

## Lesson 16

# WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT IN A MATE?

## TEACHER PREPARATION

### KEY CONCEPTS

1. Our dreams about finding a life mate should motivate us to become the kind of person with whom someone would want to build a lifetime relationship.
2. Involvement in premarital sex lowers our chances of having the kind of marriage we hope to have.

### OBJECTIVES

*By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:*

1. List the qualities that they think are most desirable in a future life-mate.
2. Reconsider the kind of person they would want to marry.
3. List the qualities they should possess in order to attract a future mate.
4. Identify various problems resulting from premarital sexual activity that could cloud their ability to choose a compatible mate.

### MATERIALS / PREPARATION

This lesson is the first of a five-lesson unit on male-female relationships. This unit will help students explore the choices they have and the probable consequences of their choices in light of their quest for a meaningful and happy life. This unit is included in this curriculum because, along with decisions about drugs and alcohol made during adolescence, decisions about sexual choices can be dream-makers or dream-breakers with life-long consequences.

- Lesson 16 (this lesson) is about marriage—how good it can be and how bad it can be—and how the experience of marriage is influenced by the choices an individual makes about sexual activity during adolescence.
- Lesson 17 will present some of the physical consequences of premarital sex, especially the dangers of promiscuity.
- Lesson 18 will present some of the emotional consequences of premarital sex, with the hope that students will be able to evaluate the risks of premarital sex more realistically and have some worthwhile reasons for waiting until marriage to engage in sexual behavior.
- Lesson 19 will focus on misconceptions about sexuality and whether a student will control his or her sexual impulses or be controlled by them.
- Lesson 20 will challenge your students to make a commitment to value their sexuality enough to save it for the person they will eventually marry.

**NOTE: Please carefully review lessons 17 and 18. They are designed so teachers in many countries can use this curriculum. Most teachers will be comfortable teaching these lessons, but some may not.**

If you are hesitant to teach this unit, here are several possible alternatives:

- You could substitute more acceptable terms for those you find uncomfortable and adapt the lesson so you can teach it yourself.
- You could divide your class along gender lines and ask a teacher of the opposite gender to teach the other half of the class.
- You could invite a Health Sciences teacher to teach these lessons for you.
- You may choose to skip lessons in this unit you believe would be too controversial, too advanced, or too explicit for your students. You may want to look closely at lessons 17 and 18. Even if you skip one or more lessons, you could teach the remaining lessons in this unit with only slight adaptations on your part, and still conclude with the Personal Journal activity at the end of Lesson 20.

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## BEGINNING THE LESSON



### Introduction

About 1 minute

Throughout this course, we talk about things you can do to help you reach your dreams (dream-makers) and things you should avoid that might hurt or kill your dreams (dream-breakers). Most young people have as a part of their dreams that someday they would like to find that one special person of the opposite sex, fall in love, marry, and live happily together for the rest of their lives. Even if that is not a major part of your dream right now, it is pretty likely it will be in just a few years.

In this unit on male-female relationships, I want to help you improve your chances of seeing this part of your life-dream come true. So, before we hear today's story, let us spend a few minutes thinking about this aspect of your future life.

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## Ideal Mate Description Clusters

About 20 minutes

In this first activity, you are going to have a chance to identify characteristics of your ideal mate. I am going to write some general categories on the board. Then, we will fill in the specifics together.

*[Write the following category words randomly on the board with as much distance from each other as possible in order to be able to add the students' suggestions.]*

Personality  
Looks, Physique  
Family  
Social Skills  
Work Ethic

Intellect  
Morality  
Beliefs  
Goals and Dreams  
Skills

*Once you have written the categories on the board, tell students the following:]*

Let us work as a class to fill in specific information under each category. For example, if you suggest a sense of humor or friendliness, I will write it in the personality cluster.

*[If your students slow down in their suggestions, you might add some of the following: Near the "family" cluster, you might mention how he or she treats the other members of his or her family or whether the family is supportive of the person. Near the "social skills" cluster, add suggestions like "treats other people well" or "respects authority." Be sure to suggest drug and alcohol statements, such as "does not use drugs," "does not get drunk," etc. The "work ethic" cluster should reflect whether the person works hard or goes to work every day. As your students make suggestions, write them on the chalkboard under the appropriate categories.]*

Carefully consider these characteristics. Now, on a blank, left-hand page in your Personal Journal, list the top seven characteristics you want in a future mate. As with most other entries in your Personal Journal, you do not have to show this list to anyone.



