



## **52 Uncommon Dates: A Couple's Adventure Guide for Praying, Playing, and Staying Together**

*Randy Southern , Gary Chapman (Introduction)*

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We know we should do it. We talk about it and acknowledge the benefits; yet most couples find *praying together* is somewhat awkward, intimidating, or something we lack the time for. It's time to experience a breath of fresh air... in prayer.

*52 Uncommon Dates* ignites a prayerful and playful connection in a way that feels natural for couples to schedule and relate to real life. Fun, creative, and spiritually engaging, this powerful resource will revive the relational, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of your relationship, one date at a time.

## 52 Uncommon Dates: A Couple's Adventure Guide for Praying, Playing, and Staying Together Details

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## **From Reader Review 52 Uncommon Dates: A Couple's Adventure Guide for Praying, Playing, and Staying Together for online ebook**

### **Marlene says**

Actually, this had some pretty good ideas. I was gratified to find an idea that I'd come up with on my own show up amongst the dates (shopping for a food pantry).

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### **Denise DiFalco says**

52 Uncommon Dates (A Couple's Guide for Praying, Playing and Staying Together) by Randy Southern is a must read for all couples. Between it's pages you will find countless creative ways to have fun while integrating prayer throughout your experiences. The author suggests the candlelight date; the jigsaw puzzle date; the spiritual heritage date; roller skating date just to name a few. With each exercise there is a reference to scripture and tips on how to bring each's individuals spirituality to the table. A marvelous tool for deeper conversation and making life better together. I was given the awesome opportunity of reviewing this book for Moody Press. Also find a stellar introduction by Gary Chapman #1 New York Times bestselling author of the 5 Love Languages.

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### **Josh Olds says**

QUICK HIT – With suggestions from the normal to the creative to the kinda-out-there, Randy Southern's date suggestions provide a something-for-everyone experience that is guaranteed to keep your marriage from getting rutted in the same old patterns.

Have you ever felt like your marriage was in a rut? I don't mean unhappy or failing...I just mean that you always do the same things, go to the same places on the same dates. You've settled into a routine and, while routines and rituals aren't inherently a bad thing, life needs jazzing up sometimes. Enter Randy Southern and 52 Uncommon Dates—that's about a year's worth of dates waiting to be explored. And I guarantee that there are some in here that you've never considered before.

Here's a smattering of the suggestions: The Get Lost Date, The Lego Date, The Park Bench Date, The Backrub Date. Any of those sound interesting? Southern expands on the idea of a Lego date saying that a husband and wife are building a life together, so why not spend an evening working together to build something slightly less daunting? It's less about the actual building of Legos and more about the creativity and conversation it fosters.

Or how about the backrub date? This one is, of course, a bit more sensual. Although Southern doesn't mention it in the book, I'll go ahead and state it here. Sex should not be the end goal here. Don't rush through the moment of sensuality to get to the sexuality. This date is about enjoying your partner's body, enjoying your partner's touch, and letting the stress of work, kids, and whatever just melt off of you as you spend alone time with your spouse.

Each date is prefaced by Scripture and a quote from Gary Chapman, author of *The Five Love Languages*. Southern then writes a few paragraphs on setting the scene, letting us know what this type of date might bring. Then comes a couple paragraphs on implementing the date. He concludes with a few discussion questions to use with your partner in discussing the experience and some ideas to pray about before going into the date. Each date covers about 4-5 pages of material.

Honestly, there's nothing really outstanding about this book. If you're not the type to go on dates with your wife or you find yourself doing just the same old thing, or you need ways of improving communication in your marriage, then this is a solid book of practical ways to foster that discussion. There's no bad advice in it, but I didn't find anything truly revolutionary either.

My lone criticism is the way this book was marketed. I understand that Dr. Chapman is a much more widely known person than Mr. Southern. I understand that Dr. Chapman wrote the introduction to the book. But it's a bit disingenuous to have Chapman's name on the cover and spine with no mention of Southern until the inside pages. This book is obviously closely related to Chapman and Chapman's work, but let's give the guy that wrote the thing some credit.

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## **Laura Langley says**

"Dating is to marriage what breathing is to the body," says Gary Chapman in his introduction to author Randy Southern's new book, *52 Uncommon Dates: A Couple's Adventure Guide for Praying, Playing, and Staying Together*. This book is packed with loads of ideas for creative dates. But they aren't just dates. They are intentional opportunities to engage in meaningful communication and relationship building as well as spiritual growth. Couples will even find some ideas for spicing up their sexual relationship sprinkled throughout some of the dates.

One of the things I love about *52 Uncommon Dates* is the way Southern intentionally constructed each date to include the following components:

- Set the Scene - a description of the date;
- Make It Happen - tips for what to do and where to go;
- Finish Strong - questions and suggestions for talking about the date and deepening intimacy;
- Mind Your Language - ideas on how to incorporate the five love languages and fill your spouse's love tank;
- Take It to God - suggestions for praying together before, during, or after the date; and
- Dig Deep - scriptures to look at as a couple, grow spiritually as a couple.

