

Myles Munroe

waiting
and
dating



A Sensible Guide to a Fulfilling Love Relationship

waiting
and
dating

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— Myles Munroe —

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Dedication

To Charisa, my beloved daughter: You have made fatherhood a pleasure, and I know that the principles in this book could only be credible because of your commitment and dedication to the values and moral standards your mom and I laid down for you.

To Chairó, my precious son: You have taught me the art of being a father by demanding from me the things a father needs to give his son. This book is not only dedicated to you but to your children and their children after them. May you continue to be an example of the values and standards we showed and taught you through our marriage relationship.

To every single unmarried person who desires the best in relationships: May the principles on these pages serve as a roadmap on your journey through the emotional seasons of interpersonal relationships.

To every parent who wants to help their children make wise decisions and keep themselves pure until marriage.

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First, this book is the result of my own experience through the passage of youth to adulthood, and the successful transition to married life as a 25-year-old virgin. In this regard I would like to thank my dad, Matthias Munroe, and my beloved mother, Louise Munroe, who laid an excellent foundation in the Word of God for all of their 11 children. These principles taught me wise judgment and kept me from the many mistakes others have made.

Secondly, I wish to thank my beautiful, beloved wife, Ruth, for providing the opportunity for me to test the principles in this book through our own courtship relationship, and for helping me prove that God's way is still the right and best way to all successful relationships.

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Thank you for granting me the time to spend so many hours serving others and writing these books.

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chapter one

Preparing to Date

Young people all over the world, regardless of culture, share at least one thing in common: the challenge of growing into successful adults. Every society has its own customs in this regard, certain rites of passage through which its youth must navigate successfully in order to be recognized as mature, responsible men and women. In Western countries, one of the most common and socially significant of these customs is dating.

The word “dating” comes from the idea of “setting a date,” where two people (or more, if on a group date) agree to get together at a certain time and place for recreation and fellowship. Dating is an important vehicle in our culture for giving young men and women the opportunity to get to know one another in a socially acceptable manner.

Although dating as we know it today is not a Scriptural concept, it nevertheless has become thoroughly imbedded as a social norm. From a sociological standpoint, dating trends and practices indicate overall societal health, because the way people behave while dating usually reveals how they will behave when married. Habits and attitudes established during the dating years generally carry over into marriage.

As important as dating is in our society, however, questions remain in the minds of both parents and young people alike. What, exactly, *is* dating? What is its purpose? When is a person “ready” to date? What guidelines are appropriate for a dating

relationship? These are important questions that deserve solid answers. Understanding dating is essential not only for teenagers and their parents, but also for older, newly single people who, because of divorce or widowhood, are re-entering the dating scene.

_____ *Habits and attitudes established during the* _____
dating years generally carry over into marriage.

One of the most common questions that parents and their teenage children ask is, “How old should a person be before dating?” The answer is not as simple as some try to make it. In reality, the question of when a young person is ready to date is very subjective, depending on the parents’ attitudes and the developmental level of the child. There is more involved than simply assigning a chronological age. Adolescents mature at different rates, and girls usually mature faster and earlier than boys do. Some children may be ready to date at the age of 13, while others may be 18 before they are ready. A person’s readiness to date is largely a matter of maturity and environment.

Part of maturity is knowledge, and there are four principles or prerequisites that every person should meet *before* they begin dating. Knowing and applying these principles will help ensure dating success regardless of a person’s status: younger, older, never married, or newly single again.

THREE PRINCIPLES OF DATING READINESS

1. First of all, you are not ready to date until you are *fully aware of both the benefits and the dangers of dating*. Once you understand not only the perks but also the pitfalls of dating, you are mature enough to begin opening yourself up to more serious relationships.

The primary benefit of dating is the opportunity to get to know someone new, to build a new friendship with a member of the opposite sex. This is important for

developing self-confidence and social interaction skills as well as for learning respect for each other as persons of worth, value, and dignity. At the top of the list of potential dating pitfalls is the danger of becoming physically and emotionally involved too quickly at too deep a level, leading to inappropriate behavior.

Human beings are social creatures, and we relate to each other on three levels: spirit, mind, and body. To put it another way, we interact with each other in the *spiritual*, *soulical*, and *physical* dimensions. This progression is very important. Healthy relationships should always begin at the spiritual and intellectual levels—the levels of purpose, motivation, interests, dreams, and personality. The physical dimension is the least important of the three, yet that is where we usually start. Our Western culture has completely reversed the process. Everywhere we turn in society—the media, the entertainment industry, the educational system and even, many times, the church—the focus in relationships is on physical attraction first.

Healthy relationships should always begin at the spiritual and intellectual levels—the levels of purpose, motivation, interests, dreams, and personality.

Young people today face great temptations and are under tremendous pressure from every quarter to jump immediately to the physical in a relationship. Physical attraction leads quickly to deep emotional involvement and the couple hasn't even had a chance to find out whether or not they share similar interests, dreams, or views on life. By the time those things come out and they begin to discover that they are not on similar levels spiritually or intellectually, it is too late because they are already emotionally entangled, making it extremely

difficult to break off the relationship. Too often they simply plunge ahead with their emotional connection, resulting in frustrated and unfulfilled life dreams.

Before you start to date someone you are interested in, ask yourself, “Am I aware of the benefits as well as the dangers of dating this person?”

2. The second prerequisite for dating readiness is a good understanding of God’s standards for relationships. You need to *learn or work out a clear set of guidelines for behavior based on God’s Word*, or you are not ready to date. This requires a certain degree of spiritual maturity. Waiting until you are in a dating situation to decide what is right or wrong or what you will or will not do is too late. Unless you settle those matters in your heart and mind *beforehand*, you will have little protection against temptation and could easily go too far. There are only two choices: either you will follow God’s standards by deliberate choice, or you will follow the world’s standards by default. Unless you *plan ahead* to keep yourself pure on a date, you probably won’t.

Our modern society has come up with some weird criteria for dating. Some say that a person is ready to date upon entering puberty, or upon becoming a teenager. The only criterion for a believer and follower of Christ is to find and follow God’s standards. If you do not know what those standards are or what God’s characteristics are for a balanced spiritual person, then you are not ready to date. Dating is no place for trial and error. You should not even begin to develop a serious relationship with anyone until you understand what God expects and requires. If you are not sure, find out first.

— *There are only two choices: either you will follow God’s standards by deliberate choice, or you will follow the world’s standards by default.* —

3. The third principle for preparing to date follows closely on the heels of the second. Once you have determined from Scripture what God's standards are, *resolve in your spirit that you will not lower or compromise those standards for any reason, even if it means losing dates*. Many people are willing to compromise moral or godly standards in order to get a date or to hold onto a boyfriend or girlfriend. That is immature behavior and will cause a lot of problems. Standing firm on what you believe in is a sign of both spiritual and emotional maturity. There are no second-class areas of life to God. He is after your best. He wants you to obey Him, follow His Word, and stand firmly on His standards. Anything less and you cannot expect to receive His best.

Close attention to these three principles will help ensure that dating is a healthy and fulfilling experience both for you and for the persons you date.

YOU ARE READY TO DATE WHEN YOU DON'T NEED TO

A fourth dating principle, which arises from the other three and is the most important of all, is simply this: *you are ready to date when you don't need to*. If you feel that you "need" a date in order to be complete or fulfilled personally, you are not ready for dating. Need involves demand and implies that there is something lacking in life. The opposite of need is choice, which allows for a decision. A legitimate need eliminates choice. For example, if we need to eat a meal in order to stave off hunger, there is little deciding left to do; we sit down and eat. Once all our needs have been met, we are then free to *choose* based on personal preference or desire.

Consciously or subconsciously, the quest to fulfill our perceived needs drives our lives and influences all our decisions. This is just as true with relationships as with anything else. As long as you perceive lack or incompleteness within yourself, every

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relationship you enter will be, to one degree or another, an effort to supply that lack or bring a sense of completeness. If you feel deficient, you will build your entire relationship on that deficiency, because you will be looking to the other person to supply what you do not have.

Most people enter relationships with some sense of incompleteness or inadequacy. What they usually end up with is a weak 50-50 relationship. Neither person can give 100 percent because they both are focusing on what they do not have, which they hope to find in the other person. People in this kind of relationship live every day in insecurity, because they each are expected to supply the other's lack, and neither knows how long they can keep doing it. The relationship may last only as long as either of them feels it is satisfying their needs or compensating for their deficiencies.

You are ready to date only to the extent that you feel whole and complete within yourself, apart from any other person (except God). When you regard dating as a matter of *choice* rather than *necessity*, you are ready. It is a matter of your ability to be happy and content whether you are with someone else or not.

_____ *When you regard dating as a matter of* _____
choice rather than necessity, you are ready.

Consider Adam, the first man, as an example. The second chapter of Genesis shows us a human being who was whole, complete, and content within himself and his companionship with God:

The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there He put the man He had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of

the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil....

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it....

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man (Gen. 2:7-9,15,18-22).

Before Eve came along, Adam was *alone*, but he was not *lonely*. Loneliness is a spiritual disease. Adam was alone because he was the only one of his kind, but he was completely fulfilled as a person. In tending the garden he had meaningful work to do. In his authority over the other living creatures, he was exercising his God-given dominion over the created order. He enjoyed full and open fellowship with his Creator.

Adam was so fulfilled within himself and so busy tending the garden and naming and caring for the birds and animals that he never felt the need or desire for a companion, this is called singleness or being single. He was so preoccupied with doing what God had told him to do that he sensed no need for a mate. Apparently, the thought never entered his head. Providing a mate for Adam was God's idea. Adam was completely self-fulfilled; he was ready for a mate *when he did not need one*.

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It is the same way with dating. The time you are most prepared for dating is when you don't need anyone to complete you, fulfill you, or instill in you a sense of worth or purpose. You are ready to date when you have first learned how to be single.

LEARN HOW TO BE ALONE

Contentment with being alone involves learning how to be fulfilled in your singleness. A truly single person is one who is complete physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually without dependence upon anyone else. Successful singles find their personal identity and sense of wholeness within themselves and in relationship with God. Because they are complete within themselves, only *whole* individuals are fully comfortable being alone. They can thrive and prosper whether or not they are involved in a relationship. For such people a relationship is an added blessing; it is icing on the cake.

*A truly single person is one who is complete
— physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually —
without dependence upon anyone else.*

A whole person is one who has, first of all, a *healthy self-concept*. Many people struggle with feelings of inferiority and self-hatred. Such a person will have problems in any relationship. Healthy self-love is critically important to personal wholeness because it affects every other relationship.

Someone once asked Jesus what was the greatest commandment of all.

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matt. 22:37-40, emphasis added).

Our first responsibility is to love God with our whole being. Because He first loved us, we are able to love Him and, in turn, love ourselves in the sense of having a positive self-image as someone who is loved and valued by God. If we do not love ourselves, it will be difficult for us to love others, or even to relate to them properly.

Secondly, a whole person has *a clear and solid faith*. When we know what we believe and why we believe it, when we know what the Word of God says and are committed to obeying it, and when we have a good grasp of God's standards for our personal lives and are determined to live by them, we are well on our way to wholeness.

A third characteristic of wholeness is *growing one's own roots*. To grow your own roots means to have your focus of motivation and control within yourself rather than in other people. Many people allow others to control their lives. They dress to please other people, they buy what others are buying, and they think the way others think. Uncertain and uncomfortable with their own thoughts and ideas, they simply acquiesce to the thoughts and ideas of others. Whole people are self-motivated, internally-directed, comfortable with themselves, and rooted firmly enough to stand strong and confident in the values they live by, even if at times they seem to be standing alone.

Being alone as a single person has many advantages, especially for a believer. One of the greatest of these is the opportunity to give undivided attention to the pursuit of spiritual growth and a deep relationship with the Lord. Married people, even committed believers, must divide their time and attention between spiritual pursuits and the everyday demands and challenges of married life. In his first letter to the believers in Corinth, Paul made that very point in describing the value of singleness:

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Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are. Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this....

I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord (1 Cor. 7:26-28;32-35).

Paul's counsel to singles is to use this time in your life to pursue "the Lord's affairs," to grow in "undivided devotion" to Him. Unfettered by the ties of marriage or other serious relationships, single people are free to concern themselves wholly with the things of God. Make the most of this time in your life. Learn to grow deep with God and to love Him by yourself first. Don't be in a rush to get into a relationship. Get your spiritual roots firmly embedded in God now, because once you get seriously involved with another person, particularly in a marriage relationship, your time and attention will be divided between that person and your devotion and service to God.

Work to develop yourself fully as a single person. Learn to be like Adam; get completely lost in God today. Become so consumed by God that He will have to interrupt you to bring another person into your life. Think of singleness as a blessing and a perfect opportunity for character development. You will have fewer distractions, a single-minded commitment, and a

more open attitude because you will not be pressured by the need to please anyone except God.

_____ *Become so consumed by God that He will have to _____ interrupt you to bring another person into your life.*

Learn to be an asset first. *You should be preoccupied with preparing yourself for whomever God is preparing for you.* Most people are so busy looking for the one God has prepared for them that they fail to prepare *themselves* for that person. Don't make that mistake. Use this time in life to prepare yourself.

True singleness is a sign of spiritual and emotional maturity. When you can be alone and enjoy it, you are a self-confident and self-aware person. You are well adjusted, not needing other people's approval to feel okay about yourself. It means that you have your act together and are ready for a deeper relationship. You have discovered and accepted who you are and can now truly give and share yourself with others. You are ready to relate (effectively).

SEEK FIRST GOD'S KINGDOM

Are you concerned about finding the "right" person? The best place to find a godly person is on the road to God's Kingdom. If you are interested in a spiritual person, look for him or her wherever the Spirit of God is. In God's scheme of things, we generally find what we need and want when we are not actively looking for them, but are focused instead on the Lord and His Kingdom. When our eyes are steadfastly fixed on God, He brings everything else into our sphere. Jesus stated it this way:

So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow

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will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own (Matt. 6:31-34).

Jesus said that we should not *worry* about our everyday needs such as food, drink, and clothing. I believe this principle extends to *all* the concerns we have in life, including our relationships and finding that “special someone.” Our first priority as believers is to seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God. If we do that, He will see to it that we receive all those other things. The key is to fix our attention on God’s will, God’s Word, and God’s glory, and trust Him for the rest.

_____ *The best place to find a godly person* _____
is on the road to God’s Kingdom.

Seeking the Kingdom and righteousness of God is like walking down a road toward a particular destination, keeping our eyes focused on the goal ahead of us. As long as we stay on the road before us, we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and in His righteousness, which means knowing how to live, act, and relate correctly in life. This knowledge comes through God’s Word and from spending time in His presence.

Along the way, various paths and alleys branch off from the road on either side. In those alleys stand people or objects that try to get our attention. They represent distractions, things that are not necessarily bad in and of themselves, but can cause us to take our eyes off of the Lord.

Consider a young man who is making his way down the road, diligently pursuing the Kingdom of God. All of a sudden, in one of the alleyways, he sees a very attractive young woman. Stopping dead in his tracks, he says to himself, “Wow, she’s really cute! I’m going to check her out!” and then saunters over to make her acquaintance.

Two things have just happened. First, his eyes, which, a moment before, were filled with images of God’s Kingdom, are now filled with the image of the young lady. Second, as he

moves toward her, he will at some point step off the path because she is not on the road with him, and because he is not watching where he is going. It's like learning to ride a bicycle. Unless you keep your eyes straight ahead, the bicycle will not go straight; it will swerve to the left or right and throw you off balance. Once the young man lets his eyes wander to the alley, he will veer off the path, losing sight of God in the process. If he is not careful, before he knows it, he will end up somewhere he never intended to go.

Anytime we start seeking people, we will be led by people. This is the dynamic of balance that God wants us to see. Once we become preoccupied with someone, or with seeking a particular person, we run the risk of losing God's direction. If we step off the road to the Kingdom, whatever path we take will lead us backward so that whenever we do eventually make it back to the road, we will likely be bruised and bleeding and farther away from our goal than when we began.

Someone may object, "But if I don't go looking, I'm going to end up walking this whole road by myself." That's not how the dynamics work in the Kingdom of God. Matthew 6:33 says that if we seek first God's Kingdom and righteousness, then "all these things will be given" to us. The King James Version says, "all these things shall be *added* unto you" (emphasis added). The Greek word for "added" is the same root word from which we get our word "magnetize." This means that, as we go along our way seeking the Kingdom of God, all these other things that we are concerned about will be added—drawn to us like a magnet. We won't have to go looking for them. Whenever we follow God's principles, we receive God's provision and enjoy God's promises.

Here is the point: if you have to go look for someone, then the person you are looking for is not on the road with you, not following the same path you are. He or she is not seeking the Kingdom of God. If you find someone off the road, you will have to go out of your way to find them, probably stay out of your way

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to get them, and then spend the rest of your life trying to bring them into the way.

Anyone you get involved with as a believer should be headed the same way you are, and if both of you are on the same road, at the same approximate place, eventually you will run into each other. You won't have to go looking. Stay on the road, focus on seeking God's Kingdom and, sooner or later, someone of like mind and heart will approach and the two of you will be drawn together.

Don't ever become so preoccupied by who you want that you forget to be who you are. Who are you? As a believer and a follower of Christ, you are a child of God. You are His possession, His property, His precious gem. It will take you the rest of your life to learn about His knowledge, His Kingdom, and His righteousness and, therefore, learning about who you really are. Righteousness means right standing with God. He wants you to know where you stand with Him: who you are in Christ and what you have in Him.

_____ *Don't ever become so preoccupied by who
you want that you forget to be who you are.* _____

If you become preoccupied with who you want, you will lose sight of who you are. God wants you to become so consumed by His Kingdom and righteousness that anybody you meet will be, first of all, someone who is on the road with you and, second, at the same place on the road as you are. That way you can move along and relate and grow together as complete individuals at the same stage of development and maturity.

WALKING IN AGREEMENT

A man and a woman who find each other while walking on the road to the Kingdom of God have a distinct advantage in their relationship over people who enter relationships born in the alleys and byways. Because they are moving in the same direction with a similar passion for God and hunger for His righteousness,

they are already aligned in a manner that enables them easily to walk in agreement with each other. This is an important consideration for people who are preparing to date.

To walk in agreement with one another, as believers, is a central biblical principle, a primary characteristic of godliness. In the Old Testament book of Amos, God calls His people to task for their idolatry and disobedience, and then asks a fundamental question:

Hear this word the Lord has spoken against you, O people of Israel—against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt: “You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins.” Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so? (Amos 3:1-3)

The implication is that no one can walk together in unity and harmony unless they agree to do so. Nobody can walk with God unless they agree to walk according to His principles and His Word. Walking together is contingent upon agreement.

This same principle also has a prominent place in the New Testament. In addressing the problem of divisions between believers in the Church at Corinth, Paul writes, “I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought” (1 Cor. 1:10). Unity of mind and thought—walking in agreement—is the kind of relationship believers must have in order to experience God’s power. This is true whether we are talking about a fellowship of believers, two believers joining together in marriage, or two believers entering into a dating relationship.

For example, consider the case of a Baptist dating a Catholic. No one can deny the fact that significant theological and doctrinal differences exist between Baptists and Catholics. These differences will make it very challenging, even difficult for this couple to walk together in agreement. No matter how

spiritual they may be, or how much prayer or fasting they have done, or even how full of the Spirit they are, they will face daunting obstacles in their relationship as they seek to walk in harmony. It is not impossible—the Spirit of God can bring harmony of mind and spirit—but it is difficult.

One of the major problems we face today in our relationships is that so many people want God’s results without following God’s principles. They look for a godly return without making a godly investment. Everyone seeks success in their relationships, but many have little real interest in God’s place in those relationships. It is completely unreasonable to ignore God’s standards and still expect a godly outcome.

Walking in agreement does not mean always seeing eye-to-eye on absolutely everything, but it does mean being in basic agreement in the Lord. Paul made this plea to two women who were part of the body of believers in the city of Philippi: “I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord” (Phil. 4:2). Unity begins with basic agreement in spirit, which then leads to harmony of mind, thought, and judgment.

————— *It is completely unreasonable to ignore God’s standards and still expect a godly outcome.* —————

Spiritual agreement in the Lord is the basis for agreement in every other area. It is the foundation stone for every truly successful, productive, and fruitful relationship. People can share common interests, intellectual pursuits, and have the same goals, but without spiritual agreement, they will still have broken relationships.

The secret to perfect agreement is to agree in the Lord. Our fundamental agreement must be spiritually based, which then provides a solid foundation for agreement in other areas. The basis for spiritual agreement is the Word of God. Spiritual

agreement is the first step toward the goal of any meaningful relationship: the development of true intimacy.

WORK TOWARD INTIMACY

Few people realize that the seeds of either success or failure in marriage are sown during the dating period. Habits, attitudes, and thought processes that characterize a person's dating relationships will carry over into that person's marriage. As a single, if you want to ensure success in your future marriage, the time to plan and prepare for that success is *now*, while you are dating. That is why it is just as important to prepare yourself for dating as it is to prepare yourself for marriage.

The standards for successful dating are the same as those for successful marriage. According to the majority of marriage counselors, one of the most common reasons for the breakup of marriages at any stage is lack of intimacy. Most people associate intimacy with physical or sexual relations, but it is much deeper than that. Those who feel that having sex brings them intimacy are only scratching the surface.

Intimacy is not an act. Intimacy is a state of existence in which both partners in a relationship trust the other more and more with their innermost thoughts. They trust each other more and more with their innermost wishes, dreams, and desires. They trust each other more and more with their innermost emotions. Intimacy, then, is the key to any successful relationship.

Most modern relationships, marriage or otherwise, fall far short of attaining genuine intimacy. One reason for this is because, in our distorted age of romanticism, manipulation, microwave speed and 30-second sound bites, we expect instant intimacy. This is a false expectation and can be fatal to a relationship. True intimacy takes time to develop. Many people try to take a short cut to intimacy through physical relations, which

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always leads to failure. The first step to true intimacy in a relationship is developing a oneness of spirit.

Relationship does not guarantee fellowship. Living together does not guarantee togetherness. If two people are close together in physical proximity but miles apart in spirit, there is no intimacy. They may be in the same room but in completely different worlds.

————— *The first step to true intimacy in a* —————
relationship is developing a oneness of spirit.

Ultimately, preparing to date means understanding that the chief purpose of serious dating is to develop true intimacy—a oneness of spirit—between a man and a woman. Once achieved, this spiritual relationship becomes the basis of a growing third and fourth-level friendship, which then becomes the basis for engagement and marriage.

I always say to people, “Don’t marry your lover, marry your friend,” because physical and emotional love are 100 percent chemical. If you marry your lover, you are basing your marriage on chemical reactions, which change like the weather. When you date, focus on the spiritual instead of the physical. Use your dating time not to groom a lover but to grow a friend.

True friendship—not casual acquaintance, but people who are joined together in heart and soul—is the foundation for all successful long-term relationships. The problem is that too many people neither understand what true friendship is nor have any real clue how to make friends or how to be a friend. If you desire a friend rather than a lover, and to be a friend rather than to be a lover, then you are ready to date. The next step is to examine what friendship is all about, and learn how to get friends by being a friend.

chapter one

Principles

1. You are ready to date when you are fully aware of both the benefits and the dangers of dating.
2. You are ready to date when you have worked out beforehand a clear set of guidelines for behavior based on God's Word.
3. You are ready to date when you have resolved in your spirit that you will not lower or compromise those standards for any reason, even if it means losing dates.
4. You are ready to date when you don't *need* to.
5. You are ready to date when you have first learned how to be alone.
6. A whole person has *a healthy self-concept*.
7. A whole person has *a clear and solid faith*.
8. A whole person *grows his or her own roots* in God.
9. You should be preoccupied with preparing yourself for whomever God is preparing for you.
10. Our first priority as believers is to seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God.
11. Don't ever become so preoccupied by who you want that you forget to be who you are.

waiting and dating

12. Unity of mind and thought—walking in agreement—is the kind of relationship believers must have in order to experience God’s power.
13. Intimacy is a state of existence in which both partners in a relationship trust the other more and more with their innermost thoughts.
14. The chief purpose of dating is to develop true intimacy—a oneness of spirit—between a man and a woman.
15. True friendship—not casual acquaintance, but people who are joined together heart and soul—is the foundation for all successful long-term relationships.

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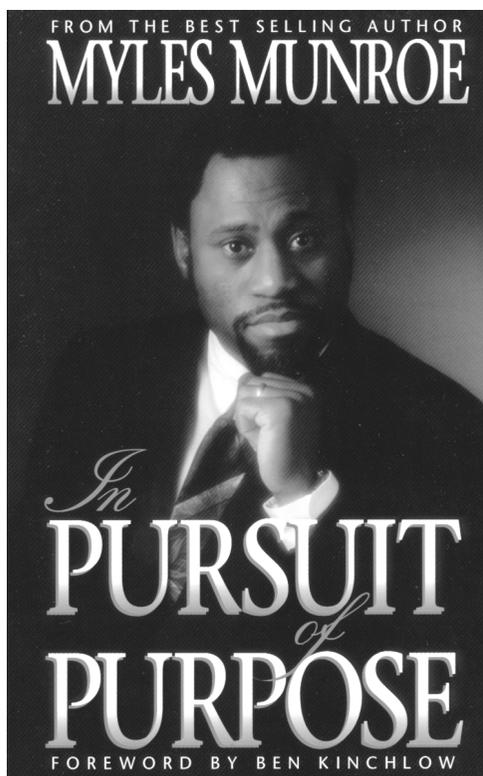
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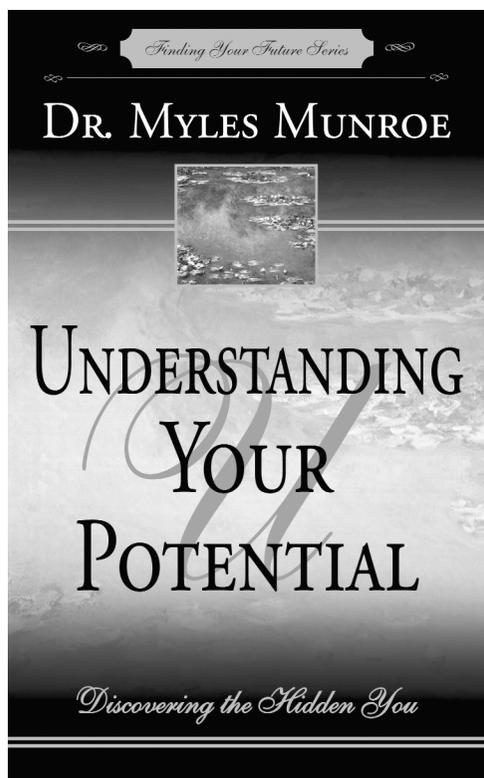
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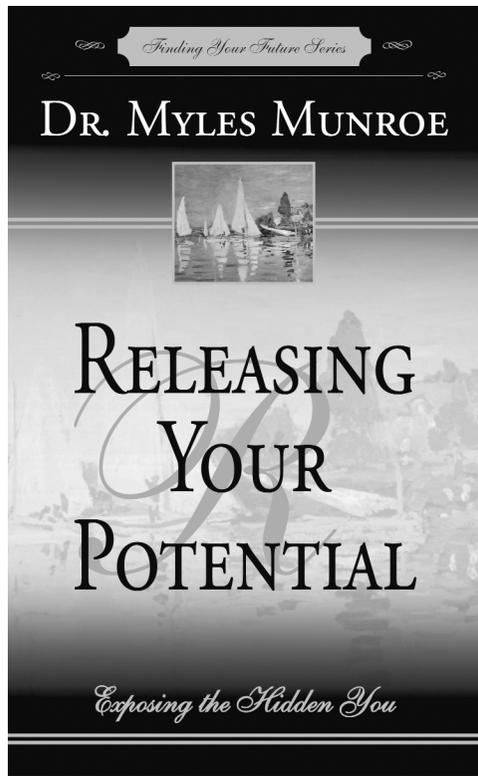
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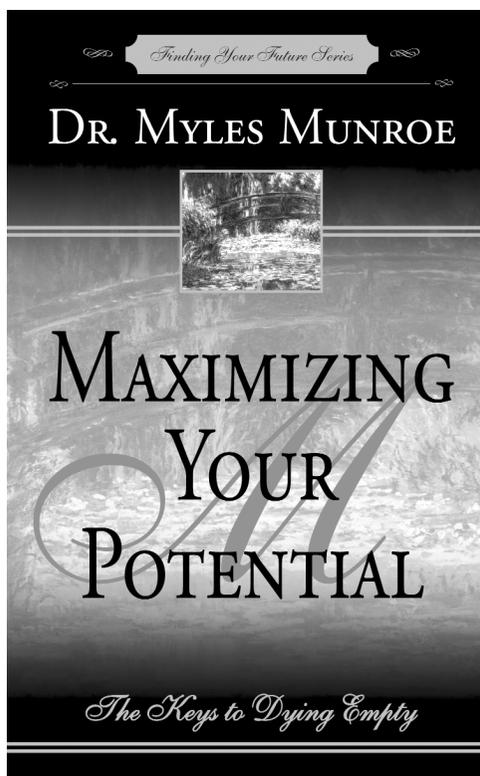
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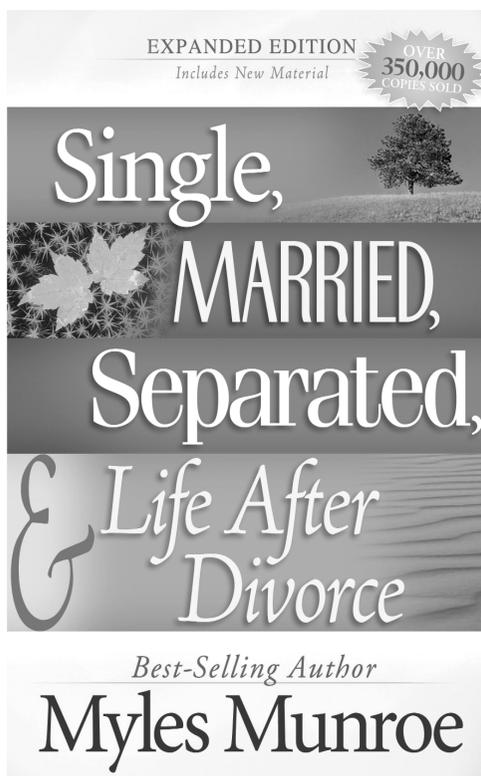
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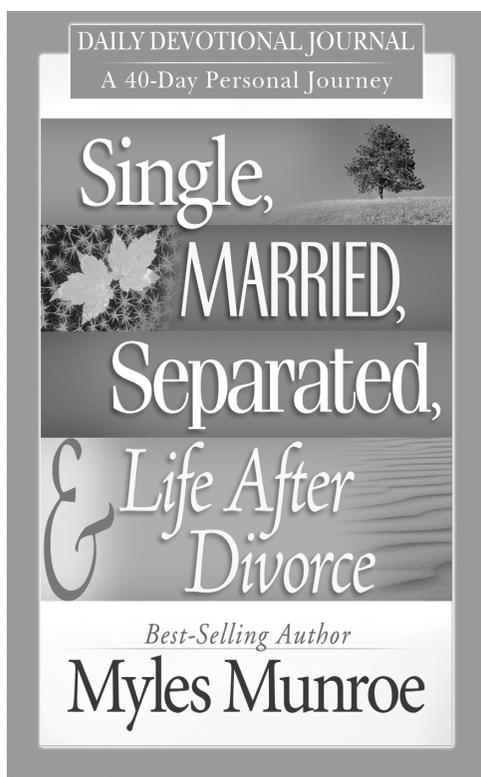
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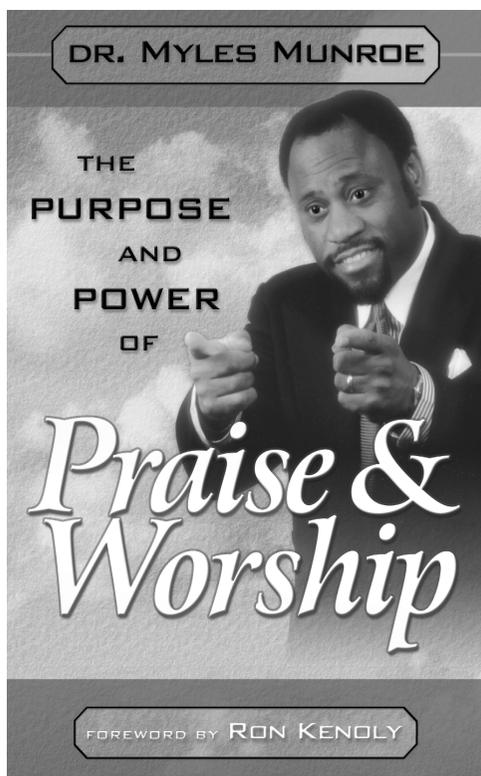
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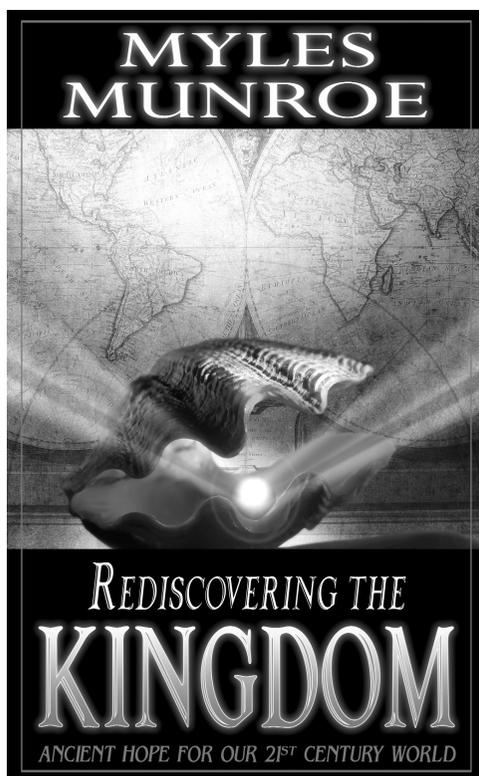
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