



Dating Mix | Shawn Johnson | 2.17.19
Life Group Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

Have you ever made someone a mixtape? If so, who was it and what songs do you remember putting on it?

SHARE

We are in our new relationship series called “Mixtape.” If you have ever made a mixtape for someone, chances are your motivation was to move them. Whether it was to remind them of your love, make them rethink things about your relationship, or even convince them to get back together; mixtapes are created to inspire movement!

In this series, we are going to talk about moving our relationships closer to what God had intended them to be. Whether you are single, dating, engaged, or have been married for years, we all have meaningful relationships in our life. And if we are honest, these relationships always have room for improvement.

Over the next several weeks we are going to look at what the Bible has to say about those people who are closest to us, so we can all move forward together!

How has this series been for you so far?

What is one emotion you are feeling about this series? Excitement? Anxiety? Apathy? Explain.

G R O W

Read Genesis 24:12-31

The story of Isaac and Rebekah is a little odd. Obviously, dating and relationships worked a little different back then, but there is still so much we can learn from this story!

What is your initial reaction to this story? What can we learn from the servant?

At this point, Abraham is an old man (Gen 24:1), so he puts his senior servant in charge of finding a wife for his son Isaac. At the time, it was crucial that Abraham's lineage lived on through Isaac, so this was a massive responsibility for the servant. So what does he do? He puts together a simple, but brilliant two-step plan:

Step 1: Go to the right place (Gen 24:13)

Step 2: Pray (Gen 24:12)

Whether you are looking for a spouse or know someone who is, this simple two-step process can be a game changer. The first step is self-evident. All too often, we find ourselves looking for the right thing in the wrong place. If you want a spouse who is trying to put God first, look for them in places full of people who are trying to put God first.

The second step is a little more challenging to implement. When it comes to developing healthy relationships, prayer is the most underutilized tool we have in our tool belt. First, because prayer actually works (James 4:2). Scripture tells us that God listens to our requests, and although he isn't a cosmic slot machine who gives us whatever we want, He invites us to ask because prayer works. But second, because our prayers change our heart for the relationships in our life.

- You can spend this week complaining about your boss and how mean and unfair he or she is, or you can spend the next week praying for them.
- You can spend this week getting angry at your spouse for all the things that frustrate you about them, or you can spend the next week praying for them.
- You can spend the next week worrying that you will never get married or you can spend the next week praying for your future spouse (whoever they may be).

The shift from complaining to praying may feel subtle, but these two different paths have very different destinations. The more we complain and worry about situations, the harder our hearts grow toward them. We become callous and numb, and before we know it, we wake up one morning apathetic toward the entire relationship. Prayer, on the other hand, has the exact opposite effect. The more we pray for someone who is difficult to love, the more we begin to care about them. Our prayers don't just change our situations; they change us!

So pray! Pray for your parents. Pray for your spouse (or future spouse). Pray for your kids (and your kid's future spouse). Pray for your boss, for your friends, and your enemies. There is a reason Paul invites us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). It is the best thing you can do for your relationships!

Do you believe prayer changes things? If so, why do you think it is so difficult to develop a healthy thriving prayer life?

What are some relationships in your life that could use some more prayer? Identify a good time in the day to stop for a few minutes and pray for them.

MOVE

Whether this is your group's very first meeting, or you've been meeting for years, this semester we all have an opportunity to move forward! The best way to do that is to pause for a moment and remember where we are trying to get. In Ephesians 4, Paul paints a great picture of what Christian community can be. Let's read it together and then set some goals for the rest of the semester!

Read Ephesians 4:25-32

Paul calls everyone to speak truth, forgive, encourage, let go of bitterness, and understand that as beings created in the image of God, we are all a part of one body. He is making a big ask here. Obviously, we won't be able to keep all these commands perfectly, but because of the active work of the Holy Spirit within us, as followers of Christ, this is possible. This passage paints a great picture of what your life group can strive toward together!

What part of this passage stuck out to you the most? How can you apply Paul's words to your life this week?

This semester, we all have an opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and with each other. One of the beautiful things about community is having other people around you to help you stay focused on where you are trying to get. In a lot of ways, a Life Group can serve as guardrails on your journey, keeping you from falling away by helping you stay focused on the light at the end of the tunnel, focusing on becoming more and more like Jesus.

So, what are your goals for your relationships this semester? I know that is a broad question but take it one piece at a time. By this summer where do you want to see your relationship with God? What are your goals for your spiritual journey? Do you want to read through the entire Bible? Be in prayer more often throughout the day? Fast once a week? Start a ministry? Be specific!!!!

How about your relationship with your family? Is there any forgiveness or mending that needs to take place? Do you want to intentionally spend more quality time with them? A certain amount of phone calls?

Same question with your friends, co-workers, and your church.

God:

Family:

Friends:

Co-Workers:

Church Family:

Life Group:

Where do you want to be as a group by the end of the semester? You don't have to share every detail with your group. But share as much as you feel comfortable. By sharing with your group, you are inviting each other in to help keep you focused on the man/woman you desire to become.

P R A Y

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely.

T O G O

Ephesians 4:32

“Be Kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

