



The Adventures of Mike and Mandy

Part 4 – Why Dating Doesn't Have to be That Hard

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Is there anybody in here that has been married for longer than 40 years? Longer than 50 years? What's the secret? "She can tell you," he said. Let her make all the decisions; that's the secret. What's the secret? Marry the right woman. I love that. Any other pieces of wisdom you'd give us this morning? Did I hear listen and have Christ in your life? You just teed it right up for me.

Actually, Ted asked me to cover Mike and Mandy and dating, so today's talk is actually *The Adventures of Mike and Mandy: Life Starts Now: Why Dating Doesn't Have to be That Hard*. We're not just talking to Mike and Mandy this morning; we're also talking to us this morning because we are going to get to the commitment piece for those of us who are already married or have been married or have walked through divorce or whatever the case may be.

I'm nowhere close to 50 years of marriage. I'm nine years in, so you guys have way more to teach me than I could possibly teach any of you from up here this morning. My wife and I were in San Diego last week. We took little man to Lego Land for his five-year-old birthday. It definitely wasn't a vacation. I get back and everybody asked how my vacation was. When you go with a four-year-old and a two-year-old, it's a trip; it is not a vacation. Let's get that squared away right now; there's a big difference. Once you have kids, as all of you know, they are no longer vacations; they become family trips.

So, we're out there and we're staying with some friends of ours, John and Kara. I just asked for stories of how they got engaged. With millennials, engagement stories have completely and radically changed from back when you got engaged, my dear friends. It's more elaborate, it needs to be videoed and photographed so they can put it up on Instagram and everything else.

John and Kara got engaged about 30 years ago. He had the whole weekend planned out. They were going on this hike and they were about to go to the top of this beautiful outlook and he was going to propose to her. But, on the hike, he starts asking her all these future questions. How many kids do you want to have? Where do you see us living? And she, being the smart, Christian girl that she was, was like, "I don't really want to answer all these questions you're asking me until we know there's going to be a future." So, they get into a little argument and so it finally gets to a point where he just reaches into his pocket and literally throws the ring at her. She catches it and she's like, "Yes! Yes! Now we can have these conversations." Complete and radically different.

So, we're leaving that trip and it had gone so smooth and we're flying an airline... I won't mention their name, but you can book really cheap tickets to get on this airline, but then everything they charge you

for afterwards... I love Allegiant. Wait... I wasn't going to mention their name. They charge you for everything and there are usually delays. There is a risk and a reward for being a cheapskate, which I am, as all of you know. The trip was so smooth. We fly there, get the rental car, the kids are doing great, they sleep. We stay in San Diego and then back up to LAX for the direct flight to Springfield. We get on the plane and everything is on time and everything is going smooth.

As soon as we get on the plane, there was a mechanical and fuel problem and there was going to be a 30-minute delay. Everybody is sitting on the plane. They can't let you deplane once you're on the plane. We sat on the runway with a five-year-old and a two-year-old for two hours and fifteen minutes. Can you imagine? The stewardess was looking at me like it was my fault. I'm like "Whoa, sweetheart, I didn't do this. What do you want them to do? They're going to get up and run because now we know we've got another three and a half flight afterwards."

As I thought about that, I thought about today's talk. Do you know the only thing worse than being on the runway and having the pilot come over the intercom and saying, "Hey, we've got a problem?" Being 30,000 feet in the air and the pilot coming over the intercom and saying that. That's why today is so important. If you're in a dating relationship that maybe you shouldn't be in or you're in a serious relationship, you're still on the runway. So, if I had wanted to, I could have raise holy heck, grabbed my kids and said, "We're going to get a flight tomorrow..." Well, it's Allegiant so later in the week. You get my point. I could have gotten off the plane. If I would have gotten up in the air and I ignored every piece of advice that someone was giving me or what was going on, there's no getting off that flight. You're up in the air. You have to wait and grind this thing out.

