

THE YEAR OF INTEGRITY

BULLETIN

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BUILDING A MIGHTY SPIRIT

PERSPECTIVE ON
CHRISTIAN DATING

MONTHLY
PLAYLIST

A misty, forested landscape with rolling hills and dense green trees, partially obscured by a soft, white fog or mist. The scene is captured in a wide-angle shot, creating a sense of depth and tranquility.

Vision

To be a "House of Prayer for all nations"
Isaiah 56 :7b

Mission

A praying and witnessing church who have a close personal relationship with The Lord, to change the world for the glory of the Lord.



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Ps Iwan Adinugroho

Prophetic, Praise & Worship Pastor

Ps Hemah Demak Panjaitan
Ps Suzana Tahir

Next Generation Pastor

Ps Rudy Nurtanaya

Teaching Pastor

Ps Daniel Hardjosuwito

Mission & Evangelism Pastor

Ps Gideon Gunawan

Pastoral Care

Ps Lily Karto

Office Manager

Ps Suzana Tahir



COOL LIST

MAIN

Canaan — Kezia, Freddie
Ephratah — Steven, Henry
Berea - Bethesda — Romy
Bethlehem — Felix, Fransisca
Jordan — Sony, Wilfred
Horeb — Ferry, Febria
Bethany — Paulus, Erina
Bethel — Adel, Patricia
Cana — Bobby
Philadelphia - Pniel — Dwi, Vero
Moriah — Elve, Calista
Ephraim — Sonia, Kendrew
Ekklesia — Edo, Ica
Emmaus — Fabian, Priska
Galilee — Kevin Y, Corine
Gennesaret — Reinetta, Albert
Gilgal - Carmel — Erika, Mike
Hebron - Philippi — Yoseph, Rian
Zion — Monica, Raymond
Eden — Jennifer

FAMILY

Antioch — Andy, Iwan
Tiberias — Andre, Albert
Gethsemane — Michael, Rudy
Jerusalem — Hestu
Mt Hermon — Lily, Unggul
Phillipi — Hariyanto, Ivan
Shekinah — Alice
Tabernacle — Sandi
Westal — Michael

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Macedonia — Eric, Alicia
Shiloh — Daniel, Clarissa

NEXT GEN

Judea — Valentina, Sylvio
Judah — Aldo, Kezia M.
Israel — Catherine, Jerry
Jeremiah — Sintia, Kevin W.
Heaven — Pauline



Perspective on Christian Dating

By Elvina Parlindungan

Let me begin with a few quotes obtained from famous Disney films. Tarzan tells you to “trust your heart, let fate decide” and Pocahontas the same, encouraging you to “listen to your heart, you will understand”. Our hearts do not lie, so listen to yours and listen to yourself – these are pretty much the message these Disney characters conveyed. In contrast to these, the Bible reminds us to guard our heart above all else, for everything we do are determined by it (Proverbs 4:23), and the Bible also reveals that our heart is not that reliable, it is desperately

deceitful and wicked above all things (Jeremiah 17:9). Another quote from one of Disney's famous princess Cinderella – "so this is love. So this is what makes life divine". Cinderella then married her prince charming and finally, it was a "happily ever after" fairy-tale, that may rather sound calming, comforting, positive and hopeful. Nonetheless, the Bible never mentions that romantic love would give us ultimate happiness and pleasure; these are rather momentary in nature and in vain if we solely pursue it for life, like chasing after the wind (Ecclesiastes 1 & 2). Instead, God Himself is the ultimate joy and pleasure, as revealed by David in Psalm 16:11. These are few examples which prove that the world is filled with messages that contradict with what the Bible says. We live in a world where our point of view about love, dating and relationships have been much deviated from what is said in the Bible. We may feel disappointed even, because our minds are already filled with worldly

expectations. Yet at some point in life, we need to make decisions after decisions – which viewpoints should we follow – is it the Bible or the world, is it God or anyone else other than Him. Thus, it becomes crucial for us to know and understand about dating that leads to marriage from the eyes of the Creator, to help us making the right choice.

Christian Marriage

Before we get into the topic of dating or courtship (whatever we may call it as), we need to know what does the Bible say about marriage. Marriage is where God unites two sinners as one, "so [the male and female] are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." (Matthew 19:4-6). The role of husband and wife in marriage is described in Ephesians 5:21-33 – both husband and wife are to "[s]ubmit to one another out of reverence for Christ", where the wives are to submit to their own

husbands, as the church submits to Christ; and husbands are to love their wives just as Christ loved the Church; “and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies.” These verses overall suggest that marriage shows a glimpse, or reflection of the Gospel. Timothy Keller, in his book *The Meaning of Marriage* summarised this concept beautifully: “The reason that marriage is so painful and yet wonderful is because it is a reflection of the gospel, which is **painful** and **wonderful** at once. The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.”

