



4Dates 4Weeks

Part 5 – Sliding into DMs

Adam Donyes and Scott McElvain

Adam Donyes: We're wrapping up the final message in 4Date 4Weeks and the whole challenge. It seems kind of oxymoronic to give a singles' talk on Valentine's Day, right? Oxymorons are like pretty ugly, icy hot, fun run, Branson entertainment, ACC Football, driving tourist – words that don't go very well together. So, we are going to sum it up. And if you're not a single in here and you're like, "I shouldn't even have come to church," you're wrong. You have an opportunity to be a backup singer, and some of the things we are going to share today, I think you can transfer onto some singles that may not be here today. Then you can give the same encouragement the same love and impart the same emboldened knowledge.

We're talking about Part 5 *Sliding into DMs*. Some of you are like what is sliding into DMs? Some of you don't know because 40 years ago, you actually went to the door, knocked on the door, and asked the father if you may take his daughter out on a date. And then it transferred where you actually called, and the house only had one phone and you had the rotary dial. You had to call and Dad answered the phone. So, Dad answered the phone and said, "Who is this? You want to speak to who?" And then you got to speak to the daughter. Now days, they do what is called sliding into DMs where they don't have to call anybody. They just get on Snapchat or Insta and they just slide right into the DMs and it's like "What's up, girl?" Young men, stop that. Stop sliding into DMs. The other lingo is "catching feelings." Where you have two people who are friends, and someone eventually catches feeling and want to be with that person.

So, there is one passage of scripture that Scott and I really want to anchor on today for singles. It's the same one I would encourage you to encourage singles with. Song of Solomon 2: 7, 3: 5, 8: 4. Three times... This is important, so important that Solomon says it three different times throughout this poetical letter. ***7 Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you...*** or I adjure you or I strongly implore, or I encourage you. He is very adamant about this. ***...by the gazelles and by the does of the field: do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.*** Scott, what does it mean to awaken love before it desires?

Scott McElvain: Yeah, that's a great question. I don't know about out you, but for me, any time I've come across this passage, I have this faint understanding of what that means. I agree with it, but I don't really know what all that entails. So, to begin here, I want to lay out a little definition that I think is encapsulating what the Shulamite woman is trying to convey here. And that is to awaken or arouse those desires is to act on the desires of sexual and emotional intimacy prior to the covenant relationship of marriage that begins at the wedding. To act on those desires.

I think that's pertinent for us because I want to acknowledge that God does give us those good desires for companionship, for intimacy, both emotionally and sexually. Those are good desires and what is being conveyed here is that those desires are to be acted upon at the right time.

In full transparency, I knew my wife four years in friendship before we started dating. The moment we started dating, I had all those desires present. They were absolutely present. I believe there are three ways we navigate or act on those desires. The first one is absolute freedom. The freedom to go and be with each other intimately, to hook up, to slide into the DMs for a hook up, not worrying about consequences, but seeking pleasure.

The second and third ones, I would phrase as repression versus suppression. Repression would say that this is the rejection or denial of these feelings, these desires, this desire for companionship. I think the third way we might go about that is suppression. As we understand these desires to be but there is a conscious restraint. They are good, not at this time.

So, what I believe the Shulamite woman is conveying in this passage is there is a right time, a right place, and a right person for the awakening and arousing of love. I think she understands something that you and I also understand and that is the power of love. She even mentions this power in Verse 5 here just a couple of verses before. Song of Solomon says this in 2: 5 - ***Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am sick with love.*** She is describing the physical ailment of her desire for Solomon in this passage. Her desire all but consumes her, exposing her to her husband just how vulnerable she is because she has given herself fully to him, he holds incredible power to build her up or to destroy her. The power of love. When these things are awakened or aroused prior to marriage, devastating things happen. I love how this commentary put it when it says, "Both men and women must let their love arise on its own and not rush into it or force it to happen. When it is time, self-sacrificial love will rise naturally; it is not forceable.