If you have your Bibles... Mike and Mandy, I know it's your Bible app. For those of you old school, if you have your actual Bibles, go ahead and open them up to **Hebrew 12: 1-2**. I think this verse has a lot to say about dating. Even if you're married for 50 years or you've been married a while, I think you can take today and encourage your grandkids, your kids, your friends. Just take this and use it to speak life and truth. These aren't my thoughts. This isn't how I think you should date. This isn't Dr. Phil or Oprah. This is what God's word says about dating. Even though the words *date* and *dating* are never used.

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders... By the way, this isn't sin; this is everything that hinders. So, the question is maybe there are things in our lives that aren't sin, but they aren't helping us run towards Jesus. They aren't helping us walk in obedience with Jesus. So, it's everything thing that hinders, things that might not even be categorized as a sin, ***and the sin...*** So, get rid of the sin for sure, but also throw off everything that hinders and ***that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,*** ***2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.***

Let me show you this video that I think will help elaborate on this a little more. [video plays]

I understand that there's no use of the word *dating* or *date* in the scriptures, but if you open your Bibles to Hebrews 12: 1-2, you will read this: ***1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of***

witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of faith.

I get it. What in the world does that verse have to do with dating. I would tell you everything. If you were running after Jesus and your eyes were fixated before you started dating someone, are they still fixated on Jesus or has that relationship you are now in caused you to slow down? Has it weighed you down? Has it become a sin that is so easily clinging to you?

I get it all the time from guys who are like, "But, Adam, you don't understand. This girl is so hot." And I'm like, "Bro, so is hell." Don't date potential, date proven character. There are four simple things I always tell young people to remember when dating and that's boundaries. Do you have healthy boundaries? Ephesians 5: 3 suggests that among you there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality. So, understand healthy physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental boundaries.

Also, obedience. Are they walking in obedience with the scriptures? Do they live repentant lifestyles or do they have no fear of God as they continually try to take off your clothes?

And wisdom. 1 Peter 5: 5 suggests that you wouldn't date anyone that isn't subject to an older mentor, a godly mentor that is helping them navigate the relational waters with you and with themselves.

Then the last one is security in Christ. If they are not secure in their relationship with Christ, they will never be secure in their relationship with you and that would become a codependent, unhealthy relationship. Even worse, you will become a dysfunctional savior in their life and the only functional relationship that anyone can have and make any relationship work is that of the one with our Savior Jesus Christ.

[video ends]

When we talk about Hebrews 12, we're just going to unpack that video a little bit. So, here's Mike and Mandy. Any time young people are dating... My wife and I do premarital counseling right now. We just walked through a difficult season of premarital counseling where the wedding actually got called off. You want to make sure you are setting young people up for success, so my wife and I do a lot of premarital counseling. I've been working with millennials for the last 16 years, so I can't encourage Mike and Mandy enough. Just pursue God first. Jesus says that in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6: 33. He says, "**But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**"

A lot of times, we don't understand this as young people. When we look at the other part of this, when you take the triangle and you invert it, you actually have Mike and Mandy, if they pursue each other rather than God first...

If they are pursuing God, they are going to naturally grow closer to one another. That's the same with our marriages. If my wife and I are continually chasing after Jesus, we are naturally going to get closer to one another. But when we start chasing our own things or chasing each other, what happens is you see

this distance between God and us is actually greater. That's where Hebrews 12: 2 steps in. If your eyes were fixated on Jesus before you started dating him or her, and now all of the sudden you realize there is this distance going on in your heart with the Lord, as your dating, do you think that's a healthy dating relationship?

I'm not trying to be a homewrecker this morning at all. I'm just suggesting that maybe God's scripture has a lot to say about who and what we pursue first, rather than dating. This is the millennial lie that I've caught or the generation Z lie that I've caught a lot. "If only I had _____, then I would be happy." If that blank is anything other than Jesus, that's an idol that will dissatisfy you once it is caught. So, "If only I had a boyfriend..." "If only I had a girlfriend..." "If only I was married, then I would be happy." That's a lie because that "if only I had..." is only going to create distance between you and the Lord when you're not pursuing him first and foremost. I've seen this a ton in 16 years of counseling.

Dating According to Theo.

Maybe you're wondering who Theo is. I was trying to be trendy for Mike and Mandy. Theology – The study of God. So, this is dating according to God, not dating according to Donyes.

