

Time Tested Laws for Building Successful Relationships

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Adams

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF DATING

Revised and Updated Edition Plus Study Guide



A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

To Elliott and Julie

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STUDY GUIDE

COMMANDMENT ONE: THOU SHALT GET A LIFE

Ask Yourself

1. Discuss the myth that you aren't complete or whole until you have a marriage partner.
2. What is the true meaning and significance of the biblical statement from Genesis 2:18, "It is not good for the man to be alone." How can you fulfill this statement without necessarily being married?
3. What are some of the typical misconceptions and false expectations that people place upon romantic partners (e.g., he/she will make me happy, fulfilled)?
4. We talk about the *un-life* (people with no life) and the common signs and symptoms. What are they and can you think of others?
5. Which of these symptoms do you see in your own life?
6. How would you rate your own self-worth based on Peter Kreeft's statements about our self-worth being based on God's Word?

7. Someone with a “real life” has five crucial elements. What are these critical aspects? Which do you need to work on?

8. What is the key to being *grounded*? Have you taken time to write down goals for your life? If not, there’s no time like the present!

9. This week, how can you give to others? Challenge yourself to make *giving* a part of your life.

10. This chapter has a list of ways you can *get growing*. What are some of those things you can begin to do to grow? Why is it important to never stop growing?

Test Yourself—Are You a Healthy, Whole Individual?

Answer Scale: 1=never; 3=sometimes; 5=always

I understand that I am a child of God and that my worth is based on this truth.

1 2 3 4 5

I am generally confident and secure as an individual.

1 2 3 4 5

I have a healthy self-esteem/view of myself.

1 2 3 4 5

People would characterize me as content/fulfilled.

1 2 3 4 5

I am comfortable in my own skin.

1 2 3 4 5

I know who I am and where I am going.

1 2 3 4 5

Test Review

Take a few minutes to consider your answers to these questions.

What would you conclude about your self-health?

COMMANDMENT TWO: THOU SHALT USE YOUR BRAIN

Ask Yourself

1. In this chapter, we have attempted to make a clear distinction between romantic love and real (*agape*) love. Can you describe the difference in your own words?
2. Discuss the importance of *agape* love and why it is superior to *eros* (romantic) love.
3. If romantic love is no measure of compatibility or the lasting health of a relationship, what value does it have in a relationship?

4. Describe the three forces of romantic love.
5. Which force overwhelms you the most? Why?
6. We believe that it is vital to make a commitment to balancing the head and the heart when dating. What are the five techniques for achieving this balance? Can you think of other ways to accomplish this purpose?
7. What are the benefits of an outside perspective on your relationship?
8. Who do you listen to for wise counsel? If you are not listening to others' counsel, aren't you being selfish? Why or why not?
9. Is it really possible to minimize the effect of emotions and sexual attraction in the dating process?
10. How do Christians use their own version of spirituality to manipulate others in the dating arena? Have you ever been a victim of this kind of manipulation?

Test Yourself—A Brain Teaser

Answer Scale: 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=neutral; 4=disagree; 5=strongly agree

I would describe myself as “hopelessly romantic.”

1 2 3 4 5

I am easily led by my emotions and physical attraction when I enter a relationship.

1 2 3 4 5

Sometimes God will lead people into a relationship that doesn't line up with common sense.

1 2 3 4 5

There is one person out there for me that God has specifically picked out.

1 2 3 4 5

When making important decisions about a relationship, the best motto is: when in doubt, listen to your heart.

1 2 3 4 5

Test Review

Take a few minutes to consider your answers to these questions. What would you conclude about yourself when it comes to differentiating between romantic love and real love?

COMMANDMENT THREE:
THOU SHALT BE EQUALLY YOKED

Ask Yourself

1. What do you think about the “opposites attract” kind of relationship?
2. What are the five most common Unequally Yoked Relationships, as described in the book? Can you think of other Unequally Yoked Relationships that are particularly relevant?
3. Discuss the dangers of the Missionary Relationship. Have you ever been the Missionary dater?
4. Why are Mother Teresa Relationships appealing? Do you have Mother Teresa tendencies in your dating life?
5. How would you define an Equally Yoked Relationship?
6. Why is the spiritual connection so important?
7. How can you tell if someone is a real Christian?
8. How long should it take for you to determine if you are attracted to someone? Can attraction grow over time?
9. How does your family background affect your ability to relate to others?

