LEADING THE WAY TO A STRONG RELATIONSHIP

Dr. Larry J. Nelson
School of Family Life
Brigham Young University
DATING: OLD THINGS MADE NEW AGAIN

Dr. Larry J. Nelson
School of Family Life
Brigham Young University
FRIDAY BEFORE A HOLIDAY WEEKEND: THIS TALK HAD BETTER BE GOOD
IF IT ISN’T GOOD, AT LEAST YOU GET EXTRA CREDIT
NEGATIVE VIEWS OF DATING
“It’s a beautiful ring. She’ll definitely pause for a moment before saying no.”
This is my work and my glory—
to bring to pass
the immortality and eternal life of man.
Moses 1:39
“If our whole goal were just to be in God’s presence again, why would we have left it in the first place? We were already with God in the pre mortal existence, but were painfully aware that we were not like Him physically or spiritually. We wanted to be like our Heavenly Parents and knew it was going to take a lot more than just dressing up in their clothes as little children do. We needed to fill their shoes – not just clomp around in them. The Atonement reconciles us with God so that we can again be with Him and enjoy sweet association, but how sweet can that association be if we remain unchanged? The goal is not just being with God, but being like God.” (Brad Wilcox, The continuous Atonement, p. 68)
The final judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts – what we have done. It is an acknowledgement of the final effect of our acts and thoughts – what we have become … A wealthy father… said to his child: ‘All that I have I desire to give you – not only my wealth but also my position and standing among men. That which I have I can easily give you, but that which I am you must obtain for yourself. You will qualify for your inheritance by learning what I have learned and by living as I have lived. - Dallin H. Oaks
“The Savior does more than cleanse us from sin. He also gives us new strength... To be admitted to His presence, we must be more than clean. We must be changed” - Dallin H. Oaks
Exercising agency in a setting that sometimes includes opposition and hardship is what makes life more than a simple multiple-choice test. God is interested in what we are becoming as a result of our choices. He is not satisfied if our exercise of moral agency is simply a robotic effort at keeping some rules. Our Savior wants us to become something, not just do some things. He is endeavoring to make us independently strong—more able to act for ourselves than perhaps those of any prior generation. We must be righteous, even when He withdraws His Spirit, or, as President Brigham Young said, even “in the dark.” Using our agency to choose God’s will, and not slackening even when the going gets hard, will not make us God’s puppet; it will make us like Him. God gave us agency, and Jesus showed us how to use it so that we could eventually learn what They know, do what They do, and become what They are.

– Elder Todd D. Christofferson
One who chooses Christ chooses to be changed.... The Atonement [is] the means whereby our hearts might be cleansed and our souls transformed and prepared to dwell with Christ and our Eternal Father.... The Atonement does more than fix the mistakes. It does more than balance the scales. It even does more than forgive our sins. It rehabilitates, regenerates, renews, and transforms human nature. Christ makes us better, worlds better, than we would have been had there been no Fall.

- Robert Millet
“You want capability and safety in dating and romance, in married life and eternity? Be a true disciple of Jesus. Be a genuine, committed, word-and-deed Latter-day Saint. **Believe that your faith has everything to do with your romance, because it does.** You separate dating from discipleship at your peril. Or to phrase that more positively, Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, is the only lamp by which you can successfully see the true path of love and happiness for you and your sweetheart.”

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, How Do I Love Thee? p. 4
REASONS TO DATE

- Fun/companionship
"You can have a good time. Of course you can! We want you to have fun. We want you to enjoy life. We do not want you to be prudes. We want you to be robust and cheerful, to sing and dance, to laugh and be happy.

"But in so doing, be humble and be prayerful, and the smiles of heaven will fall upon you."

-President Hinckley
REASONS TO DATE

- Fun/companionship
- Become the right person
  - See the skills in others that you want to develop in or eliminate from yourself.
  - Practice those skills.
“Considering the enormous importance of marriage, it is rather astonishing that we don’t make better preparation for success...too many people are inadequately prepared for this lofty responsibility.”