Boundaries: The first thing I talked about in that video was boundaries. What are healthy boundaries for young people? How can you communicate this in a gentle way to young people? I know God's word has a lot to say about physical boundaries. Ephesians 5: 3 says ***But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality...*** When you talk about a hint... I could pluck this piece of hair off my head, which none of you can see right now, but this could solve a crime case. That's a hint, so he takes it rather seriously.

Also in 1 Thessalonians 4: 3-8 says, ***3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God...***

Young people ask me all the time. "How far is too far?" I hate that question because what that question is really derived from is "How close can I get to sin without sinning?" Well, let me throw myself under the bus.

Any time I kiss my wife, she's like, "I know what you want."

"But, wait a minute; I can't kiss you and not want anything?"

She goes, "You can, you just never do."

So I say, "So if I kiss you at 8:00 in the morning...?"

She says, "That night you're going to want something; I promise you that."

What she really knows and what God knows... I'm saying you can have your own convictions, but I am telling you this. I am a guy and girls, when you do kiss a guy that's driven by hormones that are God-given hormones, this engine gets revved up. Let me give you a word picture. There's this freeway system in Europe called the Autobahn. It has no speed limit, so the equivalent of kissing a guy and expecting it to stop with the guy is the equivalent of placing him a Ferrari Testarossa on the Autobahn, letting him start the car, hear it purr and then telling him to get out. He's going to look at you like you're crazy. There's no way he's getting out of the car. There's a reason why kissing is called foreplay. It comes before the play.

I did my annual golf outing this last week and when you hit an errant shot, you yell something: "FOUR!" That's because something damaging is about to come. Young people, FOUR, because when the play is about to come, it's not a good thing. That's what I tell them all time. That's why it's fourplay. So, can a guy kiss a girl and not allow his brain to go somewhere? I haven't met him yet. Kissing was created to rev the engine. Girls are like crockpots and guys are like microwaves. It doesn't take much. This is the truth. Then, when you talk about emotional boundaries, three times in the poetical book of Song of Songs or Song of Solomon, whatever you prefer, it tells you ***do not awaken love before it desires***.

Let me tell you how we, as grandparents and parents, help awaken that love and then how Mike and Mandy actually help awaken that love. One of the ways we do it as grandparents and parents is we invite these people that are dating on family vacations with us. We invite them over for Christmas holidays and big holidays. Let me tell you why that is not protecting emotional boundaries. Now, when they break up, they're not just breaking up with each other, they are breaking up with a family too. Their potential, hopeful, future mother-in-law that liked this guy so much that was trying to get this done is now heartbroken too.

You've got to be careful with how you protect the heart. When you heighten those things... Girls are born out of the womb thinking about their wedding. I know Mandys right now that aren't even dating someone and have their whole Pinterest wedding set up. Guys start thinking about the wedding when they're about to propose. They're just different.

So, dating... Mike and Mandy, I think you guys put too much on dating, which we are going to talk about here in just a second with commitment. I think your first date, Mike and Mandy, should be one hour. As a matter of fact, a Harvard professor suggests this. And you should split the time 30/30 talking. You shouldn't go to a movie, etc. It should be a 30/30. Then you're setting yourself up for success for a second date. There's not a lot of commitment involved, which you guys are all so worried about.

I think a first date should be one hour with dinner. Don't spend the whole time talking about yourself. And there's a thing called a level 10 conversation on the first date and there's a thing called level 1 conversation. Let's hang out down near level 1. Level 10 is how many kids do you want to have? What are you going to do with your life? How many people have you made out with in your life? That's level 10. Let's go down here and ask what their favorite candy bar is. That all effects the emotional boundaries of a girl or a guy.

The other part of it is a **spiritual** boundary. I personally am in a camp that I don't think a guy and girl should pray or do Bible study together while they are dating. I'm just going to keep this "G" rated for this congregation, but when my wife and I get together and pray, it's one of the most intimate acts we do together and it is usually followed up by something pretty fun, if you know what I'm saying. So, I think there is wisdom in guarding these boundaries. Girls, Mandy, when you break up with Mike, just break up with him. If you're convicted by anything I say this morning and you realize you're not walking in a relationship that is obedient to God, just break up with him. Don't say this. This is the worst thing you could say to a guy. "God is telling me to break up with you." Great! Now he got rejected by you and the Holy Spirit.