10. What elements of social compatibility do you consider to be the most important?

COMMANDMENT FOUR:
THOU SHALT TAKE IT SLOW

Ask Yourself

1. If God tells you that this is The One after the third date, do you still need to take it slow?
2. What are three reasons to take it slow? Can you think of others? Remember that the whole purpose of “taking it slow” is to help you discern a person’s character.
3. Name the four stages of a dating relationship.
4. What are the advantages of dating someone through the “seasons”?
5. List and discuss the Seven Slow-Motion Dating Strategies.
6. Which ones do you struggle with the most? Why?
7. What are the benefits of “delayed gratification” in a relationship? Expound upon this principle: the more we wait for and sacrifice for something, the more likely we are to appreciate and enjoy it!

8. Discuss ideas for a good short and casual first date.
9. What are the long-lasting benefits of making the Two-Year Commitment?

How Slow Can You Go?—Test Yourself

True False

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| — | — | 1. I would consider myself to be a patient person. |
| — | — | 2. Looking back at previous relationships, I have a tendency to rush the process. |
| — | — | 3. I believe I can get to know someone, in depth, in a six-month period of time. |
| — | — | 4. There are many exceptions to the “two- year rule” of dating. |
| — | — | 5. When you’re in a serious relationship, it is important to talk about marriage and making plans for the future as soon as possible. |
| — | — | 6. It is important to reveal as much information about yourself early in a relationship in order to avoid playing games. |
| — | — | 7. I believe increased physical affection is a good way to enhance a relationship and help determine compatibility. |

- ——— 8. Generally, people will share most of their “real self” in the second or third month of a relationship.
- ——— 9. Passionate love is just a phase that must be diminished in order for real love to flourish and grow.
- ——— 10. Once you have discovered “true love” and you are both fully committed to each other, there is no need to take it slow.

Test Review

Take a few minutes to consider your answers to these questions. What would you conclude about your ability to take it slow?

COMMANDMENT FIVE: THOU SHALT SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Ask Yourself

1. Can you define and/or describe a relational boundary?
2. What is the positive benefit of boundaries to a relationship?
3. Give three examples of good physical boundaries.
4. What does it mean to have emotional boundaries?

5. If the key to mental boundaries is taking ownership of your thoughts, give an example that demonstrates taking responsibility for your thoughts.
6. Explain the Band-Aid Rip method in your own terms.
7. For the sake of your future relational health, finish and then memorize this sentence: pain brings clarity and clarity brings _____.
8. Name the four big lies people believe about boundaries.

COMMANDMENT SIX:
THOU SHALT SAVE SEX FOR LATER

Ask Yourself

1. Explain some of the ways our culture has changed in the way it portrays sex and sexuality?
2. Discuss the gospel of the Latex Messiah. What is the lie that our society is pushing on the youth of our culture?
3. What are some of the classic misconceptions (no pun intended) about the condom and its ability to protect you physically? Emotionally?
4. What are the negative physical, emotional, and spiritual consequences of having sex outside of marriage?

5. Certainly, obedience to God is enough reason to maintain purity. However, we have offered other significant positive reasons to save sex for marriage. What is the value in saving sex for your marriage partner?
6. What are four steps you must take in order to save sex for later? Share how you will accomplish each of these four steps.
7. In the book, we offer hope to all those who have fallen in the sexual arena. What is that hope, and could you encourage someone with this same message of hope?
8. Right now, write down your commitment to remain sexually pure until marriage. Share your commitment with a friend or a group of friends. Ask them to help keep you accountable to your commitment.

COMMANDMENT SEVEN:
THOU SHALT NOT PLAY HOUSE

Ask Yourself

1. It is becoming more common in our culture for people to believe that you should first live together before you get married. What do you think?

2. What are some of the more common reasons why people move in and live together before marriage?
3. What are some of the deeper (real) reasons that people live together?
4. Does living together really help you make a more informed marital choice?
5. Discuss “fear” and “manipulation” as reasons for living together.
6. Can you relate these to the theory that men give affection for sex and women give sex for affection?
7. Discuss the dangers and side effects of living together (e.g., pseudosecurity).
8. According to Harold Ivan Smith, what necessary elements of intimacy does “playing house” destroy?
9. What is the double message that is sent when couples choose to live together?
10. What encouragement does 1 Corinthians 10:13 give to those couples who feel stuck in their cohabitation situation?

COMMANDMENT EIGHT:
THOU SHALT FIGHT FAIRLY

Ask Yourself

1. Is fighting in general a sign that your dating relationship is doomed?
2. Name the top four harmful responses to conflict.
3. Considering past conflicts in your dating history, which of the four responses do you lean toward? What is the negative consequence to the relationship?
4. Explain how the technique of dialing down can work during conflict.
5. Provide an example of setting the tone for a productive conversation.
6. Fill in the blanks to complete Stephen Covey's famous and helpful saying about listening: seek first to _____, then to be _____. (It wouldn't hurt to commit that one to memory.)
7. Give a good example of using "I statements" to avoid sounding accusatory and putting the other party on the defensive during conflict.

