



TAKEAWAY THOUGHT: Your value is not in any person you are connected with, rather your value comes from how God has made you.

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 14:10-13, Psalm 139:14, Colossians 2:8-10, 1 Peter 2:9, Romans 8:38-39, John 13:34-35, John 1:12

INTRO

[Author Note: I use the illustration of frontrunners/bandwagon fans as an example of someone chasing value by being attached to someone or something else. You can sub in any story that makes the same point.]

Frontrunners. Bandwagon fans. You know them. You might be them. Frontrunners or bandwagon fans attach themselves to successful teams, often in the absence of success for their own teams. I don't have anything against LeBron James, and he is obviously an all-time great, but he is a great example of frontrunning. As everyone knows, since he refers to himself as such often, he's just a kid from Akron. That's in Ohio. However, none of his favorite professional teams are from Ohio. He's famously been a fan of the Yankees, the Cowboys, and the Chicago Bulls. Do you know what those teams have in common? They were successful when LeBron was growing up. He did make time to jump on the Cleveland baseball team's bandwagon a few years ago when they were in the World Series, too, so he did finally show a professional team from Ohio some love.

I am not a frontrunning fan. My love for the Detroit Lions is all the evidence I need. But there are a lot of bandwagon fans from where I grew up. There's an inordinate number of Patriots and Packers fans in West Michigan, though if you ask me, one Packers fan is excessive. I have a family member who is a Patriots fan. He trash-talks me about the Lions all the time. But I am not impressed that a team that won a couple championships before he jumped on their bandwagon continued to win them after he latched onto them.

TENSION

What compels people to jump teams and latch themselves onto successful teams? I think people are searching for a sort of value. They can trash-talk you, because their team is good, while maybe yours isn't. Fans revel in their teams' successes and feel like they are a part of it. There's a pride that comes with being a fan, or perhaps a shame, depending on your teams. I know it doesn't make sense logically, but you all know it, whether it's because you're a part of it or know someone who's just a little too into it all. Fandom feeds that natural desire we have to feel connected to something bigger, to be a part of a community, and we end up finding value for ourselves in it.

Having a significant other is that kind of connection sometimes. It makes us feel like we're connected, part of something big. It gives us value. It's that status symbol many of you so desperately want. I don't say that as a knock on you. I desperately wanted to have a girlfriend in middle and high school, too. I could brag about having one! I could tease my friends that didn't have one. I would be a part of something enviable. I thought I would be cooler, or maybe more accurately just a little cool, if I had a girlfriend.

Over the next couple of weeks, we'll be talking about dating, but it's more than just dating. I want to talk about who you are and where you truly derive your value. Spoiler alert: your value comes from God, your Creator, not from being in any relationship with any person. You have incredible value and do not need a significant other to be complete. You're great already.

But we know that some people just don't feel complete if they're not dating someone. Do you know the type? I think we've all had friends that constantly date new people. They can't go two weeks without dating someone. If they didn't have someone, where would they find their value? Who would they even be? I hope you are challenged today to realize your value and the source of your value. You are valuable and bring value to your relationships. You don't derive your value from your relationships.

This desire to find value through attachment to someone else isn't a new problem, though, and isn't just a teenager problem, so don't feel singled out. This is a problem that has persisted for thousands of years and has even afflicted sincere, faithful, Christian adults just like everyone else. It was actually a huge problem in the early church, and this tendency affected the way the church was behaving.

1 Corinthians 14:10-13 (NLT)

¹⁰ I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose. ¹¹ For some members of Chloe's household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters. ¹² Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul." Others are saying, "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter," or "I follow only Christ." ¹³ Has Christ been divided into factions? Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not!

These early Christians had postured themselves against each other based on which pastor they followed and who had baptized them. They thought following Paul made them better than those that followed Peter, or maybe following Peter made them better than those that followed Apollos, and so on. It was a silly argument, but it's a trap we fall into. We tend to seek value through different connections throughout our lives. We find value in our friend groups. We find value in our families, teams, our clubs, our church, our campus, our favorite teams, and of course, we find value in our significant others or maybe just even having a dating relationship. We are proud of the people we are connected to, and sometimes we think we are better than someone else or at least better than we would otherwise be because of them.

Paul dismissed this notion. Jesus' love and favor hadn't been divided. He died for everyone. It's only through Him that anyone has been saved, been forgiven. It's by Him we have been defined, and it's in Him that we find our value.

We should not chase value through anyone or anything else. We should know how God has defined us, to what God has called us, and realize the value He has placed on us. Instead of chasing value in dating relationships, we should realize the incredible value we bring into those relationships. I think this is more important than we often realize. I don't think it's my place to tell you when you should start dating. That's a parental issue. However, I would caution you against dating until you truly realize your value in Christ. If you believe your value actually is linked to having someone, you might do anything to make sure you keep that someone, and anything can often



TAKEAWAY THOUGHT: My Christian values should define who I am in my dating relationships.

SCRIPTURE: John 10:10, 1 Corinthians 7:1-2, Proverbs 16:3, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Romans 12:2, Joshua 24:15

SURFACE

- Who is your favorite couple in TV or movies? What do you love about them?

SERIOUS

- Who has a dating or marriage relationship that you really admire? What makes you admire their relationship?
- What sort of characteristics do you think are important in someone you would date or even marry?

SPIRITUAL

- Read John 10:10. What do you think full life looks like in a dating relationship?
- Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. What do you think it means to flee from sexual immorality?
- What do you think it means to be the temple of the Holy Spirit? How might that affect the decisions we make?

This preview includes a select number of pages from this resource.

If you like what you see, download the entire resource today!

downloadyouthministry.com