Walking in Obedience (Character): The second thing you have to ask is are they walking in obedience? You heard it on the video. Don't date potential. Date proven character. How do other people speak about their life? Are their red flags? Even if they are yellow flags, they become red flags in marriage. We know that. Marriage is dating squared. We know that. Everything is magnified and so character is so important. This does not mean anybody is perfect. No one in this room is perfect. We all need Jesus, but there is an aptitude of character that you can look at and be like "Yes this is somebody I trust, this is someone who is pursuing the Lord, someone who is going to guard my heart." I've seen too many people compromise because they're so desperate to get married that they compromise on this and then they get into it and it explodes. I want to say, "I tried to tell you and you were ignoring this character before you got married." You didn't want to hear what God's word had to say about it and there are consequences when we ignore what his word has to say about it. Just walking in obedience, not perfection.

Seeks out Mentorship: A part of obedience means that they actually live in repentance, that they have teachable hearts. One of the most attractive things... I'm an idiot, but I try to remain so teachable. My wife will tell you that probably the biggest thing that attracted her to me was that I was teachable. That means not only walking in obedience but that they also seek out mentorship. We will get into that a little next week. Next week, Mike and Mandy meet Melvin and Margaret. That's where you guys in this 9:00 service play a huge role and I'm actually excited to hear that.

Let me tell you why a mentor is important. I want to keep it light hearted. I've been trying to keep my tone happy today. You guys know I can be intense sometimes. So, I'm going to say a word that might make it less light hearted, but it's really important in this moment. I don't think any young Mike or millennial or generation Z addicted to porn should be dating anyone in a relationship. I've done too much research and seen too many studies as to what this does. They are going to try and reenact their fantasy.

Here's the reality. With all the research I've done on this, women are starting to be just as heavily involved in this as guys are. So, I told you to protect emotional boundaries. If you're protecting emotional boundaries, I don't think guys and girls that aren't married should be accountability partners. So, if they shouldn't be accountability partners and I'm telling a girl that she shouldn't date a guy that's addicted to pornography, how is she ever going to know if a guy is addicted to pornography?

Well, if they have a godly mentor that that girl can trust... If I'm discipling or mentoring any guy, you better believe I'm asking them hard questions. And if they want to engage in pursuing a Mandy or any type of girl, I'm going to make sure that they are going to guard her heart and walk in a way that is worthy of the Lord. These are questions, Grandpa, Dad, that you can be asking your young male to make sure he's walking in a way that is worthy of the Lord.

What pornography does to the male brain and the male hormone and the libido is like a water balloon. Every time they look at those images, it's like pouring more water into that water balloon. The more and more graphic is gets or the more they look at, the bigger the balloon gets. Eventually, we all know when you put too much water in a water balloon, it's going to explode. Of course, if a man is not being asked those difficult questions, he's going to have no regard for these boundaries. That's why this is so vital.

Secure in Who They are in Christ: Let me try to get back to letting it be light hearted. I know that was intense for a second, but I needed to go there. The fourth thing is this: they need to make sure they are secure in their relationship with Christ. In Hebrews 13: 5, Jesus said he'll never leave you nor forsake you. When we look for someone else to be Jesus in the dating relationship, to satisfy or fulfill us, they never will nor were they ever intended to. That becomes a dysfunctional relationship, a co-dependent relationship. It's not just between a boyfriend and girlfriend. You see this now a lot with Mandy and Mike and Mike where girls become co-dependent on one another or guys become co-dependent on one another. The reality is there is no one that will satisfy the deepest longings of the soul except for Christ. Those of us who have had the void or that hole in our heart filled by Christ know this and that's what establishes healthy relationships.

Because of all this, Woodland Hills, hold to this Hebrews 13: 4. The marriage bed should be undefiled. When you talk about honoring the marriage, it should be honored by all. Mike and Mandy have been extremely afraid of commitment and so it has prolonged marriage. Look at what is going on in a trajectory trend of marriage in America.