- Elder David B. Haight
“Simple and more frequent dates allow both men and women to “shop around” in a way that allows extensive evaluation of the prospects. The old-fashioned date was a wonderful way to get acquainted with a member of the opposite sex. It encouraged conversation. It allowed you to see how you treat others and how you are treated in a one-on-one situation. It gave opportunities to learn how to initiate and sustain a mature relationship. None of that happens in hanging out.”

-Elder Oaks, The Dedication of a Lifetime, May 2005
REASONS TO DATE

- Fun/companionship
- Become the right person
  - See the skills in others that you want to develop in or eliminate from yourself
  - Practice those skills
- Determine the attributes you do and do not want in a spouse
An app cannot determine those attributes for you.....

I accidentally swiped left and now my soulmate is gone.

Forever.
“Soulmates” are fiction and an illusion... it is certain that almost any good man and any good woman can have happiness and a successful marriage if both are willing to pay the price.”

– Spencer W. Kimball.
“I know this may be a disappointment for some of you, but I don’t believe there is only one right person for you. I think I fell in love with my wife, Harriet, from the first moment I saw her. Nevertheless, had she decided to marry someone else, I believe I would have met and fallen in love with someone else. I am eternally grateful that this didn’t happen, but I don’t believe she was my one chance at happiness in this life, nor was I hers.”

-Pres. Dieter F. Uchtdorf
“There are those who do not marry because they feel a lack of “magic” in the relationship. By “magic” I assume they mean sparks of attraction. Falling in love is a wonderful feeling, and I would never counsel you to marry someone you do not love. Nevertheless—and here is another thing that is sometimes hard to accept—that magic sparkle needs continuous polishing. When the magic endures in a relationship, it’s because the couple made it happen, not because it mystically appeared due to some cosmic force.”

-Pres. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, CES Fireside, Nov. 2009
“Frankly, it takes work. For any relationship to survive, both parties bring their own magic with them and use that to sustain their love. Although I have said that I do not believe in a one-and-only soul mate for anyone, I do know this: once you commit to being married, your spouse becomes your soul mate, and it is your duty and responsibility to work every day to keep it that way.”  -Pres. Dieter F. Uchtdorf
REASONS TO DATE

- Fun/companionship
- Become the right person
  - See the skills in others that you want to develop in or eliminate from yourself
  - Practice those skills
- Determine the attributes you do and do not want in a spouse
- Learn to commit to somebody
“And when you are married, be fiercely loyal one to another. Selfishness is the great destroyer of happy family life. I have this one suggestion to offer. If you will make your first concern the comfort, the well-being, and the happiness of your companion, sublimating any personal concern to that loftier goal, you will be happy, and your marriage will go on through eternity.”

– Gordon B. Hinckley
“These pressures against commitments obviously serve the devil’s opposition to the Father’s plan for His children. That plan relies on covenants or commitments kept. Whatever draws us away from commitments weakens our capacity to participate in the plan. Dating involves commitments, if only for a few hours. Hanging out requires no commitments, at least not for the men if the women provide the food and shelter.”

-Elder Oaks, The Dedication of a Lifetime, May 2005
REASONS TO DATE

- Fun/companionship
- Become the right person
  - See the skills in others that you want to develop in or eliminate from yourself
  - Practice those skills
- Determine the attributes you do and do not want in a spouse
- Learn to commit to somebody
- Find/Choose somebody to marry
REASONS TO DATE

- Fun/companionship
- Become the right person
  - See the skills in others that you want to develop in or eliminate from yourself
  - Practice those skills
- Determine the attributes you do and do not want in a spouse
- Learn to commit to somebody
- Find/Choose somebody to marry
DATING IS A PERFECT “BECOMING” SETTING IN WHICH YOU CAN BE TURNED INTO ONE WHO IS MORE LIKE THE SAVIOR AS YOU

(1) BECOME THE RIGHT PERSON
(2) DECIDE (CHOOSE) WHO IS THE RIGHT TYPE OF PERSON FOR YOU
(3) PRACTICE COMMITTING