I don't know about you, but when I think of this concept of forcing or rushing love, there is a TV show that comes to my mind. I believe many of you secretly watch this show and if, men, you are also being honest, you might just happen to be on the couch while this show is on as well. That is The Bachelor. Okay? I have to admit that sometimes I watch this, and I just think *do everything opposite of what they are doing. Watch that and do the opposite.* It's train wreck on train wreck with another train wreck.

I say this because in a public way, you see the consequences of what rushing and forcing love before it is time happen right before your eyes. Contestants show up and are vying for one person's affirmation and love and there is some magical clock existing out there in which these women are pushing and forcing to convey their love emotionally for a guy they've been on two dates with. Not to mention the sexual pressure that is put on these contestants to advance as far and as fast as they can to solidify that they would receive a rose. The exit interview when they do not receive a rose is all you need to see for the effects of what arousing and awakening love before it's time looks like. For there is some kind of script that almost of them read off of. "What is wrong with me?" "I gave all my love and I didn't get it back." "There must be something wrong with me; I'm unlovable." You just see the implosion of their awakening and arousing love prior to that time on full display.

So, as we move to the next section here, Adam is going to talk about what we do if we have already aroused or awakened that in the relationships right now or previously.

Adam Donyes: Or follow the cues of *The Bachelor*, right? My wife and I do a lot of pre-marital and post-marital counseling and it's crazy how some of them will watch this together. I'll look at the wife and say, "You don't expect to go stay in lodge cabins in the Alps and him to take helicopter rides with you and drop you off on deserted islands?" "You know that's not normal, right?" She'll kind of look at me... NO, it's not normal. Don't follow the cues of *The Bachelor*.

What happens if you are a single in here and you've already awakened love, or you've already pushed that too far. My friend, Eric Metaxas, says it really well. "*Having sex with the person you expect to marry is acclimatizing them to the idea of sex with someone they aren't married to.*" What a powerful quote. You're getting them ready to do something you don't want them to do outside of marriage. Remember this. Sex isn't man's idea; it wasn't woman's idea. Women might think it was man's idea. No, it wasn't man or woman's idea; it was God's idea. God designed and God created sex. Marriage wasn't man's idea. Marriage was God's idea. So, when God designs things, he designs them within the context in which they belong, and it's the same with this. So, when you do something outside of a design, it can have catastrophic effects. It can have an impact. Let's look at this biblically. Scripture has something to say to this.

1 Thessalonians 4 – **3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified...** That word *sanctified* literally means to be set apart, which means we should be taking our dating, our marital, and our sexual cues from the Bible and not *The Bachelor* or Tender swipe left, swipe right. We shouldn't be taking our cues from culture; we should be taking our cues from scripture.

...that you should avoid sexual immorality... It's pretty clear. If you are not married, you should avoid sexual immorality. It's crazy to think about how prolonged adolescence singles are getting married later and later. One of the elders asked me why in between services. I said because men are more able to get on pornography where they don't control their own body and they are satisfied without needing a spouse, which is catastrophic what we're seeing in this trend and generation.

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; 6 and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. When I think of singles dating, I often times see people who take advantage of guys or girls by emotional manipulation, by wordsmithing things, by making a girl feel bad if she doesn't give a part of her physical purity or whatever the case may be, and the relationship becomes really unhealthy and manipulative. It says do not take advantage. Gentlemen, no means no. Don't take advantage of a brother or sister, girls too. Don't emotionally manipulate guys, don't play games.

If you are in your 20s, stop playing games. Grow up, be an adult, don't play games. You know what I'm talking about. If you're ready to get married and you want to be a mature adult, there is no more time for games. Married people, stop playing games. **The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. 7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy**

life. 8 Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

So, if you are a single and you're dating someone, they need to be a believer, period. A believer shouldn't date a non-believer. That non-believer is not going to have the Holy Spirit in them, and they are going to act like a non-believer. And scripture is crystal clear with it. There is no relation with a non-believer and a believer. I get this all the time from young people. You know that I mentor young people all the time. Girls will tell me this when a guy is awesome, "Man, he has so much potential to be an amazing Christian." I'm like, "Yeah, he also has potential to be a deadbeat dad. I don't care."