It is painful – because two sinners are united in a commitment, covenant-keeping design called marriage (where no one can separate, only God has the authority to do so, through death), where both continuously and constantly would discover and learn to accept each other’s flaws and weaknesses, yet both are to love and serve each other despite themselves knowing they are flawed, and knowing that their spouse is also filled with much weaknesses and flaws. There is no way out for this, there is no other option but to work for the marriage. In our relationship with someone for instance, as humans there are times we would feel that this particular person is overboard and no longer deserves our care, attention and respect. We may choose to walk away, learn to forgive and let go, and we could even take necessary action to avoid being hurt further by this particular individual. In marriage, in theory, we need to stay in course and

walking away from marriage is not an option.

Marriage is also wonderful at the same time. As sinners we discover more of our flaws and weaknesses, yet we know that this is where our character is sanctified and purified further, and God uses our marriage to shape us to be more like Jesus Christ. Moreover,

marriage is like a reflection of the Gospel, because as we discover our flaws deeper, we know that we are much loved and accepted in Christ, more than we can imagine and comprehend. There is nothing in us that is worth to be loved for, yet the Creator of this universe, through Jesus Christ, died for our sins, gave Himself for us, so we can live and



spend the rest of our eternity with Him (1 Peter 3:18). In the quest of being sanctified in Him, another wonderful thing is that we do not fight this with our own strength, but God is the one that gives us strength and power to love Him, obey Him, pursue Him, delight in Him, to do good, be sanctified and transformed to be more Christ-like (1 John 3:9, John 15:1-4). This will lead to both husband and wife, wonderfully being transformed and sanctified in Christ and wonderfully learn to love each other in marriage, as Christ has loved them first.

Christian Dating

In the Bible, many marriages were left to the instruction of God or were arranged by God, through man. Isaac and Rebekah were united through God's revelation to Abraham's servant (Genesis 24). Marriage between Joseph and Mary were arranged by man, in God's sovereign plan. At present times, it

is scarce to see people entering an arranged marriage, instead most of us 'date' before marriage. We may call the phase prior to entering marriage as dating or courtship. The Bible is filled with God's instruction for us – His sons and daughters, on how to live our life on earth, also to prepare us for marriage (n.b. if He calls us to be married), which will be highlighted later here. In addition, I would also include some of my perspectives about Christian dating for the not-yet-married in writing.

What is dating

Allow me to explain my definition of 'dating' before discussing this topic further. For me, dating is a phase where I am preparing myself for marriage with a specific person exclusively of opposite gender. If I am not ready to see myself getting married, willing to know someone's character at a much deeper level, being prepared to enter a battle ground which definitely will not be

easy, will require much hard work and commitment – I will not enter such phase yet – instead, I would recommend anyone to take time to build friendship with everyone with respectful boundaries. The man or woman we date are not series of lab experiments that prepare us to be a better husband or wife. We do not date person A in order to prepare us to marry person B, because person A and B have different personalities, tendencies, background, habit that would be distinct. If I were to illustrate – for instance we are pretty competent at playing an instrument, then we start learning another instrument, it will require hard work, practice and commitment to be good at playing the other instrument. Likewise, we still have to adapt, adjust and learn again from the starting line if we start dating a new person/entering a new relationship. At the end of each relationship, we have learned how to love someone; we cultivated love emotionally and exclusively, learned how to love each



other practically and specifically, yet we walked away. Then we started the whole process over with someone else. I would encourage my fellow brothers and sisters to date with clarity and purpose, and not as an experiment. Dating does not really prepare us for marriage, especially if we treat it like a trial-run or a test-drive. This advice is not necessarily to marry the first person you date, but to date in a way that serves the person you marry one day. Thus, if we date with clarity and purpose (that dating is not a test-drive), treating this as a phase where me and my future spouse would get to know and respect each other deeper, I believe the dating experience with our future spouse would be more rewarding and fulfilling.

