

L I N K E D



Who and how we date is super important! Culture tells us that relationships and sex are just for fun. It tells us that we can change other people into versions we like more. It values physical attraction to a degree that almost nothing else matters. We're told to have fun, be carefree, and don't worry about the consequences because they're not real anyway. And it all sounds so fun! So fun, in fact, that at first glance it seems like the way to go. But can that really be what God intended for us? To use people? To allow ourselves to be used? To treat our bodies and our hearts with complete recklessness? In this series we'll discover that healthy bonds and true, lifelong intimacy are the real gifts! And God even gives us the directions to see that link establish in our own lives!



LINKED

WEEK ONE

Growing intimacy with God is the best way to learn how to grow intimacy with a partner. In that relationship we discover who we are, how we operate, what we're worth, and what love and mutual submission looks like. If you want true intimacy in your life, start here.

TEXT: 1 CORINTHIANS 13; 1 JOHN 4:9-12

THP (TAKE HOME POINT): JESUS BEFORE EVERYTHING

WEEK TWO

There are healthy bonds & unhealthy bonds. Healthy bonds are created when we spend quality time with people, are present in difficult times, serve together, and enjoy intimacy in the context of marriage. Unhealthy bonds are created when we rush into sex acts, depend on others for happiness, and make excuses for the poor decisions of others. If we want a healthy link with someone, we must pay attention to the bonds we create and how they're lived out.

TEXT: PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11

THP (TAKE HOME POINT): DON'T RELY ON A WEAK LINK

WEEK THREE

WE ALL LIKE TO THINK THAT WE'RE FREE THINKERS THAT AREN'T EASILY SWAYED BY THE INFLUENCE OF OTHERS. BUT THE TRUTH IS WE'RE ALL INFLUENCED ALL THE TIME IN BOTH OBVIOUS AND SUBTLE WAYS. THE CHALLENGE ISN'T TO NOT BE INFLUENCED. THE CHALLENGE IS DECIDING WHO WE ALLOW TO INFLUENCE US AND HOW WE ALLOW THEM TO DO IT.

TEXT: 2CORINTHIANS 6:14-18; PROVERBS 5:1-5

THP (TAKE HOME POINT): WHAT INFLUENCES US GUIDES US

WEEK FOUR

WE'RE MADE TO BELIEVE THAT SEX IS CASUAL. THAT AS LONG AS BOTH PARTIES CONSENT, IT'S ALL GOOD AND FUN. BUT LEANING ON OUR CULTURE TO DEFINE SEX FOR US IS A FOOL'S GAME. BECAUSE CULTURE SHIFTS AND CHANGES. IT DEFINES, REFINES, AND REDEFINES. THERE IS NO FOUNDATION TO BUILD ON. SO WE LOOK TO THE CREATOR OF SEX, WHO IS UNCHANGING, TO DEFINE IT ONCE AND FOR ALL. THIS IS THE ONLY FOUNDATION WORTH BUILDING ON.

TEXT: 1CORINTHIANS 6:12-20; MATTHEW 7:24-27

THP (TAKE HOME POINT): BUILD YOUR LOVE ON THE FOUNDATION THAT HOLDS

A Guide For Conversation

1. GET PREPARED

- READ THE OVERVIEW FOR THE WEEK TO GET A BASIC GRASP ON WHAT IS BEING TAUGHT.
- HAVE THE THP (TAKE HOME POINT) MEMORIZED SO THAT YOU CAN BRING IT UP WITH YOUR STUDENT.
- FOR BONUS POINTS, READ SOME/ALL OF THE SCRIPTURES LISTED AND DO SOME RESEARCH ON WHAT'S BEING COMMUNICATED!

2. GET CURIOUS

- START SLOW AND LIGHT. MAYBE ASK AN ICEBREAKER QUESTION SUCH AS: "DID YOU MEET ANYONE NEW TONIGHT?" "WHAT WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE NIGHT?" "WAS THERE ANY GOOD FOOD?"
- ASK A SPECIFIC QUESTION REGARDING THE THP (TAKE HOME POINT). "HEY, I KNOW THE THP FOR TONIGHT WAS _____. WHAT DID YOU TAKE AWAY FROM THAT?"
- PAY ATTENTION TO THEIR ANSWER! USE THEIR ANSWER TO DRAW OUT FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS. "YOU MENTIONED IT CHALLENGED YOU IN THE AREA OF DEVOTION. WHERE DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU COULD BE MORE DEVOTED THIS WEEK?"
- ASK THEM HOW THE MESSAGE CAN APPLY TO THEIR EVERY DAY LIFE THIS WEEK: "IN LIGHT OF FEELING CHALLENGED TO BE MORE DEVOTED, WHAT IF YOU DEVOTED YOURSELF TO HOMEWORK BEFORE VIDEO GAMES THIS WEEK? OR YOUR BIBLE BEFORE YOUR PHONE?"
- PARTNER WITH THEM: "IN LIGHT OF BEING CHALLENGED TO BE DEVOTED, WHAT IF WE— TOGETHER—DEVOTED OURSELVES TO EATING DINNER AT THE DINNER TABLE 3 TIMES THIS WEEK?"



