

# SPOTLIGHT

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## First Date

By Sharon Ahn

On the first day of November, after lunch on a boat, I ventured outside to take a look around and found myself on this island. I climbed over mounds of rocks and dipped my feet in little pools of water. On one shore, the bank extended unseen beneath the water. I waded into the water and realized it looked like I was walking on water! I continued to explore, never tiring of the tiny adventures. Finally, I decided to relax on a rock that provided a panoramic view of the river and the surrounding villages. Amidst the quiet and breathtaking scene, I realized the truth behind a passage in Isaiah:

For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts in his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is

called... In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer. (Isaiah 54:5,8 ESV)

Unexpectedly that Sunday afternoon, I found myself on a date with God. In one of the most beautiful places in the Amazon, I meditated on who God is and how He loves me. It was a rare time for me to be amid His perfect and awe-inspiring creation and NOT think, "How wonderful would it be if there were a boy to share this moment with..." Rather, the focus went back to God: He had created everything I was seeing and He deserves all the praise and glory for it. God, GOD, loves me with an everlasting love...? We fail to let that really sink in.

My first date with God was not planned by me but orchestrated by Him. He wanted to remind me that day that He wants to love me, that He loves

me more than I love Him.

When was the last time I took time out of my schedule and set it aside for God? Not just the typical "QT" slot, but a time to go on a "date" with God? When was the last time I went somewhere romantic and beautiful, meditating on and thanking God? How often am I consumed with thoughts of boys, relationships, and marriage that I push aside and neglect the most important relationship I will ever be in? How dare I pray and ask God for a husband when I repeatedly forsake Him.

In Revelation, Jesus says to the church in Ephesus: "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance... I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first" (2:2-4). How many of us have done the same thing? †

## Dear Brothers

By Dae Gun Chang

Striving to be a man of God while in a romantic relationship takes special characteristics that God desires in us. Now being married over 5 years and having dated for 3.5 years prior, I would've thought that I have mastered some of these, but in reality I am still struggling. In the midst of it all, God has been faithfully teaching me, and I wanted to specifically share two things that God really wants us to focus on.

While growing up, my mother reminded me to pray for my future wife—not that I would find that person, but that I may be ready for that person. Her request was that God would cause change and prepare my heart for that perfect person with a Christ-like selflessness. Many relationships start off with the newfound joy initially blinding us into thinking that we are being selfless, but often times, we realize that "selflessness" is rather conditional.

That is why God reminds us to give ourselves up wholeheartedly as how Christ gave himself up for the church even in death.

The second characteristic is simply love. As Jesus loved, He wants us to imitate the magnitude of this unconditional love towards a single person whom God has handpicked for us. As quoted in every wedding ceremony, the passage of Ephesians 5 talks about God's command for husbands to love their wives. In this short passage, God deliberately states this command three times. His intentions are very clear, yet most of us still struggle with this command because of our sinful nature.

Brothers, no one said relationships are easy. Rather, it's hard work. To be selfless and loving does not come natural to many of us. We have to constantly challenge ourselves to go beyond our own comforts, to give up what we desire, and to find a way to love. It takes preparation of our heart to be ready for a Godly relationship. To put it into context, for the past few weeks, I've been interview-

ing people for an open position at my work, and it's pretty easy to tell who comes really prepared and who doesn't. Showing up to an interview without a resume would probably be a telltale sign of a lack of preparation. On the other hand, a person who comes prepared for any question or situation will have a successful interview. The difference therein lies in how we prepare, which is especially true in relationships.

Where do we go from here? Similarly to preparing for a job interview, we need to gather as much information as possible regarding God's view on relationships so that we may prepare ourselves to be the best candidate for the open position. We need to consistently evaluate our hearts and measure where we are lacking in selflessness and love. We need to build Godly habits in our daily lives that reflect Christ. And most of all, we need to get on our knees and pray that God will break us and mold us to be men whom He will be pleased with as leaders. †

# Jesus Christ vs The American Dream

By Janet Tsuei

After becoming a young adult and submerging myself into the workforce, I have come to realize how difficult it is for us to rely on God. Day in and day out, our lives have become routine as we become participants in this soulless "rat race". I feel as though our hearts have been torn between what we want and what God wants. We live and breathe the world, leaving little room for our great

God. I have thought about this situation much for years and have come to realize that in the end, it's a battle between our American Dreams and Jesus Christ. Since going to grade school, the philosophy of the American Dream has been ingrained in my head. The pursuit of happiness and the promise of prosperity led me to believe that I can achieve all things with my own power and strength. Thus,

leading us to further widen the gap between self-achievement and obedience to God.

I could write all the paragraphs needed for a decent essay, but I decided to visually map the values of God in comparison to the values of the world. We should re-examine our hearts daily and ask ourselves if our hearts are in the right places. Are we servants of God or are we slaves of the world? †

