



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

More Than Friends / Week 2

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

Your perspective is your pick.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand that while they can't always pick their circumstances when it comes to dating, they can always pick their perspective.

SCRIPTURE

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones (Proverbs 17:22 NIV).

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! (Philippians 4:4 NIV).

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things (Philippians 4:8 NIV).

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

In the *Proverbs* verse, what Solomon *doesn't* say is almost as important as what he *does* say. What Solomon *isn't* saying is

that the medicine to feeling down is perfect life circumstances and getting what you want (including a relationship). What Solomon is saying is that the cure is a cheerful heart or sense of joy. And often times, being cheerful is a choice.

In the *Philippians* passages, Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord always, which confirms that being cheerful and joyful is a decision that we can make. Paul then follows that up with a list of things his readers can think about to help make that happen. Basically, Paul is saying that having a cheerful heart—and *not* having a crushed spirit—is connected to what we think about.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

I came across an old journal that I kept in high school where I wrote about the homecoming dance my senior year.

Although I had big plans for the dance, the guy who I hoped would ask me had different plans. At the time, this event was the most important thing on my mind. And it felt awful.

TENSION

Maybe you feel this way about dating in general. It's because the idea of being more than friends brings a lot of emotions and "feelings" with it.

King Solomon wrote something that speaks to how powerful our feelings are in *Proverbs*. A sense of joy is the cure and the medicine to feeling down.



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TEACHING OUTLINE

How you feel on the inside never stays on the inside.

Some of you have noticed that your dating life or *lack* of a dating life is affecting the way you feel about *everything*. And you wish you had a cheerful heart . . . but *how*?

TRUTH

Actually, there are a lot of verses in the Bible that show us it *is* something we *can* do.

Basically, Paul is saying that what you think about matters. We have the power to decide that it's not the only thing we'll think about.

Just because one part of your life makes you unhappy, even if it's an important part, doesn't mean all of your life is bad.

When we don't change the way we think, we lose perspective.

Perspective is what you see in a situation, but it doesn't just happen. You get to choose it. Your perspective is your pick.

It's time to pick a new perspective. It's time to fight to have a cheerful heart!

APPLICATION

So let's practice for a second. Let's go back to what Paul wrote and take some clues from him.

In the words of the apostle Paul, *think about such things*. Let your mind stay there.

It doesn't mean you never think about dating. It's just not your focus.

LANDING

When things aren't necessarily the way you want, I want you to know that you have more power than you think you do.

INTERACTIVE

This Interactive happens during the Truth. Say this to lead your students through this tangible illustration of perspective:

Let's do a little experiment with perspective.

I want you to put your hand just a few inches in front of your face. Keep your fingers apart like you're about to give a high five.

Now for just a second, I want you to focus your eyes on your fingers. Keep your focus there. You can still see me up here on stage, right? But how do I look? Probably pretty blurry.

Now, keep your hand in front of your face, but look through your fingers and focus on me. Focus through your fingers. You can see all of it, right? Me, the stage, people around you. Sure, you can still see your hand, but your fingers look a little blurry.

What you just saw are two different ways of seeing the same situation. And that's what I want you to figure out when it comes to dating. It will ALWAYS be a big part of your world. The whole thing will always be right in front of your face. But you can choose whether you focus on it.



TEACHING SCRIPT

More Than Friends / Week 2

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BOTTOM LINE

YOUR PERSPECTIVE IS YOUR PICK.

INTRODUCTION

1 MINUTE

My parents still live in the house I grew up in. And they've kept my old room the same way it looked when I left home almost twenty years ago. It's a little creepy. When I went back to visit a couple months ago, I came across an old journal that I kept in high school. Against my better judgment, I started to read it.

One journal entry started right before my senior year. I wrote about who I wanted to go to homecoming with, who would be in our group, and even where we would eat (weird!). But as I kept skimming through the journal entries after that, the story took a turn.