3. **GET BENEATH THE SURFACE**

- THIS STEP—ADMITTEDLY—WILL TAKE TIME AND WILL DEPEND ON THE TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP YOU HAVE WITH YOUR STUDENT. HOWEVER, CONSISTENCY IS KEY. THE MORE YOU PRACTICE, THE BETTER YOU'LL GET!

- NOTICE THEIR BODY LANGUAGE, TONE OF VOICE, AND OTHER NON-VERBAL CUES. WHAT ARE THEY PROJECTING? STRESS? ANXIETY? ANGER? SADNESS? JOY? ASK A SPECIFIC QUESTION TO DRAW THAT OUT: "HOW ARE YOU FEELING AFTER TONIGHT?"

- ARE THEY CLOSED OFF TO CONVERSATION OR OPEN TO IT? IF CLOSED OFF, ASK THEM IF THERE'S ANYTHING THEY'D LIKE TO DISCUSS. IF THEY STILL DON'T BUDGE, USE YOUR JUDGMENT ON WHETHER TO PRESS AGAIN OR LET THE CONVERSATION BE.

- REAFFIRM YOUR AVAILABILITY. "IF THERE'S ANYTHING MORE YOU'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT, I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I'M HERE FOR YOU."

4. **GET VULNERABLE**

- AS YOU WADE INTO DEEPER CONVERSATION, OFFER AN APPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF VULNERABILITY.

- BEGIN TO SHARE YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES REGARDING THE SUBJECT BEING DISCUSSED (I.E. "WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, I HAD A REALLY DIFFICULT TIME NOT GIVING INTO PEER PRESSURE. HERE'S HOW I GOT HELP TO MAKE BETTER DECISIONS." OR, "HERE'S WHAT I WISH I WOULD HAVE DONE TO AVOID THE CONSEQUENCES THAT NATURALLY CAME AS A RESULT OF MY POOR CHOICES.")

- ALLOW YOUR STUDENT TO SEE YOUR HUMANITY. INVITE THEM IN TO A STORY OF RELATIONSHIP THAT YOU CAN WRITE TOGETHER, IN REAL TIME.

5. **GET PRACTICAL**

- AT NORTHVIEW, WE ALWAYS TALK ABOUT MOVING PEOPLE TO THEIR "NEXT." SO, FOR YOUR STUDENT (AND YOU!), WHAT IS GOING TO BE THEIR NEXT AFTER HAVING THIS CONVERSATION?

- DO THEY NEED TO APOLOGIZE TO SOMEONE? DO THEY NEED TO CONFESS SOMETHING? DO THEY NEED TO EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR SOMETHING? HELP THEM DETERMINE WHAT THEIR NEXT IS GOING TO BE.

- FINALLY, HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE. FOLLOW UP! MAKE SURE THAT THEY COME THROUGH ON WHAT IT IS THAT THEY SAID THEY'D DO.

If/When They Disagree

What do we do when there is pushback and rebuttals? How can we avoid letting this conversation become a wedge in the relationship?

Be respectful, not dismissive

We cannot act quickly to dismiss our students as ignorant or be too harsh when responding to their rebuttals. If we do, it will close them off and truth cannot walk through a closed door.

Keep your emotions in check (Don't freak out)

Refuse to get defensive. Don't allow your student to feel as if you're against them. Calmly, politely, wade through the conversation even if you feel them getting hyperemotional.

Find and mention common ground

In her TED Talk on debate, Julia Dhar says, "...the way to reach people is by finding common ground." We have to intentionally find places to use the phrase "I agree that _____" or "I can see how _____ can make sense."

Where is it that you and your student can find common ground?

Finding common ground can look like: "I can see how you would see it that way!" "I can tell you've thought about this." or "I can tell that you have been thinking about this."

Probe a disagreement with questions

Questions are usually a better use of rebuttal than spitting out our thoughts. Ask them,

"Where did you learn that?"

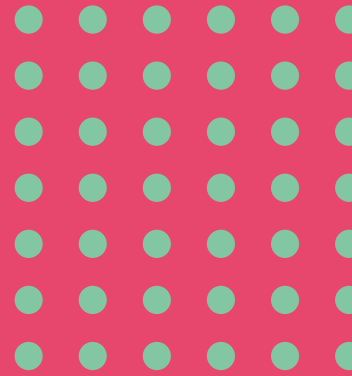
"How do you see it differently?"

"What brought you to this conclusion?"



LINKED

RESOURCES YOU CAN BUY



EVERY YOUNG MAN'S BATTLE BY STEPHEN ARTERBURN
EVERY YOUNG WOMAN'S BATTLE BY STEPHEN ARTERBURN
WILD AT HEART BY JOHN ELDRIDGE
CAPTIVATED BY JOHN & STASI ELDRIDGE

CONGRATULATIONS ON ENGAGING IN AN INTENTIONAL CONVERSATION WITH YOUR STUDENT! WHETHER YOU MADE IT THROUGH STEP 1 OR ALL 5 STEPS, GIVE YOURSELF A PAT ON THE BACK. EVERY CONVERSATION MUST START SOMEWHERE. YOUR RELATIONSHIP WILL BE BETTER FOR IT IN THE LONG RUN! YOU'RE DOING THE HARD WORK!

WHEN FAMILIES WIN, WE WIN!

