now."

Do you think that Jenny and Max should be dating or just be friends? Why?

How might Jenny get into trouble at some point in this relationship?

If you were Jenny's friend, what advice would you give her?

Today, ask God to help you make the right choices in your life and be with people who will influence you in godly ways.

2—BE YOURSELF!

Sometimes we act a particular way around one group of people, and then we act in a completely different manner around another group of people. What does James 1:6-8 say about those who do this?

- ☐ They are like waves on the sea that rock the boat
- ☐ They are like waves that wind tosses around
- ☐ They are like wind tossed by the waves
- ☐ They like Double-mint gum

Why is it important to be yourself when you are dating someone?

What could happen if you are always trying to live up to someone else's expectations?

Why is it important to show the person in whom you are interested that you belong to Christ and serve Him?

Today, ask God to help you be real around everyone—especially those you are dating or are attracted to—and live out what you believe about Jesus.

3—A TAIL OF TWO DOGS

The yoke's on you if you don't pay attention to 2 Corinthians 6:14.

Imagine you live in the frozen land of the north and you need to get somewhere. So you take out your dog sled and leash up your trusty team—a German Shepherd and a Dachshund. What do you think will happen?

- ☐ You will quickly end up off track.
- ☐ The two dogs will eventually figure out how to work together.
- ☐ The little dog will hop on the back of the big one.
- ☐ The German Shepherd will slow down to match the pace of the Dachshund.

While it's possible anything can happen, the most likely outcome will be the first one—the strength of the big dog will cause the weaker one to turn aside. In what way is this like a dating relationship where one person is a Christian and the other isn't?

Why is it hard to influence someone for Christ when you are dating that person?

It's a sad but true fact that "missionary dating" just doesn't work. There's a reason the Bible says not to be "yoked" to an unbeliever. Be friends with people, but don't enter into a relationship with someone who doesn't love God the way you do!

4—DON'T NEGLECT GOD

One thing really does lead to another. Read Hosea 13:6 for an example.

Amira was a Christian who loved hanging out with her friends and doing things to help others in her community. One day, she met a boy named Jake in her youth group, and she

was immediately smitten. Jake seemed perfect. He loved God, liked to do service projects in his neighborhood, and prayed and read the Bible every day.

The two began spending time together . . . *lots* of time together. The problem was that the more they saw of each other, the less time they seemed to have for their other friends or the things they used to do. Finally, one of Amira's friends said, "Amira, do you realize that since you've started dating Jake, we hardly see you anymore?"

Amira protested at first, but eventually she realized her friend was right. She wondered what she could do to still see Jake but have more balance in her life.

According to Hosea 13:6, what's the trap we often fall into when we are content and not suffering any major problems?

What kind of limits can Amira put in place with Jake so that she spends time with her friends and—most importantly—time with God?

When you're in a relationship, it is easy to neglect God. You want to make the relationship with the new person work, so you spend a lot of time with him or her and a lot of time thinking about that person. However, what is the danger in doing this?

Today, listen to the words of the prophet Hosea: don't forget God! Look at your life, make sure things are in balance, and don't neglect your time with God. In the long run, this will pay off incredible rewards.