Soon it became clear that, although I had big plans for the dance, the guy who I hoped would ask me had different plans. He asked a different girl. In fact, he asked three before one could actually go. (That's right, THREE girls, none of whom were me!)

It gets worse.

NO ONE asked me. So all my friends went to the homecoming dance together, and I stayed home. I felt sad and depressed, like all of my friends were having fun, and I was in my living room watching the SciFi channel with my parents.

Reading those journal entries as an adult, I realized that, at the time, this event was the most important thing on my mind. And it felt awful.

TENSION

3 MINUTES

Maybe you know the feeling. Maybe it wasn't because there was an event that you wished someone would ask you (and they didn't), or because you wished there was someone you could ask who would say yes.

Maybe you feel this way about dating in general.

It's like it's easy for *anybody* to get a date . . . besides you. And you make jokes and laugh it off, but if you were honest, it stings a little. **Or sometimes, even worse, you feel REJECTED.** Rejection is no walk in the park!

In this series, we're talking about dating and this idea being *more than friends*.

And even though statistics tell us most high schoolers *aren't* in a relationship right now.

- And even if you've never been in a relationship (or you're not in one right now).
- Somehow, they still feel like a big deal, don't they?

It's because the idea of being more than friends brings a lot of emotions and "feelings" with it. And feelings, my friends, are a powerful thing. In fact, King Solomon wrote something that speaks just to that. He says:

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones (Proverbs 17:22 NIV).

Looking at my old high school journal, the "medicine" I thought I needed—the thing that would cure my insecurity, loneliness, and feelings of insecurity—was a relationship. More specifically, it was a relationship with one *particular* person. That. Would. Fix. Everything. Maybe you feel the same way.

But Solomon says something different: *A cheerful heart is the cure.*

In other words, **a sense of joy** is the cure and the medicine to feeling down. He *didn't* say that the answer is found in perfect life circumstances and getting what you want (including a relationship).

The second half of the verse goes on to say, *a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*

A broken spirit will weaken you and wear you out. It's more than having a bad day out or feeling bummed. It's about letting a bad day or week become a way of life. The word "crushed" captures it perfectly. It's the feeling of being weighed down by feelings of unhappiness because of your life circumstances.

Whether you're feeling cheerful or crushed, I think what Solomon is saying is this:

How you feel on the inside never stays on the inside. It eventually seeps into the rest of your life.

Chances are, some of you can relate. **Some of you have noticed that your dating life or lack of a dating life is affecting the way you feel about everything.**

And you wish you had a cheerful heart . . . but *how*?

It's not like you can change how you feel about something. It's not like you can suddenly be thrilled you're single. It's not like you can *not* care that you just went through a breakup.

Maybe you've heard your parents say things like, "You just need to change your attitude." Or, "Cheer up, kiddo!" And you've wondered, *Is that even something people can do?*

TRUTH

5 MINUTES + INTERACTIVE

Actually, there are a lot of verses in the Bible that show us it *is* something we can do.

Over and over, in different times, places, and circumstances, the writers of Scripture say things like “Rejoice” or “Be glad” or “Be of good cheer”¹ And I imagine their original audience thought things like, *Is that even possible? How does someone actually change how they feel?*

One of the times we see this is in a letter from the apostle Paul to the church at Philippi. He says this: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!* (Philippians 4:4 NIV).

Another translation says *always be full of joy*. Paul continues by reminding his readers of some things they can do to make that happen. He talks about treating people well, prayer, and being grateful for all the good things they had. And then he says something that I think could be a game changer for you, especially if the whole dating scene has bummed you out.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things (Philippians 4:8 NIV).

Basically, **Paul is saying that what you think about matters.** Having a cheerful heart—and *not* having a crushed spirit—are both connected to what we think about. They’re NOT simply affected by our circumstances, like whether we’re dating or not dating.