In 1920, post-World War I, the median age for marriage was 24.6 for males and 21.2 for females. Right after World War II, which ended in 1945, you see it dropped. This is all the wars going on, the Great Depression so it jumped a little bit, but then it drops down after World War II. When those guys came back, they were ready to have families. That's why they are the baby boomers. They got back from the war and they got crazy busy. So, the males median age was 22.8 and the female was 20 and they were extremely responsible young individuals. They had seen more things than most of us will see in a lifetime. Then you jump up 40 years and look at what happens. By the way, this continually grows. For the sake of the slide, I didn't put in 1960 through 1980. In 1990, the median age for males was 26.1 compared to 23.9 for females. You see this trajectory trend. Last year, the male median age was 29.2 and the female was 27.4.

Mike and Mandy, I love you. I spend 340 days a year with you. What this is showing is a term called *prolonged adolescence* and an unwillingness to grown up. Let me tell you what it's doing. I'm not doing this to scare you into marriage. I'm just giving you the statistical facts. Think about this. This trend continually grows and let's say in another ten years, it goes up and we're up to about 35 where you guys

are waiting to have kids and families. Your kids are going to grow up without grandparents. Think about that. If you keep prolonging this adolescence and these adult milestones, pretty soon grandparents aren't going to be around because you're pushing the age limit back and it just continually has a ripple effect. And let me tell you this, Mike and Mandy, that's crazy because grandchildren are God's reward for not killing your kids. You want grandbabies. And all my grandparents said... Amen. You sugar them up, you get the hyper, and you send them home. It's the best deal ever. And they love you, Memaw and Papa. It's the best.

So, when we look at commitment... and this is where we're going to drive home today. **The decision to get married should be based on our ability to commit and not on the level of our feelings.** Culture drives this for Mike and Mandy. Mike and Mandys, tell me what this is a picture of right here. This is The Bachelorette, right? What about the next one? It's The Bachelor. How unrealistic is this? "I've got an idea. Let's give you a house of 40 beautiful women, make out with all of them, and try to make a decision." That's the dumbest idea ever.

Let me just throw this out there. Light hearted, Donyes. Girls, your Bachelor/Bachelorette or The Notebook, these are your version of pornography. Your romanticism... I stopped my wife from watching The Bachelor like six years ago. I go, "Baby, we're never going to own a helicopter and go to the Cayman Islands and get to do a date like that. You can just get that out of your mind right now. That's not realistic, Sweetheart. That's just not happening. I can go get you a rose if you want to do a rose ceremony, but everything else, you can forget about it; there ain't no way, Sweetie."

But, we see movies like this and the girls are crying, "Why aren't you more like that?" "Because I'm not in Hollywood, Sweetheart. This is real life. I love you and I'm going to do my best." Or even to this part. This was huge. There are all these things that fuel you and there is no idea of commitment in any of these things. Everything that culture feeds Mike and Mandy has nothing to do with commitment.

There's even a statistic that shows that millennials and generation Z are up for the idea of a trial marriage where they try it out for two years and then if they don't like it... Eighty-five percent of millennials and generation z are on board with this idea. You try marriage for two years and if it doesn't work, you just abandon ship.

They are over committed: Let's talk about commitment for just a second this morning. Why we don't keep commitments as adults or young adults... either way. The first thing I would tell you is it's because we are over committed. Mike and Mandy are over committed to numerous things. They have coffee appointments, they have to hang out and play video games for 30 minutes...

I'll work on my tone, Ted. You told me to watch my tone and don't go after them, just love them. They over commit to these things that maybe have no eternal significance. So, what I would ask you is what are you committed to, Mike and Mandy, that has eternal significance? They struggle with saying no. No is not a cuss word. As a matter of fact, Galatians 1: 10 says this: ***10 Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.***

Better options come along: The other reason why I think they don't keep their commitments is better options come along. It's this thing called FOMO – Fear of missing out – which I also think is prolonging the marriage age. I don't think with 8.4 billion people in this world with 4.2 billion girls and 4.2 billion boys, that there is one person... You have a better chance at winning the Powerball than finding that one person. I actually believe you are compatible with a lot of people, but when you get married, that's the one person God had for you. Mike and Mandy live with "What if better options come along?" And this kills commitment.