Why and how do we date

As we date with clarity and purpose, knowing that we are in a relationship with someone with a goal towards marriage, we could view this journey

as a phase where we grow together, support and build each other towards the same goal. Being Christians, we know that in whatever we do, we do it all for God's glory (1 Corinthians 1:31), by all means this should include our dating phase too. "Each of [us] should use whatever gift [we] have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If [we] speak, [we] should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If [we] serve, [we] should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory..." (1 Peter 4:10-11). We can encourage each other through prayers, we can support each other's ministry and serve others together (instead of being too demanding towards each other), we may also support each other to remain faithful and diligent in our study/work, we rebuke each other in kindness and in truth, we pursue holiness together as Christ is holy (1Peter 1:15-16), we listen

to constructive biblical advice and criticism in humbleness, we may practice patience, forgiveness and love, reminding each other that both are sinners in need of God's grace everyday, every single time. The list is endless, there are many other things we could do to glorify Him during our dating phase. Overall, I believe that if we date with clear purpose towards the same goal, that is to support each other's growth in the Lord, God is and will be glorified. Our friends and family could see the fruits – the beautiful change and transformation that we experience in the Lord.

With whom shall we date

The Bible gives very clear instruction, as with whom we should date: (i) date a believer/follower of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 6:14-16), (ii) date someone of the opposite gender (Genesis 2:23-24, Matthew 19:4-6). After these two conditions are fulfilled, I would like to give further perspective on this. The Bible

instructs us to honour our father and mother (Ephesians 6:2-3), so I would suggest to ask for parents' permission and blessing before dating someone. One of the most profound ways to honour our parents is by giving them respect and taking a moment to listen to their thoughts. From my personal dating experience with my husband, our parents play a significant role in strengthening our relationship. The adjustment phase between you and your partner would definitely be much bearable if both of you already have your parents' full support.

However, we know that our parents are not perfect. If there is a case where our parents demand us to marry a non-believer, we will have to make a tough decision. However, lest be weary not, because the Bible tells us to "not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). The Bible already warns us that as we follow Christ, we



could face opposition from others (which may even be our family), and we need to be prepared to stand firm in faith towards Christ (Matthew 10:21-22, 34-36). In addition, Jesus says this: “[a]nyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37-38). At this point, we can ponder now which matters more – what God wants **or** what I/ others want, obeying God’s will **or** obeying my heart desire/other people’s desire, treasuring Him as our utmost treasure **or** treasuring our possession on earth (which we know is momentary and fleeting). This is your choice to make.

One thing I am certain of – God is always good, no matter what. His will is good, pleasing and perfect (Romans 12:2). King Solomon’s story depicted in 1 Kings 11 gives

us another perspective as to why it pleases Him if we date and eventually marry fellow believers. Long story short, Solomon initially demonstrated that he loved the Lord (1 Kings 3:1), but his heart turned away from Him ever since he married women of other nations (1 Kings 11). It was stated that the Lord has ordered the Israelites “not to associate with [foreign women] and they are not to associate with [the Israelites], because they will most certainly turn [the Israelites’] affections away to follow their gods” (1 Kings 11:2). Instead of Solomon worshiping God, now he is susceptible to worshiping idols or false gods. The person we date and eventually marry would affect our life choices. If we marry a believer that has undivided heart to love, worship and serve God, we will most likely be drawn to Him further. In contrary, we learn from Solomon that if we marry an unbeliever, there is a significantly much higher risk that it will not be long before we may

begin to worship their god(s).

When are we ready to date

It varies, if we think of when a person is ready to date, to enter a relationship that will lead to marriage. One may decide to start dating after finishing a degree, after starting a career, after being financially stable, after owning a house, etc. I personally think that our readiness, to a lesser extent is defined by these factors. Will there be even a point when we are completely ready, free from flaws and future mistakes? We need to continuously and constantly pray, asking God for wisdom to guide us in making a decision (Proverbs 2:6). Nonetheless, in my personal opinion there are certain things that we can consider before entering a relationship. First, I think it is important to have the mindset that there will never be a point when we stop learning and hence, we need to continuously strive to change

and be transformed, in Spirit and in truth. This would keep us grounded and humbled, increasingly and constantly dependent on Him, knowing that our own self-righteousness means nothing to Him (Romans 3:10, Isaiah 64:6). Second, I think it is very important to have at least a trusted sister in Christ (for women) or brother in Christ (for men) that holds us accountable in dating, but again, we need to humble ourselves wanting to listen and learn. Dating, often times may isolate us from other Christians and the closer we become with our partner, the more distant we may be from other important relationships or we may even start neglecting other important areas of our life. While we have few or many friends over the years, are they the ones that are willing to press in, ask harder questions, offer 'unwanted' (yet wise) counsel according to the truth? Do your friends relentlessly pointed you to Jesus, encouraged you to do the right thing, even when

they knew it might upset you? If there is a believer in mind that you can trust, be transparent with, we should ask for his/her counsel, ask him/her to pray for you and help you to mature as a man/woman, as a future husband/wife. We desperately need wisdom, truth, correction, counsel, and perspective.

