

Three Lame Reasons Spouses Stop Dating



Serving Leaders in Life

This article was written by Dr. Mark Dance, executive director, Care4Pastors.com.

For more from Dr. Dance, check out his blog: <https://markdance.net/theblog/>

Pastors: During this time of isolation because of COVID-19, couples may struggle to creatively connect.

Most of us have heard the familiar “leave” and “cleave” passage at weddings. The term *cleave* literally means “*to pursue hard*”—which is how every marriage will grow through the various seasons of life.

“A man leaves his father and mother and bonds/cleaves with his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

Each season of marriage will have its unique challenges, and typically, couples find excuses to stop dating. These are the most common ones we hear:

We’re too BROKE to date.

Stopping dating somehow becomes acceptable when couples have babies because parents of preschoolers are generally broke and exhausted.

“Babysitters are expensive!” I can assure you that babysitters are much cheaper than a divorce lawyer. You might not be able to date every week in this season, but don’t use your kids as an excuse to stop pursuing each other. Our kids were never meant to be the glue that holds us together.



We're too BUSY to date.

Parents of grade schoolers can easily find they have become too busy to date. Our personal calendars in this season compete heavily with school, work, and church calendars. Considering this season is temporary, we may tend to prioritize our children's needs above our spouse's needs, doing neither a favor in the process.

Care4Pastors director Mark Dance shares: February is always a crazy month for Janet and me. We may speak about marriage in multiple events at seminaries, colleges, state conventions, churches, and associations. At each of these events, we teach them that to *promote* their spouse, they need to consistently *demote* their kids, parents, friends, and church members. I don't advocate neglecting other relationships; just don't pursue them as hard as you do your spouse.

I often tell pastors that one of the most important things he can do for his church is to love his own bride more than Jesus' bride. Nobody wins when we make our spouse compete with our ministry.

We're too BORED to date.

Spouses who stopped dating when their kids were still at home, often find that their marriage gradually became as empty as their nest. In this season, diverting all of our energy and attention to our careers or hobbies, to the extent that we grow disinterested in each other, is easy to do.

Last week I asked a pastor how long he had been married, and as he looked at the ceiling, he sheepishly replied, "24 or 25 years?" I said something to the effect of, "You need to know because I guarantee your wife does. Your 25th anniversary is a HUGE deal to her as it should be to you."

Janet and I have had three simple marriage goals which have helped us be intentional in growing our marriage:

- **Connect daily**
- **Date weekly**
- **Explore annually**

The nature of the term "date" implies that it is on your calendar. Your season of life will determine how fancy or long your dates, trips, or conversations are, but the key takeaway is to never stop pursuing the person you publicly promised to "love and cherish."



[Click here to download a Date Night Menu from Great Commandment Network](#)

