

HANDLE WITH CARE: LOVE & DATING

Scripture used: [Matthew 4:18-19 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

This week is the first of three sermons about the guidance and wisdom God provides for love and dating. This is a mini-series inside of our “Handle With Care” campaign. Pastor Hurmon is exploring how we should refocus on relationships as a key part of doing better in this new year and new decade. Love and dating are critical parts of this large question. After reviewing a lot of the research, Pastor Hurmon decided to take a more personal approach. He asked himself “What should I tell my 15 year-old daughter about love and dating that will continue to bless her as she grows up?” This led him to some fascinating truths about mindset toward relationships, whether you are a single considering dating, in a new relationship, a spouse of many decades, or a senior re-entering the dating world.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Say “yes!” to following Jesus because it changes who we are.** This week’s Scripture tells the story of Jesus recruiting the first few disciples. Before He even introduced Himself, Jesus asked Peter and Andrew to follow Him. This is the first step in every person’s faith journey, and it radically shapes our approach to life. That doesn’t mean that we should expect an instant transformation, though. It took years for the disciples to truly believe. Miracles such as Jesus calming the storm led them to proclaim that He “really is the Son of God!” in [Matthew 14:32-33 \(NLT\)](#). So even when the disciples struggled with their faith, Jesus could use them as a part of His plan to redeem the world. The same is true for us!
- 2) **Following Jesus involves two transformational insights about our relationships.** The first insight is how we need to know and affirm our own worth. His triumph over death redeems me. We were bought at “a high price,” as Paul says in [1 Corinthians 6:20 \(NLT\)](#). We must act as if we are worth the price that Jesus paid to redeem us. The second insight is that everyone else is worthy, too! Jesus told us to love others the way that He loves us in [John 15:12 \(NLT\)](#). He made it very clear that each of us are worthy of His sacrificial love. He spent time with prostitutes, tax collectors, and every other kind of sinner imaginable.
- 3) **Jesus gives us a revolutionary model for relationships.** He told the disciples to love others, as we already learned. But in the next few verses of [John 15:12-14 \(NLT\)](#), Jesus makes a much stronger case. The only way we can become Jesus’ friends is to do what He commands. In other words, we only follow Him if we are laying down our lives for our friends. This is the *agape* love of Christianity that impresses the world. Jesus showed us how to love. We must sacrifice ourselves, accommodate others, forgive unconditionally, and serve endlessly.
- 4) **Modern culture distorts love with the myth of “the right person.”** The world gives us the exact opposite message. Pop culture tells us that our lives will magically become great when we find “the right person.” Our bad habits and insecurities will disappear. Again, Paul comes to the rescue. He writes in [Roman 12:2 \(NIV\)](#) that we can’t conform to the world. We must renew our minds in Christ. That means focusing on ourselves first, and allowing Christ’s redemptive love to work on us. Then we can turn toward the world and love others the way Jesus showed us.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Are you becoming “the right person” little by little each day? What are the obstacles to these small improvements?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - We are tempted to focus on the flaws of others instead of our own. The more we follow Jesus, though, the more we are free to focus on ourselves. If our worth is affirmed by Jesus’ sacrifice, then we can be secure in that knowledge. Our lives should reflect and radiate that life-changing truth. How can you live as a Jesus follower that blesses others? When dating, many of us focus on the “exterior package” that we are hoping for, rather than the interior content. What would changing this focus look like?
- 3) **DO** - Pastor Hurmon challenged the whole church to read [1 Corinthians 13:4-7 \(NIV\)](#) each day this week. This will prepare for us next week’s sermon when he unpacks the insights of Paul’s message about Christian love.