Here's just a sampling of the 52 Dates:

- The First Time for Everything Date where couples purposely get out of their rut and try new things.
- The Playground Date where couples go to a playground and then focus on better understanding each other's childhoods.
- The Arcade Date where couples have fun together and focus on what it means to be more childlike in faith.
- The Zoo Date where couples enjoy God's creation and conversation.
- The Memory Lane Date where couples remember favorite moments together.

I have to say that there are a few dates my husband and I won't be using, like the Haunted House (Halloween) Date, the Dancing Date, and the Amusement Park Date. However, even without those three, there are almost enough dates for one a week for an entire year. I especially like how each date is intentionally designed to help couples grow together spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

52 Uncommon Dates is one I'll be giving as wedding shower gifts in the future. A great marriage takes work, and regular dates are a key tool for strengthening marriages. I highly recommend this book to all couples whether they've been married just a few months or more than 50 years. There's always more to learn about your spouse, and author Randy Southern helps facilitate growth in intimacy with these fun, interesting and intentional date ideas.

#### About the Author

Randy Southern has written dozens of books, articles, study guides and curricula for the Christian market. His works include *The World's Easiest Guide to Family Relationships*, *Raising Highly Capable Kids* and *Dating Clues for the Clueless*. A graduate of Taylor University, Randy lives with his family in Fishers, Indiana.

\* Note: I received a copy of this book from NetGalley for this honest review. However, the opinions expressed are my own.

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#### **J. Parker says**

What I really liked about this one is how Scripture is interwoven throughout the ideas. There's a focus scripture at the beginning, questions for relating to one another and to God, and follow-up passages to reinforce biblical understanding and intimate time.

The book boasts that these date are "uncommon," and indeed they are. Too many of us default to dinner and a movie, or conversing about household tasks and parenting. But a good date night helps you stay connected, grow in intimate knowledge of one another, and keep the spark alive. These uncommon ideas foster exactly that.

Not every chapter may hook your interest, but with 52 ideas, there's bound to be some dates you'd like to try and would enjoy.

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#### **Gabrielle W. says**

With access to blogs and Pinterest it's easy to find lists of date ideas. Seeing this book, I thought it'd be a repeat of everything already out there, essentially a waste of money.

I'm so pleased to say I was wrong!

This easy to read 223 page book is amazing!

Taken from the introduction:

"...Dating is viewed as a prelude to marriage. It was important, it served its purpose, but now it's time to get serious about life. It is this kind of reasoning that leads couples to forget that their relationship with each other is what marriage is all about....Dating is to marriage what breathing is to the body....The choice to date communicates the message, "I still love you. I still enjoy being with you. I'm glad I married you."

Unlike some books, I suggest reading the introduction.

Each date contains the Title (the dates theme), Words to grow on (bible verses in text), Set the scene (what this dates about), Make it happen (instructions), Finish strong (questions to start a discussion), Mind your language (using Gary Chapman's Love Language-offers advice for certain love languages), Take it to God

(before your date use some of the suggestions given), and Dig Deep (grab your bible and delve deeper into Gods word with these bible versus).

This book offers great idea ranging from normal (but still loads of fun) to creative and unique. This book is definitely a great way to break up the mundane date night and get you out of a rut! Unlike some books, this would be great for both newly weds and going on 25 years couples.

One thing I should note, though the cover bears Gary Chapman's name, he wrote the introduction and the book works close to his Love Language book (i.e the Mind Your Language part of each date), the book is actually written by Randy Southern; so I feel bad his name isn't on the cover or even spine of this great book.

If you're married, this book is worth the purchase! My parents are actually planning on doing it like a devotional-working there way through the book.

"I received a copy of this book from the publisher for the purpose of this review."

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### **onthejourney says**

This is a really great book for married couples to find creative ways to spend time together. There are ideas on ways to pray, questions to ask and innovative ways to love on your spouse. This would make a great wedding or anniversary gift.

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### **Jen says**

Not what I thought it was. I wanted something that would be more like a recipe, this was very general like, "go on a road trip".

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### **Dana Kamstra says**

I was so excited to get to review this book. My husband and I have dated for four years before we were married, and have continued dating for five more and counting. But, sometimes once you've dated for so long, you run out of some fresh ideas. Well, now we have a book with some wonderfully creative possibilities.

First of all, some of the suggestions in this book might come across as a bit simple if you and your spouse have been together for more than a couple of years. If you have reached that point of knowing each other quite well, some of the aspects of this book might just feel a bit silly. But, if you stay open minded about the points of each date, I'm sure you can still have fun with this book and have some great conversations with your significant other.

So what is this book really like? Well, each "date" chapter has seven components:

1. Words to Grow On: This section is simply a verse and a note by Gary Chapman. They are words to keep in mind on your date.
2. Set the Scene: This is an overview of what the date is and what the overall point of it is.
3. Make it Happen: Literally, this is nearly a step-by-step of how to pull the date off.