The Bible tells us to encourage and build each other in truth (1 Thessalonians 5:11,14; Colossians 3:16). The Bible also encourages us to seek counsel and advice (Proverbs 12:15, 11:14, 15:31-33). As inconvenient, unnecessary, unhelpful and even unpleasant as it may feel at times, God has sent gifted, more experienced, Christ-loving brothers/sisters into our life, for our good and for the good of our partner (and potential future spouse). We all need courageous, persistent and faithful friends and counsellors, to help us face challenges and temptations that may arise during the dating phase. I

can testify here that my husband and I are truly thankful and grateful to a handful of Christ-loving believers who care for us both, speak and act in truth, give us constructive advice, pray for us, rebuke us, encourage us and support us to grow in the Lord. There is no doubt that God use them to shape me and my partner, give us perspectives that are aligned with God's will and this truly strengthens our relationship. Although there is no guarantee that our journey, every chapters and seasons we face would be easy; would definitely not like a Disney

movie with the 'happily ever after' fairy-tale, but the good news is – we know His grace is sufficient for us, empowering us in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10); and many times God use His trusted people to support our growth so we walk in course, in His righteous path. Lean on the people who know you best, love you most and will tell you when you are wrong. In response, we need to also pray to God for a listening ear and a soft heart that is willing to be moulded, shaped and transformed to be more like Jesus.



MINISTRY LIST

Vocal — Jessica Sutiono
Musician — Raynaldo Ali
Multimedia — Budi Sendjaja
Lighting — Budi Sendjaja
Sound — Steven Santika
Usher — Elbert Pranoto
Translator — Elbert Pranoto
Caring — Felix Hariyadi
Dancer — Priska Sunaryo
Drama — Jennifer Chandra
Sunday School — Reinetta Tanujaya
Hospitality — Tasmin Ifah
Intercessor — Monica Haryanto
Mission — Felix Chietra
Media Art — Sonia Pranatha
Community Kitchen — Yolanda Tjong
Cultivated Podcast — Ravello Satria
Youth — Rio Susanto





THE ULTIMATE LIST OF

LOVE SONGS

#1

First Love

KARI JOBE

#2

Who You Say I Am

HILLSONG WORSHIP

#3

Love Won't Give Up

ELEVATION WORSHIP

#4

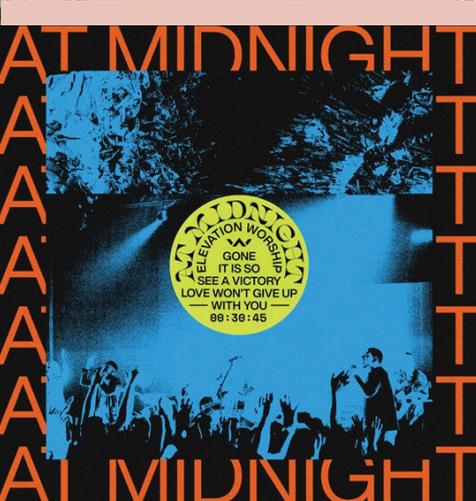
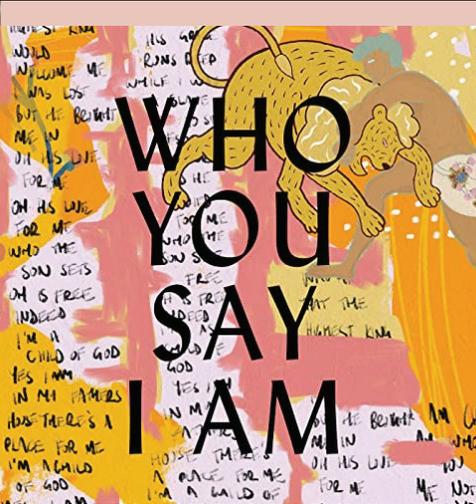
Extravagant

BETHEL MUSIC

#5

Tak Terukur KasihMu Yesus

SYMPHONY WORSHIP



You can find the complete playlist in Spotify





*Repentance is not by our own
merit, but it springs into the soul
by the mere good-will of God, and
immediate power of the Holy Spirit*

ZACHARY CROFTON