

## II. PROGRESS POINTS

### 1. Typically, relationships pass through four progress points.

The problem is, sometimes we get stuck. We get stuck because we want something – call it whatever you like – we get stuck because of our desires, needs, cravings, yearnings, longings, obsessions. We let the desire become too important, then it hooks with temptation, and the result is huge problems (James 1:12-15). Maybe the relationship dies, or maybe you waste your life wishing the relationship would die and maybe trying to figure out ways to kill it, or at least change it!

What's the solution? It's not that the things you want are bad, or the desires are evil – we just need to think about them the way God does.

#### A. First progress point: Desires that are related to our bodies (physical attraction).

What does this desire look like?

- Guys typically want their bodies to feel good (sex). In our culture, guys are increasingly growing desires about looking good.
- Girls typically want their bodies to look good (and they want sex too).
- We obsess about sex, weight, clothes, shopping, hair, etc.

What kind of temptations hook this desire?

- Sex before marriage (Once married, your body belongs to someone else and you must give it and now the temptation becomes not to, for both guys and girls).
- Porn
- Spending money you don't have on clothes, hair, etc.
- Spending more time on yourself than others
- Anorexia
- Cutting

How does Satan use our culture to deceive us that hooking this desire with temptation is a good thing?

- Internet porn.
- Movies like “Juno” (great message about pro-life, but accepted the sex as fact), Valentines Day.
- Using sensuality and a certain body type to sell things.

What are the results of getting stuck here, and how does getting stuck here affect relationships?

- You want more sex – the desire becomes insatiable.
- You want more porn.
- You think you are getting closer when there is physical intimacy, even though it is sin. You believe love = lust or sex.
- You shop too much = develop destructive financial habits
- You eat too little = develop self-harming habits.

How do you grow so you won't get stuck in this desire?

- Christians are called to deny themselves (consider other people more important than they are (Luke 9:23, Philippians 2:1-6).
- When you consider other people more important than you are, you are denying yourself.
- Either be contented where you are, or get married (1 Corinthians 7:1-5). Girl, don't say no-one ever asks me out. You are probably stuck in one of the following progress points.

## **B. Second progress point: Desires that are related to our dreams (romantic attraction).**

### What does this desire look like?

- Guys typically get hung up with wanting a girl who meets the physical standards they have set.
- Girls typically get hung up with wanting a guy who meets the fantasy standards they have set.

### What kind of temptations hook this desire?

- You want a rich guy who could give you the moon – or a cool guy, or a funny guy, or a tall and handsome guy, or a guy who says just the right things.
- You want a gorgeous girl who turns you on.
- You want a girl who makes you feel macho.
- You want a guy who makes you feel like you are the most important person to him.

### How does Satan use our culture to deceive us that hooking this desire with temptation is a good thing?

- Internet romance
- Years ago there was a movie called “Sleepless in Seattle,” how about “The Notebook?”

### What are the results of getting stuck here, and how does getting stuck here affect relationships?

- You believe love = romance. Girls especially put romance expectations on guys.
- You think you are closer if you have certain “feelings” for the other person. This is a lie, because good feelings come as a result of thinking right and doing right (John 13:17). The good feelings of romantic attraction are the butterflies you get whenever you do something new or stressful (e.g. write a test, make a speech).
- If you get stuck here, you may never meet a person who fulfills the fantasy standards you have set.

### How do you grow so you won't get stuck in this desire?

- Grow by dreaming about ways to glorify God.
- Serve in the church in real ways, and dream about new ways to serve Him.
- Be kind to people who don't meet your dreams, you never know what kind of beautiful relationship may result.

## **C. Third progress point: Desires that are related to our expectations (personal quality attraction)**

### What does this desire look like?

- Expecting to find someone without flaws.
- Expectations
- Pickiness

- Critical spirit
- I focus on what people don't do.
- I am negative about people.
- Sometimes I like them at first, then when they don't meet my expectations, I become critical and negative.
- Rejecting people very early in the dating process – like before they ask you on a date.
- When someone we like rejects us, we sickly find that attractive, and become upset because they have not met the expectation we put on them of how they should treat us.

What kind of temptations hook this desire?

- Hero worship, a culture that idolizes certain people.
- The temptation to put people on a pedestal.
- The lie that Romans 3:23 might not be true about somebody.
- Superiority feelings when you put people down or gossip
- Feeling good about yourself when you criticize others

How does Satan use our culture to deceive us that hooking this desire with temptation is a good thing?

- Entitlement mindset.
- Expect to be taken care of.
- Don't believe we live in a fallen world, believe and expect good people.
- Don't believe the Bible that Christians need to be like God who is all about forgiveness.
- Redefine grace as physical grace or some social standard rather than a merciful person who is all about extending grace to others.
- We believe the lie that if it doesn't work out, I had the wrong person. I just have to find someone else and it will be OK.

What are the results of getting stuck here, and how does getting stuck here affect relationships?

- The result of getting stuck in this progress point is that you are always a victim of how others treat you (or don't).
- The kind of day you have having depends on how others treat you.
- You look at others from a critical point of view.
- Another result is that you can never be pleased by others because they never treat you the way you expect to be treated. No-one will ever please you because you focus on your demands for them.

How do you grow so you won't get stuck in this desire?

- Christians grow when they put all their expectations on Jesus (1 Peter 1:13) and how to look like Him.
- Fear God more than man (Galatians 1:10).
- If you are in a relationship where you criticize others together – BE WARNED. That person WILL TURN ON YOU AND YOU WILL TURN ON THEM. Where ever you go, there you are.
- Learn to find and focus on things in people that are evidences of God's faithfulness in their lives (especially people you don't like).

## D. Fourth progress point: Desire for glory (attraction by the common goal of glorifying God by loving, obeying, rejoicing in Him)

### What does this desire look like?

- God to be glorified
- The church to grow and show a watching world that life is superior
- You want to find someone who has a similar desire.

### What kind of temptations can warp this desire?

- Pride
- Legalism
- Hypocrisy

### How do you grow?

- Focus on dating a person with same values and beliefs as you have.
- Walk in confession of sin, be constantly looking for ways to change and grow. You concentrate on changing self not the other person. You are not defensive, but receptive to being helped by the other person.
- Think about love biblically, as an action you choose. Choose to love the other person by meeting their true needs.
- Become friends with people first, then start dating if you believe it would honor God.

## 2. Stuck in points 1-3?

If someone is in a relationship with a person who doesn't want help to move on from progress points 1-3, here's how to break up.

- It seems impossible for people who are emotionally involved with each other (especially females) to break up forever. So, advise them to do the following:
- For 2 weeks, stop all phone calls, texts, and contact.
  - a. It's impossible for anyone to be objective about whether dating someone is wise while attached.
  - b. After 2 weeks, you go through withdrawal, and gain some objectivity.
- Put it in God's hands during that time by choosing a special verse or passage (such as Psalm 46:1, Psalm 63:1).
  - c. Write your verse on cards. Keep them by your bed, on your mirror, in your planner, etc. Repeat it to yourself when you wake up, through the day, when your head is on the pillow before sleeping.
  - d. For the 2 weeks, talk about the relationship only with godly adults who will give you wise counsel.
  - e. Stay apart so that you both can grow and change. Identify specific ways in which you need to change and grow, and ways to do so.
  - f. God can put the relationship back together, if it's a healthy relationship between two sold-out people who desire God's glory above all else.
  - g. After 3-6 or more months, you will be able to observe if you have both grown and changed. Then and only then, consider resuming the relationship.
- Do this now to remain friends. You're doing this because you love the other person, like mothers love kids by letting them go because they need to grow up.