



DISCUSSION GUIDE—LOVE AND DATING

1. It can be awkward talking about dating relationships with other people. If you were thinking about starting or stopping a dating relationship, would you talk to anyone first? If so, what sort of perspective do they have on love and dating?

This might be a hard question to ask, so be willing to give your own answer. It makes all the difference who you're willing to talk to, especially if their view toward dating doesn't include Jesus.

2. What are the benefits of being single?

There are many! Single people have more time to grow in their relationship with God and their relationships with friends. The Bible refers to singleness as a good thing (1 Corinthians 7:8).

3. When learning what you should and shouldn't do with someone while dating, what is the difference between asking "is this sinning" and "is this loving"?

If needed, remind them that "loving" means a Christ-like, self-sacrificial love that is all about the other person's best interests. "Is this sinning" asks how close you can get to the line without going over the line. "Is this loving" goes in the opposite direction, asking what you can do that's in the other person's best interests.

4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you need to hear other people affirm who you are? 1 means not at all. 10 means all the time. Follow up question: How might both ends of that spectrum affect your approach towards dating or other relationships?

If you need affirmation from others, be careful about placing your identity into the hands of your friends or dating partner. If you do not need affirmation from others, be careful that you are still willing to learn about yourself from other people's perspectives. For participants who don't plan to date.

5. What is the difference between being known and being noticed? Why do people often set "being noticed" as the goal?

Being known is when someone sees past your "visible self" (fashion, makeup, hair, etc.) and they get to know your interests, dreams, and pursuits. Perhaps people settle for being noticed because it is quick, simple, and gives a sugar-rush kind of excitement.

6. Just because you start dating doesn't mean your other friends go away. Why is it good to preserve your other friendships, and how can you do that? Is it wise to preserve friendships with people of the opposite gender?

It's good to preserve those friendships because you still need them to guide you and they still need you to guide them. You can preserve friendships by being intentional with times to be together without "significant others."

7. What role do you think physical attraction plays in dating? Follow-up question: Agree or disagree: You don't need to find someone physically attractive in order to date them.

For most it plays some sort of role. The goal of this question is to help them see that for long-lasting relationships, physical attractiveness is just the beginning. It is important to work on the "inner you" even more than you work on your appearance.

8. It can be awkward when many of your friends start to date, but you don't. What encouragement would you give to someone who is feeling unready to date or unwanted by others?

Their value is not determined by how many people ask them out; it is found in Christ. Single people often have a lot more freedom to develop other relationships and other pursuits. Not everyone is ready to date at the same time, and that's okay. Don't be pressured into someone else's expectation.