They fear commitment: The other one is they fear commitment. They're so scared of commitment because they don't think they will be able to follow through. Or it ties into the better options that come along and the fear of missing out is really fear of commitment.

They don't value their word: They don't understand when Jesus said let your yes be yes and your no be no. They don't value their word and so what does commitment matter, or the lack of commitment? And commitment is so important.

Let me just tell you the truth. I don't feel like taking the trash out all the time. I changed a poopy diaper yesterday. I didn't feel like changing that stink bomb at all. I don't feel like picking up toys or Legos that I just stepped on. I don't feel like doing those things at all, but do you know what? Nine years ago this summer, I stood before God. I stood before witnesses and I said I'm committed to God and I'm committed to this woman until death do us part. For better or worse. In sickness and in health. For richer or for poorer. I'm in this; I'm committed. And regardless if I have the Bamble, twitterpated feelings and the butterflies are going crazy like on The Bachelorette, it doesn't matter. My marriage to this woman isn't dictated on how I feel; it's dictated on a commitment I made before God and his witnesses.

When we lose commitment, we lose this country. When we, as Christians, lose the ability to be committed, regardless if it gets hard, regardless if it gets difficult, that's when things fall apart. Nothing in life has ever come without commitment. No professional athlete has ever won anything without it. No Nobel Peace Prize is ever won without it. Nobody has ever gotten anything without remaining committed. Nothing great has come without commitment. And those that have been married 50 years will tell you that there's a whole lot of Jesus and a whole lot of commitment to that. He segued me right up this morning. How do you stay married for 50 years? You're committed to Jesus and you're committed to one another. On your best days and on your worst days.

Steph and I have had some tough days, but it's in those tough days where I look to Jesus and say, "Jesus, I'm going to need you on this one. I do not like this woman in my house right now. I love her, but I do not like her. She's telling me everything I know I need to hear, but I do not want to hear right now." And all the hubbies said... Amen. But we know we need that better half, so it's so important.

What commitment should mark us as Christians? Whether you're married today or whether your Mike and Mandy, what commitment should mark us.

The commitment to follow Christ: I think in the latter days, it's going to get much more difficult and the culture... We're still pretty safe here in Branson, the buckle of the Bible belt, but it's upon us. I was just out in LA and San Diego where it's not as popular as it is here in Branson, Missouri. If we're not marked by this commitment in the next 10 to 20 years, I think it will look radically different for the next generation coming up.

Commitment to God's people: We should be marked by the commitment to be God's people and to love God's people. Who are God's people? Everyone. We should be committed to love... That's a great commandment: *love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and the second is love your neighbor as yourself.* We should be marked by the way we are committed to loving others in spite if they look different than us, talk differently, act differently.

Commitment to serve: To serve this church. To team up with Stephanie and Denise and Katie and everybody else behind the scenes. We should be marked by our commitment to serve. Matthew 20: 28 says *...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...* And guess what, millennials and generation Z? Serving may not give you a paycheck, but you're walking out God's will for your life. He called you to serve.

I'm all for millennials and generation Z wanting their dream job. I'm all for you wanting your dream job and being your own CEO, but just work hard during the waiting process. Just work your tail off during the waiting process and get toward your dream job. A Jeannie is not going to show up and say, "Poof! Here you go, CEO. Way to go. You dreamed for it long enough." No. Work your tail off in the process. That was one of the difficult things we had with this last pre-marital counseling. One of the individuals didn't want to work their tail off.

Commitments we've made that we stick to. I understand that sometimes, Mike and Mandy, we make commitments and things come up. Let me give you an example of this in my own life. I was asked to speak at Young Christians' Weekend, which always happens to fall on the Final Four. And I accepted the invitation to go speak at Young Christians' Weekend. It's a great event. Mike Hefley and Silver Dollar City do a phenomenal job putting on this even every year and I gladly accept.