This is good news, because it means that we have a lot more control than we think! It doesn’t mean that it doesn’t bother us if we’re not dating—stuff like that will always get to us. **But we have the power to decide that it’s not the only thing we’ll think about.** Listen, any time something frustrates you, it can be tempting to let it dominate your thoughts. But before long, it can turn a bad moment into a bad mood. And the bad mood, day after day, can lead to a bad life.

But it doesn’t have to be that way!

Just because one part of your life makes you unhappy, even if it’s an important part, doesn’t mean all of your life is bad. So Paul is telling us to make a shift in how we think.

Why? Because when we don’t change the way we think, we lose perspective. And a loss of perspective gives all the power to our circumstances. And before we know it, our circumstances have crushed our spirit.

This is what happened to me in high school. I let my sadness over not dating keep me from enjoying the rest of my high school. I was so focused on it that I couldn’t see other parts of my life clearly. **I lost perspective.**

Perspective is a weird word. We use it a lot but somehow it’s hard to define. Basically, **perspective is what you see in a situation**, but it doesn’t just happen. You get to choose it.

¹ Psalm 32:11, Isaiah 65:18, Joel 2:23, Zephaniah 3:14, Romans 12:11, Romans 12:15, Revelation 19:7



INTERACTIVE

The Interactive for this message happens right here in the script. Check out the Communicator Guide that precedes this script to find out what to do here.

In other words . . .

Your perspective is your pick.

The choice is yours!

It's okay to want to date. It's even okay to be frustrated by it. But it doesn't have to be the main thing you focus on . . .

- When dating starts to consume you.
- When your life begins to revolve around your relationship status.
- When you feel like the deeper things going on can be fixed by dating the right person.
- When more important things start to get blurry.

It's time to step back.

It's time to pick a new perspective. It's time to fight to have a cheerful heart!

You're not going to suddenly feel differently. Your feelings aren't entirely under your control, but your attention, focus, and view of the situation is.

The thing that can be hard to remember as teenagers is that this is just a season of a much bigger life. But since it's the season you're in, it can feel difficult to see it all clearly.

- Not having a date feels like the actual end of the world.
- Being dumped feels like the worst day of your life.
- Not getting a promposal or getting a "no" to your promposal feels humiliating.

It's normal to be bummed out by that. But believe me, *you will make it through*. And the sooner you can make a decision to shift your focus, the sooner you'll see those tough moments with the right perspective.

Because the truth is, no circumstance—dating or otherwise—is going to give you the cheerful heart you want. And you're not *stuck* with a crushed spirit just because things aren't going the way you want in your dating life. You can change your attitude. You can focus on something more important because there is SO MUCH GOING ON IN YOUR WORLD OTHER THAN DATING. Sometimes it just takes a little effort to remind ourselves of that.

APPLICATION

1 MINUTE

So let's practice for a second. Let's go back to what Paul wrote and take some cues from him.

You don't have to answer out loud, but in your own mind:

- What is one thing going really well in your life right now?
- Who is one person you're grateful for?
- What's one talent you're glad you have?
- What's one thing you're proud of yourself for?
- What's one thing God has done that makes you thankful?

Chances are, you can't answer all of those right now, but I'll bet one or two answers came to mind. Some really good things are happening in your world right now. So in the words of the apostle Paul, **think about such things. Let your mind stay there.**

It doesn't mean you never think about dating. It's just not your focus. As your focus changes, you may just find yourself feeling better about the dating scene because it's in a proper perspective.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

I want you think about what you can do to proactively go after a cheerful heart—even when you don't feel like it. Even if your circumstances in dating don't change in high school, think of how your life would look different if you had a cheerful heart. *And think about what you could miss out on if you don't.*

This is bigger than dating. As you get older, more and more things will happen that tempt you to stay frustrated and angry. **But when things aren't necessarily the way you want, I want you to know that you have more power than you think you do.**

Your dating circumstances and life circumstances will change all the time. You can't control that. But you can control how you respond. **Your perspective is your pick.** Take it from the wisest king to have ever lived. Your heart is too important to leave in a broken place. But a simple change in where you focus can make all the difference in the world!



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS