

HANDLE WITH CARE: LOVE & DATING

Scripture used: [John 15:12 \(NIV\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon wrapped up his mini-series on Love & Dating this week. He reminded us how we first decided to share this message with us. He wants his own son and daughter to know the Biblical truths about relationships so they don't fall victim to destructive worldly ideas. This same message applies to all of us, from the single person to widower, and from the newlyweds to the married couple who have been together for 50 years. We can all do a better job embracing the radical paradigm of love that Jesus offers. Pastor Hurmon shared the 1905 short story "[The Gift of the Magi](#)" to illustrate this radical love. A wife and a husband each sacrifice their most prized possession for the sake of the other. We should all be aspiring to this kind of selflessness. Jesus commanded us to live this way when He said "Love each other as I have loved you."

KEY POINTS

- 1) **We need to become the right person, not find the right person.** The world constantly sends us the wrong messages about love. Movies, social media, books, and other forms of popular culture offer the myth of the right person. We are told that all of our faults and fears will disappear when we meet Mr. or Mrs. Right. Of course that isn't true, and we often treat other people poorly because we can make the excuse that we haven't yet been fixed by our special someone. The truth is that we become in dating who we will be in marriage. That means we must be working on ourselves all the time. It is our responsibility to treat others the way we want to be treated. We must invest in our relationships now, not wait for a fantasy.
- 2) **Jesus showed us how to love each other with *agape*.** This is one of the Ancient Greek words for love. [Agape](#) refers to the highest form of love, one that transcends our brokenness. This is the love that Jesus demonstrated through His ministry. It culminated in His sacrifice for us on the cross. That ultimate expression of love led to the ultimate expression of triumph, when Jesus rose from the dead and brought us all the promise of eternal life. We can practice *agape* in our own lives. Paul offers us specific examples of *agape* in [1 Corinthians 13:4-7 \(NIV\)](#). We must be kind, humble, and gentle.
 - a. **Agape love is not self seeking.** When we love others like Jesus, we cannot also be focused on ourselves. We are thinking about them, and what they need. We lose ourselves in acts of service for the people around us, which helps us practice humility. In [Philippians 2:8 \(NIV\)](#) we see how Jesus gave us the perfect example of humbly serving others by going to the cross. He could not think of Himself at that moment. He was focused on saving humanity!
 - b. **Agape love is not easily angered.** We cannot expect to hear bad news without having a reaction. But we also have to work to resolve the situation instead of giving into our emotions. When we make mistakes, we should apologize and take full responsibility. This helps the other person feel validated. That makes it easier to soften our answers and move on.
 - c. **Agape love does not keep score.** God erases our sins, as it says in [Isaiah 43:25 \(NLT\)](#). We should never try to hold onto the sins of others. Keeping score is a power play. When we keep score, we're saying "Here's proof that I am better than you." So anytime we start dredging up past issues, remember God has already erased it from His memory. Who are we to hold onto it?
 - d. **Agape love is protective.** Pastor Hurmon focused on the modern "hookup culture" and its tolerance of casual sex. He reminded us of Paul's writing in [1 Corinthians 6:12 \(NLT\)](#) and [1 Corinthians 6:16 \(NLT\)](#). We have the freedom to do anything we want, but that doesn't mean it's good for us. We can quickly become slaves to the things we thought would bring us freedom. We must protect ourselves and our bodies. Sex is an intimate act, and it involves much more than just the physical joining of two bodies. We threaten our own happiness when we give away our heart to others in bits and pieces. Over time we lose the ability to deeply love another.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Do you believe in the right person myth or are you working to become the right person yourself?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Where do you have the most work to do? Are you self-seek? Are you easily angered? Are you a score keeper? Are you not protecting yourself and those close to you?
- 3) **DO** - Pastor Hurmon asked us to consider the question "What does it mean to treat my body as sacred?"