A week later, I get a call from a buddy saying, "Hey, I have hotel passes and final four passes to all three games."

I was like, "Awesome. Let me call you back."

"What! Call me back!?"

"I made a commitment. I need to follow up and see if I can be released from my commitment and if not, I can't do it."

"Bro, you're crazy; this is like once in a lifetime!"

"Yeah, I tell my wife that a lot and she doesn't buy it, so let me find out if this is okay."

I called Mike and said, "Mike, I got an opportunity to go to the Final Four. I know I committed to you to speak; I'm going to stick to that first. However, I've got another guy that's a great communicator that would love to step up if you're okay with that. I want you to know I will honor my commitment first."

Mike was gracious. He said, "Go enjoy the Final Four. Connect me with your guy."

My guy went and did it and it was great. That, young people, is how we handle commitments. Not not showing up. Not not texting. Not not calling. If you make a commitment... I don't care if it's to go have coffee with somebody today at 5:00 and you decide something better came up because a boy finally asked you on a date or whatever the case may be.

You call that friend and say, "Hey, I know I made a commitment to have coffee with you at 5:00. I have another opportunity that I would love to exercise; will you let me out of that commitment?"

That's how Christians should be marked with their commitments. That's what people should say about us. "You know what? Those people that go to Woodland Hills are men and women of their word. They follow through with their commitments."

There's nothing to fear in a commitment. God honors it. Look at this and we will close with this today. Psalm 15 says this. **1 Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain? 2 The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart; 3 whose tongue utters no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbor, and casts no slur on others; 4 who despises a vile person but honors those who fear the Lord; who keeps an oath even when it hurts... who keeps their commitment even when it hurts. ...and does not change their mind; 5 who lends money to the poor without interest; who does not accept a bribe against the innocent. Whoever does these things will never be shaken.** That is who may ascend and have that deep intimacy with Jesus Christ.

Mike and Mandy, I long for you to be married. I think this is God's idea; it's not man's idea. God came up with this. I understand your hormones are going crazy. When you go even further back in the median age to biblical times, people were getting married at 13 and 14 years of age so they didn't have nearly the sexual temptations that you do now with billboards and pornography and everything else. I understand that, but there also has to be a drive in your heart to be committed. I don't think marriage today has anything to do with age. I think it has everything to do with maturity. I've seen some 19 year olds that are ready to get married and I've seen 30 year olds who aren't. But I think it's a resolve in your heart, Mike and Mandy, to decide you are going to grow up, get out of the basement, stop playing video games, get a job, pay your own cell phone bill... This is a loving tone.

Here's why I'm telling you this, Mike and Mandy. It's because marriage is amazing. Is it hard? Yes, but it is amazing and I wouldn't trade raising two kiddos with my beautiful wife for the world. God is going to sanctify us, Mike and Mandy. I just prefer it to be through my wife and kids than anything else. He's going to sanctify us. He who finds a wife finds a good thing.

Mike, you ain't never going to find a wife until you learn how to ask her out on a date. And by the way, we didn't have Tender growing up. Tender is an app and all they do is see a girl's picture and if they like it, they swipe one way and if they don't the swipe the other way. Then they connect this way. Y'all are like chickens. I used to have to go knock on Daddy's door with a shotgun right next to him and ask if I could take his daughter out on a date. But, I want you guys to get married because I think it's a gift of God and has everything to do with honoring boundaries, walking in obedience, seeking out older, godly wisdom, being secure in your relationship with Christ, and knowing how to honor your commitment. Amen?

Father God, we do thank you so much for this church. I pray whatever you had to say today just penetrated. I pray that these words can be encouraging to Mike and Mandy. I love them as you know.

I pray for the singles. God, I pray for godly men and women to meet godly men and women, that they would be married in an obedient way to your scripture. That they would honor you and honor the marriage bed.

If there is any Mike or Mandy in here this morning that's in a relationship that is dishonoring to you, that's not walking in obedience, I pray your Spirit would convict, I pray your Spirit would move through that and do a work that only you can do. God, thank you for a word that actually has a lot to say about how we navigate relational waters.

We love you so much and it's in your matchless and mighty name we pray, Jesus... Amen.