4. Finish Strong: You can find some focused questions that are designed to go along with the date. They are meant to help you learn more about the other person and grow your relationship.
5. Mind Your Language: If you are familiar with Gary Chapman's Five Love Languages, then you'll really enjoy reading how each date can help you utilize a particular love language for that date or even suggestions for after.
6. Take it to God: Prayer is an important aspect of any relationship and this section gives you a few suggestions to specifically thank God for and to pray over.
7. Dig Deep: Finally, this section gives specific passages to look up and discuss that relate to whatever theme the date is. It also suggests reading a passage from the Love Language Devotional Bible.

Overall, I think this book is fantastic. I love how creative the dates are and even just reading the table of contents has me interested in trying some of these out. The People-Watching Date, The Lego Date, The Car Date, and The Cemetery Date all sound quite interesting... and there are plenty more!

\*\*I received a copy of this book from Moody Publishers in exchange for my honest review. All opinions expressed are my own.\*\*

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## **Julius McCarter says**

Randy Southern's *52 Uncommon Dates: A Couple's Adventure Guide for Praying, Playing, and Staying Together* is a book I was excited to get into my hands. After all, any book purporting to deal with the way Christian couples relate to one another that has an Introduction written by Gary Chapman simply must be a good book.

The book itself claims to be a guide for developing a "prayerful and playful connection" in a way that feels natural for couples to schedule and relate to real life.

And, let's be honest. Most couples need that sort of support and mentoring.

So to find a guide that focuses each date around Scripture (even when the verse chosen is sometimes chosen in a rather random way) and contains conversation starters for each date, it's not a small gift to Christians in relationships -- particularly those married. I particularly found those conversation starters to be wonderful -- they help to open up the lines of communication in creative and faithfully imaginative ways.

But, in the end, I was left feeling overwhelmed by the book. The date ideas themselves were really rather bland -- like, "go to a restaurant neither of you have visited before". Others were "dates" I wouldn't even classify as a date -- like, "invite your in-laws out for an outing". (In our family, these are called "Sunday dinner" or "birthday dinner".) Still others are just so outlandish as to be impractical -- like, "invite the local fire department over for pancakes". (I'll overlook those dates that couldn't be dates even if we wanted to make them dates -- like the train for a half marathon idea.)

When I came to the end of 52 Uncommon Dates, I decided it'd really been mistitled. Instead, it really should have been titled 30 to 40ish Random Dates That You May Have Already Done, Plus A Dozen More That Are Just Unrealistic. There are certainly a few that are uncommon, but the really imaginative ones (I counted about 12) left me feeling that the book was over-all a let-down.

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I received a free copy of this book from Moody Publishers in exchange for my honest review here.

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### **Callie says**

Lots of fun date ideas, with ideas for including prayer and Bible study too. I enjoyed it.

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### **Michelle says**

Ever since I got married three years ago I have heard many people tell me to "keep dating". All of the marriage studies and books also promote the idea of a couple to keep dating. That being said, I think many of these push the idea mainly for couples with kids. It's more difficult for them to go on "date nights". As a couple without kids and only one dog, a lot of the ideas behind date nights don't really relate to us.

Many of the dates listed in this book are our daily lives on the weekend. We go on bike rides, we cook, we watch movies, we hike, and we play on the playground. Obviously this is not always the case but for couples that don't get to do these things on a daily basis this book is perfect.

I would give this book to any newlywed or any couple who has small children. Some of my favorite date ideas are: Lego date, park bench date (sitting and reading the Bible in the park), sunrise date, and the cemetery date. This book really does have some great simple ideas. None of the things have to cost that much money. Many of the dates are not for small town/country folk. Going to the zoo or the arcade etc. these aren't always things they can do when the nearest anything is five hours away. There is enough variety throughout the book that the couple can get creative on the matter though if in this situation.

The main part of this particular date book that I like is before and after each date the couple prays, and then they talk about what they did and how it honors God or how they can live out their faith. This also gives verses and other resources to read to go along with each date.

This is a great book I really loved it.

I recommend to any couple.



"I received this book from the publisher for free in exchange for an honest review."

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## **Jenny Farmer says**

This book has some creative, fun, and imaginative date ideas. 52 ideas, to be exact.

Each date has a description, suggestions for how to accomplish the date, talking points, and suggestions for prayer and scripture reading.

I like that all of these date suggestions are different. Some are very involved and would require you to go somewhere and even plan a night away. Which is super hard for us to do these days with the kids. So I'll save them for later.

Other dates are fun things that we could do in the evening after the kids are in bed. Plan a special snack, have our date activity, and spend some intentional time bonding as a couple doing something together that we both enjoy doing. The talking points with each date are great for going deeper into our relationship than just the activity that we're participating in.

With work and kids we honestly don't spend a ton of intentional time together. And we've used this book to schedule a couple of fun dates while the kids sleep – because, if it's not on our calendar, it doesn't happen.

And this book gives us something fun to do on our date, instead of just eating dinner and looking at each other with that "what now?" expression and then settling for Netflix.

If your looking for some fun new date ideas. You'll find some fun ideas in this book!

I received this book free for purposes of my review. All opinions are my own.

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