= 21 minutes

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**Story**

About 5 minutes

(Read the following story.)

**Next, let us see what our three friends are doing.**

*We want to know more about Uncle Marvin.*

*“Do you think your text might be a bit too brief?” asked Natalie.*

*“That is the whole point behind texts! They are supposed to be brief,” said Derrick.*

*“Maybe, but your ‘want’ is so open-ended that any answer might suffice,” said Natalie.*

*“For example, Uncle Marvin is five-feet-eleven inches tall and wears a bowtie.”*

*“I see what you mean,” confessed Derrick. “What do we want to know about Uncle Marvin?”*

*“We could start with what we already know,” suggested Sam.*

*“That is right! Tony said Uncle Marvin loves a good mystery and a good laugh,” said Derrick.*

*“I can see how the Pet Rock and the Shoe game would appeal to him,” laughed Natalie.*

*“We could ask your mother, she is Uncle Marvin’s sister,” suggested Sam.*

*“He is a lot older than she is. I think something happened between them a long time ago,” said Derrick. “Dad respects Uncle Marvin. So whatever it was must be complicated.”*

*“We should ask her,” offered Natalie.*

*Derrick’s mom was a little surprised to see the three of them sitting around the kitchen table when she got home from work. She smiled and said, “It is rare when your friends are your family and your family are your friends.”*

*“Do you really think so?” asked Sam. “We grew up together, so why would we not be friends?”*

*“Seeing you three sitting there just reminded me of other times. Marvin made that same observation about family and friends, and it stuck with me.”*

*“Tell us more about Uncle Marvin,” encouraged Natalie*

*“What do you want to know?”*

*“What is he like?” asked Derrick. “I cannot remember a single story about you and Uncle Marvin.”*

*Derrick’s mom looked across the room as if she were looking into the past.*

*“Mom? What are you remembering?”*

*“Oh, just the day I learned nothing—and everything,” she smiled.*

*The three cousins leaned forward, elbows on the table and waited.*

*“One night, Marvin was sitting by the window, half-listening to his younger cousin Jenny and her friend talking about boys. Their conversation was undoubtedly sexual in nature, but they were talking around the issue. I was only five or six at the time and could not follow the subtleties of their conversation. I had no framework to understand. Still, the curiosity of my five-year-old mind filed their words away, along with my questions.*

*“The very next day, Marvin took me with him to an art show. He was a stone sculpturer back then, and some of his statues had won prizes. We had taken the train and he had put the case with his smaller stone statues, carefully wrapped in burlap, on the overhead rack of our train car. As the train rocked its way across town, I began to ask my nagging questions from the night before.*

*“He listened to every word—words that carried only confusion and mystery to me. It could have become our facts-of-life talk, the “birds and the bees”—an uncomfortable lecture at an elementary level on the nature of sexual intimacy between a man and a woman. It did not.*

*“He never said a word. By his nod, I knew he had heard me. But for the first time in my life, he did not offer a ready answer. His silence seemed so strange. He closed his eyes, and I thought I saw his lips move—as if he were praying or something.*

*“The train pulled into our station, and as we gathered our coats to depart, he said, ‘Sis, would you please get my case of statues down for me?’ I looked up at that high shelf and big box and said, ‘I cannot. It is too heavy for me. I do not even think I can reach it!’ He smiled and said, ‘You are right. It is too heavy for you. If you tried, it would only hurt you. And I would never really ask you to do such a thing. The answers to the questions you have been asking are like that case of stone figurines—they are too heavy for you to carry right now. The time will come soon enough for you to carry those answers. But I love you too much to burden you with them now. Can you trust me to give you those answers when the time is right?’ And that was the day I learned nothing and everything.” \**

*\*This story is an adaptation of a true event that happened between Corrie ten Boom and her father many years ago. Corrie Ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*, Spire Books, 1971, p. 26-27.*



= 25 minutes

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## EXPLORING THE LESSON



### Heavy Things Activity

About 10 minutes

In the story, Derrick's mom was five years old when Uncle Marvin told her she was too young to have her questions answered. You are all more than twice that age.

One of the reasons we are dealing with sexual issues in this class is we believe you are ready to hear a lot of the information a five-year-old is not.

But that does not mean you are ready to unlock every door in the male-female area of life. What you would find on the other side of some doors would be too heavy for you to carry now. Some of those things would end up hurting you and those around you. And some could eventually crush your dreams.

