Linked Wk4 (Full Script)

Series Road Map

**Series Overview:** Who and how we date is so 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 intimacy are the real gift and God even gives us the directions to see that link establish in our own lives.

**Week Overview:** 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.

**Grab the Room (Intro):** Weak internet connection

**Tension (What's the Struggle?):** Bonding with others is always fun & exciting. That’s why we’re fooled into thinking that all bonds are good and of equal value.

**Climb (Rising Conflict):** Some bonds help, while other bonds hurt. How do we know the difference?

**Truth + Supporting Text (Illuminate):** There is a better way. Philippians 1:1-11

**THP (What’s the Takeaway?):** Don’t rely on a weak link

**Application (Call to Action):** Tensile Test. Test the quality of your bond. How did the bond grow? How does the bond effect you? Is the bond reciprocated? Are you relying on a weak link?

*Red – Scripture*

*Blue – Personal Story*

*Green – Prop*

***THP/Main Points – Bold***

I want you to imagine that you desperately want something that you have to order from the internet. And this thing you want to order is only available in a limited number and for a very limited time. Maybe it’s some sort of electronic device or piece of clothing or a sport or concert ticket. Could be anything, just get in that headspace. You know you have to bring your absolute best, so you plan ahead. You grab the fastest computer you can find; you free your calendar for the moment the sale starts, and you head to somewhere with the absolute best, most reliable, and fastest internet anywhere. Why is that? I mean you might be hanging out at a friend’s house who lives out in the country. Why don’t you just trust the internet connection he has? Or you’re already at a local coffee shop that has free guest Wi-Fi. Why don’t you just stay there and roll the dice and hope for the best?

*Personal story of when this happened to you…*

Well, this actually happened to me not too long ago. Any country music fans in here? Specifically, Luke Combs? Well, I have been a HUGE Luke Combs fan for the last four or five years now and one of my dreams in life has been to go to one of his concerts. The problem is that he has rarely been in Indy for a concert. And any concert that is within a 4-hour drive has been ridiculously overpriced to the point where I, a top .01% listener of his in 2020, refuse to fork up the cash to go. Well, just recently he released his Growin’ Up tour dates and Indy was surprisingly on there and I knew I HAD to be there April 1st. So I immediately went to his website to sign up for presale access and after 90 minutes, was able to sign up for the CHANCE to get access to presale – it wasn’t even guaranteed! Fast forward 24 hours and I got the email that I WAS chosen and was told the specific time and website to go to for purchase. Here was the catch – it was “first come first serve.” Oh boy. So, over the next 24 hours I set 10 reminders, figured out where I would be at 10am the next day so I could plan on removing myself and buying the tickets. To be completely honest, I was going to be in a meeting and there was going to be a VERY HIGH chance that I was going to have to ‘use the bathroom’ at that exact time. And when 9:50am rolled around the next day, I excused myself to the restroom WITH my laptop, cleared all of my open tabs, joined the waiting room as soon as humanly possible and eventually was let into the queue because I was NOT going to miss this. I entered my presale code and IMMEDIATELY was let in, that’s how few people beat me to the line. I bought all of the tickets I was allowed to and have since then sold them to my friends to make my dream of seeing Luke Combs in concert come true.

I did all of this planning ahead of time but in the end, I was at the mercy of my internet connection. Since it was strong, I was good to go. But if it would have been weak, I would have been in trouble. I got lucky – and more times than not, I can just trust that the established Wi-Fi connection will be a strong one. A strong link in that regard can be fairly easy to come by, but why does it seem that this is one of the most difficult parts of finding the right person? I mean how many times have you looked at a girl and thought, “Why are you with that guy? He treats you horribly!” Or “Bro, that girl is so mean, why do you put up with that?” It is something that is obvious from the outside but easy to ignore on the inside.

**DON’T RELY ON A WEAK LINK**

What do I mean when I say a “Link?” Well, relationships are driven by bonds – these intangible thoughts/emotions that take a very real form in the way of feelings for people and things. We form bonds with anything. And I mean anything. Many, if not all of us here can say that we have formed bonds with either our friends, families, pets or hopefully a combination of those things! God gave us this incredible ability to create these emotional bonds of love and belonging with things. And what’s crazy is it doesn’t even need to be a living thing. Does anyone feel a bond with their car or device or bed? Do you talk to it, encourage it, or dread saying goodbye? I know I do! My car’s name is Bianca the Elantra, and I’ve even got this theory that bonding with your car makes it run longer. Call me crazy.

The point is that we humans create bonds with others that are so strong and so powerful that they literally determine the direction of our lives. The bonds we feel for people can lead us to do things we never imagine, in good and bad ways. Maybe your bond with another friend in Northview Students caused you to go to an event that really impacted your life. Or the bond you have with another led you to try a new food that you really love. Or maybe the bond you have with your friend group led you to do something you regret, that you’d never do on your own. Maybe the bond you have with a boyfriend or girlfriend led you to make a decision you wish today you’d never made.

1 Corinthians 15:33 says “Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”

The truth is: 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 strong link with someone, we must pay attention to the bonds we create and how they’re lived out.

That’s kind of scary, isn’t it? Because bonds are a joy to establish. They require hard work but result in so much good when they are done the correct way. Getting to know someone new, enjoying their company, and being opened up to new perspectives and ideas is fun. You know that feeling when you’re making a new friend and you start to realize, “Wow, this is more than just a casual friendship. This is a big deal!” That’s such a fun feeling! You spend extra time with them, you go on epic adventures, you talk about the things that matter to you and the bond grows and grows. But it’s often only when the bond is formed that we realize that things are headed in ways we’re not sure we like. Maybe they suddenly bring up a topic that you’re not at all comfortable with. Or they want to pursue something that you don’t think is healthy. But you’ve created this bond and suddenly there’s fear of letting them down or even a fear of losing that relationship. So, you ignore the voice that’s telling you to run and you fall in line, only to regret it.