And then guys will say this: "Oh my gosh but she's so hot." I'm like, "Bro, so is hell. I don't care." Does she know Jesus? Does he know Jesus? Is he walking with the Holy Spirit inside him that's going to help him navigate the single waters, which is really important because here's the reality: In dating, we put on these rose-colored glasses and it is difficult to see red flags in dating with rose colored glasses on. What are those red flags? Co-dependency, sabotaging dates because you make it so self-centered and about you, wanting to cross physical boundaries, having a lot of emotional baggage. Those are red flags in dating.

Trust me. Marriage just becomes dating multiplied. Marriage is just dating squared. So, when you're dating someone, Gary Thomas says this in his book, *The Sacred Search*. "*We become so infatuated where the epinephrine and the endorphins in our brains literally make it impossible to see red flags because we have rose colored glasses on.*" So, it's important that there are backup singers in these singles' dating life that they help identify those red flags in people.

I've learned this from singles. Usually, singles don't want to ask godly couples if they should be dating someone if they know they shouldn't be dating that person. They'll go to their secular friends who would give them the advice that they want to hear rather than what they need to hear. So, as you go through dating, you have to understand that infatuation period only lasts for nine to twelve months. Then that Bambi, twitter pated, really infatuated period goes and then, like Scott said, it's a train wreck on train wreck on train wreck. It explodes because once that infatuation is gone, what you've built on and you've chosen to ignore all the red flags.

So, here's a fireplace. We would all love to sit next to one of these today. What is a fireplace for? A fireplace was built to have warmth in a house and being able to confine a fire and it works great. But if you remove that fire from outside of the fireplace where it belongs, it is going to cause a lot of damage. As a matter of fact, it will burn the entire house down. This is how God designed sex. Singles, the fire is meant to be inside of marriage. When you take it outside of that, you're playing with fire, literally.

Now, let me encourage you with this, singles. If, like me, you have made mistakes in your physical purity... I didn't start walking with Jesus until halfway through college, and I made some mistakes in my physical purity. My wife was amazing. She didn't. She walked with Jesus her whole life and she has been amazing. So, we started dating and I wanted to do it the right way. I wanted to date her how scripture says you should pursue and date a woman, not how culture had taught me my entire life.

So, knowing I had made some mistakes, I approached her and just said... and I knew this was going to get serious. I needed to let her know I had a past. I wanted to be honest, transparent, and didn't want any of our relationship built on lies. I approached her and just said, "Hey, I want you to know I have a past." I'll never forget what she said. She said, "That's not who you are today and that's not who you are becoming. I don't want to dwell on it." Thirteen years into marriage, she hasn't brought it up or thrown it back in my face yet. And she's living out the gospel. That's the redemptive power of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5: 17 – ***If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; the old is gone.*** So, if you are a single in an impure relationship, I'm telling you your response to today is to start walking in the newness of Christ, is to start walking in purity. If you're a parent and you know your young person is in an impure relationship, it is your responsibility, as a backup singer, to tell them to get out of that relationship. God is not going to bless a sexually impure relationship.

If you are single and you are shacking up with somebody, you either break up, separate, and start pursuing the right way then lean in towards marriage, but you can't continue to have sex with somebody and say God is in this relationship. It doesn't work. That's not how he designed it. So, just like my wife says, "That's not who you are becoming," you have a chance to become somebody too. That's what I love about the story of David. The dude blew it with sexual purity, but God still redeemed him and we call him a man after God's own heart.

So, Scott, the next part of this is what about the singles that have never even had the opportunity or chance to awaken love?

Scott McElvain: Well, I want to acknowledge something and that is that I know that many of you who are single have a deep desire to be married and just haven't had that happen yet or haven't found that person yet. And as I made a phone call to a friend, Angie Woods, who is a life coach for young, single, Christian women, she said a phrase in there that I thought was too good not to share. She said, "**Hope deferred makes the heart sick.**" So, if you are single and your heart is sick as you are losing hope that that may be something that the Lord has in store for you, do not lose hope. I want to encourage you here today because I feel as though I understand a little bit of where you're at. We live in a culture today that is so sex saturated that it's insane. The way in which we as a culture or the culture looks at singles that there is something wrong with you. Or why are you not with somebody? You're getting a little bit older, what's going on?