What are some of the heavy adult responsibilities or consequences that go along with adult sexual activity and marriage? Or what are some of the heavy things you might find if you open that door?

*[Accept suggestions and write them on the board.]*

*[If they have trouble thinking of some, you could suggest some of the following:*

- Diseases
- Pregnancy
- Memories
- Comparison to spouse
- Fear spouse will be unfaithful]

These are some of the 'heavy burdens' people often find on the other side of the door of sexual intimacy. When you are mature enough physically, emotionally, socially, and financially, taking on these responsibilities can be fulfilling and rewarding. But for most teenagers, these kinds of burdens are so heavy they never go on to even attempt their dreams. They are so heavy they can be early dream-breakers.

So, you might be wondering, "What can I do now, so I will be ready to open these doors when I am older?" It turns out there are some very important things you can begin, right now.



= 35 minutes

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## ENDING THE LESSON



### Matching Characteristics You Need to Develop

About 10 minutes

Please open your Personal Journals.

Let us take another look at the characteristics you want in a future mate. The next step of this exercise is very important:

On the facing right-hand page of the page where you wrote the characteristics you desire in a mate, write a matching set of the characteristics you need to develop in order to attract this type of person.

For example, if you wrote friendliness is important, you should be friendly. If you valued his or her treating your parents with respect, write what you need to develop to match that respect. If you value a relationship with someone who does not abuse alcohol, then think about your decisions regarding alcohol. What will attract your mate to you?

Please write the matching characteristics you need to develop now in your Personal Journal.

*[After they have had time to write, say:]*

Now, I would like you to return in your Personal Journals to your personal goals, dreams, values, beliefs, and skills you have recorded. Which of those do you think you might now wish to change, based on the characteristics you want to develop to attract the kind of person you will want to marry?

On another page in your Personal Journal, please write a one-sentence description of the change you decided to make.

*[When your students have had time to consider and write, make the following point:]*

I hope you will keep your Personal Journal as a reference for the days when you begin dating. The wisdom of the ages, as well as much up-to-date research, shows that people who find a mate with similar values, beliefs, goals, and dreams struggle less to keep their marriage together and fight less with each other.

In this lesson we have considered some things that might be too heavy for us right now, and how we can prepare ourselves to be ready for them later. In the next

lesson, we will continue by looking at some of the physical consequences of premarital sexual activity.

*[Before dismissing your students, remember to dictate to them the Parent-Teacher discussion topics.]*



= 45 minutes

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## RESOURCES

### GOING DEEPER

In this lesson, you identified several characteristics you want in a future mate. You also identified some characteristics you might need to develop to be ready for your future mate.

Nearly everyone would agree one of the most important factors in a successful marriage is that the husband and wife genuinely love each other. We are going to look at one of the best-known and most-loved passages in the Bible. It is a description of what genuine love is really like.

*[Read aloud 1 Corinthians 13:4-7a.]*

There are at least 16 characteristics of real love listed in this passage. I have summarized each of these in one, two, or three words. As I write these characteristics on the board, please copy them in a list in your Personal Journal. You will be using this list in a few minutes. The characteristics:

*[Write these in a vertical list on the board as you read them aloud.]*

Patient

Kind

Not envious

Does not brag

Not proud

Polite

Not demanding

Not irritable

Forgets wrongs

Hates injustice

Rejoices in truth

Supportive

Loyal

Hopeful

Trusting

Unfailing

Now, please look back at the previous list you wrote in this lesson—the characteristics you need to develop to attract a good mate. Compare your list with



the one you have just copied from Corinthians.

Are any of them similar? If so, mark the similar characteristics in the Corinthians list.

Now, look at the rest of the Corinthians list you have not marked. Are there one or two of those characteristics of love you think would be especially important to develop? If so, put a mark by those also.

Now, take another look at all the ones in the list you marked. Which of these could you put into practice this week, perhaps in your family or with your friends? Take a few quiet moments to write in your journal a particular person on whom, or with whom, you are going to practice one of these characteristics of love this week. Write down exactly what you plan to do or say.

*[Note: There is no closing discussion section in this GOING DEEPER segment. There is no FOCUS POINTS section in today's lesson.]*

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## PARENT-TEACHER CONNECTION

### For Family Discussion

1. Discuss with your adolescent some of the qualities people should develop before he or she is ready to be married.
2. Ask your adolescent to share with you one quality he or she chose in class to work on at the present time. Ask how you might encourage or assist him or her in developing that quality.

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