I see it all the time: healthy bonds that lead to blessings. I see it all the time because I’m a student pastor and I have the privilege of spending tons of time with you guys. Every week, I hear someone say, “I want you to meet the friend I invited.” And it fills me with so much joy to see you using the bonds you create to love someone well and enrich their lives. Or I’ll see you guys praying together or talking in your life groups about the things going on in your lives that really matter. Or on trips, when you care for each other and use your collective gifts to make a difference in someone’s life. Those bonds you have with each other are being used to bless each other and love each other deeply. And just look at how those bonds are formed. Maybe they were there for you when things were tough, and the love they provided and wise counsel they gave to you were so appreciated, it endeared them to you even more. Or maybe you were serving somewhere: could be a church ministry, volunteering in the community, or going on a mission trip. And when you served side by side with them, you got to know that person in a whole new way. That’s what a healthy bond looks like and that’s how a healthy bond is formed.

But I also see it all the time: unhealthy bonds that lead to suffering. I see it all the time because I’m a student pastor and I have the privilege of spending tons of time with you guys. It may be someone I’m counseling who says, “I only did it because so and so told me to” or “I know that I know better, but you don’t know what it’s like to feel that kind of pressure.” And it breaks my heart to see you settle for so much less when there’s so much more out there for you. Or your parent texts me and says, “So and so is getting wrapped up in this thing. I don’t know why, they know so much better.” And I’ll sit on the phone and hear your momma crying because you’re potentially sacrificing your future because the voices you surround yourself with don’t truly care about you. Or, how many times have I heard students talking about a mutual friend who is wandering from their faith and their own personally held beliefs all because of the influence of their significant other. And you just can’t seem to believe that this person you know is acting this way, but it’s all because of a bond they share with this one person. And maybe that bond was created in a way that was innocent at first: “they make me feel good about myself, they accept me for who I am.” But then the bond grows because they’re already in deep. Saying no to this person might remove them from their life. So, they keep doing the next ill-advised thing and the next poor decision. Or if I can be real, one thing I see heart-breakingly often is this dynamic lived out in a romantic relationship. A boyfriend/girlfriend combo where sex is introduced before the covenant promise of marriage.

Maybe you’ve heard this before, but maybe you haven’t. God gave us something amazing when He gifted the act of sex to Adam & Eve, and thereby to the world. This gift of sex is meant to be enjoyed. There’s a reason it’s everywhere. Sex is supposed to be fun. And done in the context of marriage it isn’t just a fun thing to do, it leads to incredible blessings. The most obvious is kids. One gift of sex is building a family to love and enjoy. But a more immediate and unavoidable blessing of sex and sex acts is the bond that it creates between two people.

But even past the physical, this gift is just incredible. God designed man and woman to unite in this act and every time they do, it draws them closer and closer to each other. Scientists are just breaking the surface of seeing how and why this hormone causes couples to be more loyal to one another and even more attracted to their spouse than they otherwise would be. The brain chemical that’s released during sex literally makes you love a person more.

That’s amazing when it’s done inside of marriage. That’s catastrophic when it’s done outside of marriage. Because in both scenarios it builds a dynamic bond between two people. In marriage it makes you stronger and more able to endure. Outside of marriage it makes you needier and more likely to excuse bad behavior. It’s why you see people putting up with behavior that makes no sense. It’s why you hear people excuse their boyfriend or girlfriend of things that are just crazy. Because they built a connection, a deep bond of loyalty and patience, with someone who not only hasn’t earned the right to have it, but uses that bond for their own gratification. In short, we consciously and subconsciously remain bonded with someone that has no right to be bonded to us. They rely on a weak link, formed by mistakes, with a future marred with regret.

**Don’t rely on a weak link.**

That’s easy to say, but what does that really mean? Like everything, we look to Jesus. But He never had a romantic partner. He never engaged in that type of relationship. So we need to take a step back and look at the bonds that existed in the New Testament. And one place that’s so clear on what a healthy bond looks like is that between the Apostle Paul and the church he started in a city known as Philippi.

This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to all of God’s holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the church leaders and deacons.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now.And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News. God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus.

I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ’s return. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

This is what a God honoring bond looks like. This is what it looks like when you create a healthy bond.

Notice how the bond came: by the mutual pursuing of Jesus. Through joy and the pursuit of two goals: to know the love of God better and to communicate that to others.

Notice how the bond endures: they’re constantly there for each other – during the good times of God moving and the difficult times of being imprisoned because of the declaration of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection.

And notice how the bond continues into the future: the promise of continued pursuit of Jesus, to the glory of God and benefit of everyone who hears the word of God.

Maybe you’re here today and you’re sweating something fierce. You hear all this and know that the bond you have with your boyfriend/girlfriend is based on physical desires and emotional blackmailing. Or maybe you’re here today and you feel none of that. But you know that one day you want the type of relationship that brings life and love, not regret and difficulty.

Maya Angelou, American memoirist, civil rights activist, and one of our most prolific and influential poets once said, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

So, my question is this: what are you going to do?

Now you know better. You know how bonds are established. You know what they can do and you know how to build them. You also know what unhealthy bonds look like, what they can do, and how they’re established.

So, for the next couple minutes while this song plays, I want you to take a moment and evaluate your bonds. Do they hold up or are they found wanting? Write the answers to these questions down somewhere and do this more multiple relationships in your lives, especially the dating relationship that you might be in.

*Use this time to play a song and have the following questions on the screen:*

What good comes from this bond?

What bad comes from this bond?

Is this bond founded and centered on Jesus?

Is this bond a strong link or a weak link?