My wife and I are in the process of house hunting and we have about ten days to put a contract on a house before we're out of our next spot. Because of this, I am looking at houses I never ever would have considered prior to this timeline that I now have on me. Square footage, where we're living at, what it looks like. I am knocking things off my list. To put it another way, I am beginning to settle for things. And if I may encourage young single men and women, do not settle. Do not cave into the pressure. Stay strong.

I offer to you another thing as you look for love, as you look for marriage, which is what J.P. a pastor down in Texas, talks about. When he counsels young men and women, he asks them what they are looking for. The number one answer he gets is, "I'm looking for that feeling. I can't put my words on it,

but when I meet them, I'm just going to know." That's bad. J.P. describes it as dating should be more like a job interview than we want to admit. Is this person going to be a loving husband? Is this person going to be a good father? A good mother?

So, here is something I challenge you with. If you are young and single or even if you're in a dating relationship, maybe consider this. You actually write out a list of what you're looking for. Now, I have two caveats to that. One caveat would be after you create this list of this goddess woman or this he man, that you do two things. First of all, you write this. Pastor Douglas Wilson says this, "*Be the kind of person that the kind of person you want to marry would want to marry.*" For everything you write on that list, you have to begin thinking *would that person want to have anything to do with me?* That you may begin thinking about some areas that you need to be working on as you are pursuing marriage and in a relationship.

My second caveat to you writing that list would be this. Does your list match what God says is beautiful of a young man nor woman of God? There could be random things on there, preferences or whatever, but as you begin to take that list to the Lord, does that match what God says is beautiful? And if it doesn't, then you would humble yourself enough in conviction to confess that before the Lord and begin to pray that he changes your heart to better seek and love the things in which the Lord loves and seeks.

Now there are some things in there that are automatic deal-breakers for me, right? Like being a Tampa Bay Buccaneers fan right now. Let's just let out a collective sigh for all my Chiefs fans right now. But we would begin truly to think what is it that God wants in a young man or woman that we pursue.

I also want to ask a question that I think is a pertinent question for any stage of life, whether you're single, in a relationship, or married. For the singles that are sick of heart that we begin to maybe change our perspective by asking questions like this: How can I leverage this season of life for the advancement of the gospel? How can I leverage where God has me with what I'm doing for the advancement of the gospel? There is a season, there is the gift of singleness that allows you to do stuff that in marriage and raising kids doesn't allow, that you may begin to capitalize, maximize, and pursue that season for the advancement of the gospel. Because the Great Commission didn't say it begins when you are married. The Great Commission is for all in all seasons of life. So, hopefully, that challenge and different perspective may aid young singles.

Adam's going to finish us off in describing how we know when we're ready to awaken love.

Adam Donyes: I would say if you're single, there's nothing wrong with you... maybe, right? No, no, so maybe you're too clingy or maybe you're too apathetic. Or maybe singleness is because you're not taking initiative or because every first date you go on, you sabotage by becoming super clingy and already talking about marriage on the very first date.

Maybe you are single because you have some maturing to do and you have some awareness to develop, which is understanding too. But if you are single and you are a girl, I love the way that Mia Angelo puts this. She says that a woman's heart should be hidden in God that a man has to seek Him just to find her.

So, if you're single and you're looking for a significant other to fulfill you or satisfy the deepest longings of your heart, that person will react as a dysfunctional savior. They are not supposed to complete you or satisfy you, regardless of what Hollywood movies say. No one completes you outside of Jesus. So, when you look for that, that becomes dysfunctional co-dependency, and it becomes really unhealthy. So, the idea that getting a significant other is going to make you happy is a lie straight from the pit. The enemy wants you to think that somebody else will complete you when Jesus alone is the one that completes you.