COMMANDMENT NINE:
THOU SHALT NOT IGNORE WARNING SIGNS

Ask Yourself

1. Why do some people tend to ignore red flags in a relationship?
2. What excuses do these people give? How can these excuses be refuted?
3. What are the major red flags and warning signs, as discussed in the book?
4. What should you do if you find yourself in an abusive relationship?
5. How would you define an addict?
6. What does it mean to be a “coaddict” in a relationship?
7. One of the major warning signs is the Peter Pan syndrome—someone with a pervasive pattern of irresponsibility and immaturity! Do any of these characteristics describe you? What do you need to do to overcome these irresponsible or immature traits? On the other hand, does the Peter Pan Syndrome describe someone you are dating?
8. Do you agree with the statement, “You either have chemistry or you don’t?”

9. Phrases like “self-discovery” and “inner healing” can sometimes be thought of as mere psychobabble. However, personal growth is necessary and rewarding. What issues from your past should you address before you can have a healthy relationship in the future?

Test Yourself—Warning Signs

True False

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | 1. Marriage has a way of eliminating some of the typical character flaws of a partner. |
| _____ | _____ | 2. Your chances of getting married are slim to none if you are too discriminating or judgmental about your partner’s character (no one is perfect). |
| _____ | _____ | 3. If a person is controlling, demanding, and humiliating, this may be a problem, but it certainly isn’t abusive. |
| _____ | _____ | 4. When your partner has serious problems (i.e., alcoholism, pornography, addiction, etc.), the most Christian approach is to love them through the difficulty, pray really hard, and avoid being judgmental. |
| _____ | _____ | 5. If a person has a history of unfaithfulness, chances are they have learned from the consequences of their problem and would never make that mistake again. |

- ——— 6. When you have significant concerns about the health of a relationship, but can't quite put your finger on the problem, the best approach is to give it time and wait for a more definitive feeling about what is going on.
- ——— 7. It is far better to be in an unhealthy or even "sick" relationship than to be alone and miserable.
- ——— 8. When you discover red flags in a relationship, the best thing to do is lay low and see if things work themselves out.

Test Review

Take a few minutes to consider your answers to these questions. What would you conclude about your ability to recognize and heed warning signs?

COMMANDMENT TEN: THOU SHALT CHOOSE WISELY

Ask Yourself

1. If the ultimate goal of dating is about discernment of character, why then do people rush through the dating process and seemingly ignore the most important aspect?

2. Why is it typically so difficult to discern character?
3. We have listed four reasons why people tend to make poor choices in the dating process. Can you identify with any of these four?
4. What kind of person is most vulnerable to the First Available Syndrome?
5. How is it that sex has a way of blinding people and causing them to lose objectivity?
6. What are your priorities in life? What do you want your partner's priorities and character traits to be?
7. Define what it means to have character. Can you think of some people that you admire for their strong character?
8. We have attempted to offer several "helpful things" for discerning character. Can you think of other ways to get beyond the superficial and obvious in order to discover who someone truly is on the inside?
9. Are you willing to *die single* rather than compromise on the essential characteristics you desire in a mate?
10. Elaborate on the five ECQs (Essential Character Qualities) as defined in the book.

Test Yourself—How Compatible Are You?

If you are in a dating relationship, take this simple test.

True False

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| — | — | 1. Too many similarities can hurt a relationship because it leads to boredom and lacks necessary challenge. |
| — | — | 2. Differences are valuable because they stimulate growth and promote maturity. |
| — | — | 3. It is important to find someone with many differences to compensate for your own weaknesses. |
| — | — | 4. My partner and I have a similar understanding and definition of being a Christian and Christ-follower. |
| — | — | 5. My partner and I agree on the essentials of the faith. |
| — | — | 6. My partner and I disagree on how to practice our religious beliefs. |
| — | — | 7. Once you find true love, most of your problems and differences will diminish. |
| — | — | 8. More often than not, I experience some level of excitement and physical attraction associated with my partner. |
| — | — | 9. I have a strong chemical attraction to my partner (the X factor). |

- ——— 10. Relatives and friends have concerns about our relationship.
- ——— 11. The differences we face as a couple will become less problematic once we get married or engaged.
- ——— 12. My partner and I have a lot in common when it comes to family backgrounds and cultural upbringing.
- ——— 13. We agree on most things concerning how we spend our social time together.

Test Review

Take a few minutes to consider your answers to these questions. What would you conclude about your beliefs about compatibility? Have your past or current dating relationships primarily been with those with whom you are fairly compatible according to the test?