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| **Song: "Style" -- Taylor Swift****FLAMES OR PARADISE** |

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| **The Gospel** | **JOHN 4:27-30** |

**[Jesus'] disciples returned, and were amazed that he was talking with a woman, but still no one said, "What are you looking for?" or "Why are you talking with her?" The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, "Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Messiah?" They went out of the town and came to him.** |
| ***Gospelthink: The Samaritan woman saw who I was.*Is it clear from my life that I have chosen the Lord?** |
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***“Midnight. You come and pick me up, no headlights, long drive, could end in burning flames or paradise. It’s been a while since I have even heard from you. I should just tell you to leave 'cause I know exactly where it leads but I watch us go 'round and 'round each time. You got that James Dean daydream look in your eye and I got that red lip classic thing that you like, and when we go crashing down, we come back every time 'cause we never go out of style. He can't keep his wild eyes on the road, takes me home, lights are off. He's taking off his coat. I say, ‘I heard that you've been out and about with some other girl’. He says, ‘What you've heard is true but I can't stop thinking about you,’ and I said, ‘I've been there too a few times.’”*** |
| **The lady and the man in the relationship described in Taylor Swift's song "Style" are still beginning a love relationship. They have dated in the past, and both of them discovered that there were other people in their lives with whom they could have a relationship. Their own relationship was one that had magic moments in which they thought that they had found the perfect match for themselves. But there were other times when just the opposite was true, when they were going "round and round" trying to discover how their relationship together would be.Dating always involves such thinking because early on, we just never know what the other person is going to be like. It is a discovery process, and we will always find ourselves "second guessing" our thinking. We realize that the decision is a momentous one, and early on, generally speaking, we are simply not able to find the love the way we want it.These meditations have often pointed out that Jesus did not have anything to say about the process of discovering "romantic love." Life commitments to each other were arranged rather than discovered in Jesus' time. Consequently, the person searching the Gospels for how to work with romantic love will never find it. But the Scriptures give many examples of people searching for *love* in their lives. Studying the lady in John's Gospel who has been described as the "Samaritan woman," we see a person who was searching for love in the life she was leading. The fact that she had several lovers is a statement of a person trying to discover true love.No doubt, the lady had found that discovering such love was not at all easy, exactly the same conclusion of the two lovers in Taylor Swift's song. They both were continuing to discover love elsewhere even as they were involved in discovering love with each other.The lesson for the twenty-first century Christian is a lesson of caution when one is discovering romantic love, that is, when one is dating. At all times, the potential marriage partners must be totally aware of the commitment that they intend to make.**    |
| ***PRAYER*****Good and gracious God, you taught us that love in every form was the desire that you had for us. As we grow in love and romantic love in our lives, give us the grace to always understand your idea of love, both in a general way and in a romantic way. Be with us, we pray.** |
|  **+++++****GUIDE FOR CLASSROOM PRESENTATION AND PERSONAL ENRICHMENTTheme: Discovering who to love as a romantic partner has difficulties that we must face.DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**1. In he Gospel, Samaritan women were considered as ritually "impure" by the Hebrew people. Is "prejudice" still part of our world today? Yes or no and why?2. The woman left the water jar at the well, saying, in effect, that what was originally important was no longer important. In general, are most Christians concerned at the "important" things in life--God and how to live a good life? Yes or no and why?3. What is your understanding of the "Messiah"? See *Catechism of the Catholic Church, second edition,*numbers 711-716. 4. Text analysis: " I watch us go 'round and 'round each time." What is the meaning of the sentence?5. Are couples who are beginning love relationships usually as honest with each other as the song portrays? Yes or no and why?6. Should beginning love couples be totally honest about their former dating patterns? Yes or no and why? 7. In general, is it a good thing to date a person that one has dated before? Yes or no and why?8. Is there such a thing as "love at first sight," that is, a love relationship that will end in full commitment and marriage after only one date? Yes or no and why?9. Much of the time, "discovering love" means that the couple was involved in premarital sex. Why is this not acceptable? See *Catechism,*number 2353.10. What are the dating patterns in your locale right now? In particular, what do couples usually do on dates? Is "dating around" acceptable?  When do couples start dating exclusively?11. What is your opinion of the meditation's thought that young people have to be "cautious" in their dating patterns. Is it a true statement? Yes or no and why?12. What does the song "Style" teach young people?     |
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