It's the same way I've told people that often we carry father wounds because we look to our earthly fathers to play a role that only our heavenly Father can. In the same way, when we look for a significant other to complete us in a way that only Jesus can, we project unfairly onto somebody else a role they can't carry. They can't carry that burden. They can't carry your sin. They can't carry your junk. Jesus can. And Jesus said, "I will never leave you; I will never forsake you," but that person you're dating, that person you're married to, they'll disappoint you and let you down. It's called sin. When you take one sinner plus one sinner, you get more sin, not less sin. It doesn't get less when you take two sinners into this equation.

Ted showed this triangle a couple of weeks ago and I love it. I've always used it for young people. So, this is even for married couples. This isn't just for single people, this is for everybody. So, you have you and others. Think about your name, the girl's name, your spouse, you and then you have God. Every relationship that pursues God first and foremost is going to have more intimacy, they're going to close the distance between each other, getting closer to God and helping that intimacy.

But the problem I see so many times with young single people is they do the opposite. Here's the full part of the triangle. They pursue each other first. So, rather than keeping God the center of their relationship and pursuing him first and foremost, they pursue each other first and you see what happens to the distance between God. They actually increase their distance between them and God, creating an unhealthy relationship.

Gary Thomas says it this way, *"Marriage doesn't solve emptiness, it exposes it. So, marry someone who has a solid core. If someone can't live without you, he or she will never be happy living with you either."* He's speaking of dysfunctional co-dependency.

I think a lot of the reasons why there are so many singles, especially in this prolonged adolescence era is one, guys are apathetic. I promise you, fellas, girls are better than Fortnite. A good, solid Christian girl is way better. And, fellas, there is a mature girl out there and you guys have the pick of the litter if you'll just step up.

So, if you are a single guy in here today or online or in the Chapel and you have never been on a date with a girl, but there's this girl you really want to take out, I will cash app you your first date. If you will step up and be a man... She has to be a believer. And you need to be a believer. My wife and I will sponsor your first date to get off your duff, ask her on a date... Today is a great day to do it. I heard there is a day called Valentine's Day. Today would be a great day to take that girl out.

So, hit me up after this service and I will cash app you to take that girl on a date for your first date. Scott's going to wrap this up for us.

Scott McElvain: As we wrap up... Adam mentioned how we take what we've heard today as a married couple? How do we use this? Is this a sermon for singles? I would ask this question. How do we, as a church, going to continue growing and loving on our singles, that season of life? I would first begin with just the idea that we've consistently used the backup singers. Backup singers for our marriage is why I think we need to continue that and be backup singers for those that are single and those that are in dating relationships.

I can tell you that when I look back on my life, Pete and Becca Majors, Mike and Tammy Higgins allowed me the opportunity as a young, goofy, single guy to come in and be a part of their family on Sunday night diners. Or to go Trick or Treating with them. Or sit by them in church. And to see great pictures of godly marriages that I was taking mental notes of to one day desire to be a part of what Nicole and I have now. So, church family at Woodland Hills, I ask that you become the Shulamite woman, that you, that we, as a church body, are speaking truth to singles and those dating, letting them know God's design for these desires is in the marriage covenant.

That we would be a community that loves all seasons of life, pouring into the season of life we've just come out of. So, maybe we begin to seek out and I offer this too. Singles and young couples, you should be seeking those married couples out too. You should be pursuing it, asking, "Hey can you speak truth into our lives that we would be the body of Christ?" 1 Corinthians 12: 12 talks about it. ***12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*** We are the body of Christ. The hand needs the foot. Singles need dating couples. Dating couples need married couples. We are to love on each other.

When I think about this message, it's helpful for all of us and should be a challenge and encouragement in multiple ways.

Father, we thank you for today. You are the creator of all things. And in that creation, you saw fit to give man and woman this great gift of marriage. Lord, may we heed your words as we hear the calling, the charge to not awaken or arouse love before it's time. May we understand your design for sex and emotional intimacy is in marriage.

So, Lord, let us continue to be the church body that loves on different seasons of life, speaking truth with love and may be honor you in the way that we go about our relationships.

We love you and thank you and it's in your name we pray. And all God's people said... Amen.