



Sex

Getting Started

- *Larger LIFEGroups may consider splitting into same gender groups in order to facilitate more meaningful discussion.*
- *Groups will not have enough time to discuss every question. Leaders are encouraged to skip questions and make substitutions based on what's best for their group.*

Warm Ups (15 Min)

- Everyone go around and share a “High” from the week and a “Low” from the week.
- At what age, if ever, did your parents have the “talk” about sex? Was it helpful?

Community Note (1 Min)

- In the midst of a marriage series, some people might ask: “Why should singles care?”
 - a. Studies show that the vast majority of people eventually get married - and a series like this can help prepare people for a future relationship.
 - b. Our health as the body of Christ depends on all people pouring into one another - and leaning into a study on marriage will no doubt give you valuable insight that you can use to support the married couples around you.
 - c. This series contains great info that can be applied beyond the marriage relationship.
- For a great article on leaning into your singleness, visit <https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/lead-out-of-your-singleness/>

Scripture Study (30 Min)

- EXTRA GRACE REQUIRED: This is an “awkward topic” and some may feel uncomfortable participating. Please also recognize that some people have been wounded by the misuse of sexuality, while others feel tremendous guilt and/or shame. No one HAS to participate. We share appropriately and confidentially. We leave a spirit of judgement in the nail pierced hands

of God. We rejoice that God is a God, who in Jesus, keeps no record of wrongs and that God can bring about healing.

- **Living to Please God (1 Thessalonians 4:1-5):** “As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God....”

Intimacy and Marriage

- “The first chapters of Scripture reveal a God who made sexuality core to the human experience—and indeed, the way that Adam and Eve would “fill the earth and subdue it.”
- Song of Solomon celebrates the sexual delight of lovers.
- Paul taught that marital union represents the relationship between Christ and his church.
- Christianity remains among the most “sex-positive” religions, even if segments of the church have on one hand, cloaked it in shame or, on the other, given it a mystical power bordering on idolatry. Today’s Christians face a culture that, through pornography, media, and advertising, idolizes sexual pleasure while debasing its unitive and procreative power by extracting it out of relationship. In this context, evangelicals struggle to teach and live out a biblical theology of sex that centers on the marital covenant between husband and wife, affirms the playful, non-procreative dimensions of sex, and welcomes the possibility of new life, even without a central teaching on birth control.”
- <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/topics/s/sex-and-sexuality/>)
- **Prominent author Sheri Bell refers to the following for a healthy sex life:**
 - Productive and meaningful communication
 - Love for each other
 - Physical attraction
 - Willingness to make time for each other
 - Date nights, fun and playfulness
 - Acceptance of each other's flaws and quirks

What do you think of this list? What is missing? What should be removed?

Intimacy = IN-TO-ME-YOU- SEE

- “Sex is an expression of intimacy between two people, but it’s not the means to intimacy. That’s why we regularly hear couples say, “The sex was great, but it wasn’t enough,” to explain their break up.

- Here's the thing about sex: it's awesome. But to prevent it from becoming just a recreational activity for two people sexually attracted to each other, God asks us to save sex for marriage. Only then is it placed in its proper context of sacredness.
- Healthy relationships get strong not through sex, but through shared values, shared interests, and effective communication. Until a couple has demonstrated a significant level of commitment to each other by saying "I do," walking away is just too easy. Because the only intimacy they have is due to sex."
- <https://www.josh.org/sex-sacred-forgotten-that/>

Insightful article on Sexuality and Being Single

- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-single-persons-good-desire-for-sex>

Wedding Vows

- What words of the Traditional Wedding vows catch your attention? Why?
- "I, ____, take you, ____, for my lawful wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and health, until death do us part."
- "I, ____, take you, ____, to be my husband/wife. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love and honor you all the days of my life."

The Theology behind Intimacy and Marriage

- <https://www.livingout.org/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sex>
- Sean Doherty goes on to remind us:
 - Marriage reflects the relationship between the persons of the Trinity
 - Genesis 1:27 says: "So God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (TNIV)
 - The difference between women and men is the way humanity reflects or represents God. The Father and the Son and the Spirit are all fundamentally different to one another, and yet fundamentally united to one another. God is not a solitary individual, but a relational, interdependent being. And at our most fundamental level, we reflect that.
 - Marriage reflects the relationship between Christ and the church
 - Read Ephesians 5. Once again, the difference between these two is real and cannot be downplayed, but their union is also real.
 - "This is why sex must be between people who are fundamentally (or 'ontologically') different to one another in the way that men and women are fundamentally different to one another. Sex within marriage shows that people who are truly different also can be truly united. (This is also why marriage must

be a permanent union.) The Father and the Son and the Spirit are all fundamentally different to one another, and yet fundamentally united to one another. Christ and the church are also different to each other, yet truly brought together as one. It is not enough to be different people, different individuals. The people must be different genders. In fact, sex uses precisely the physical differences between a woman and a man in order to unite them physically.

- So, sex must be between a man and a woman for exactly the same reason that it must be within a permanent relationship. The point of sex is not simply to unite any two individuals, but to show that there can be union between two people who are fundamentally different, just as Christ and the church are fundamentally different but truly united, and just as Father, Son and Spirit are different and yet truly one. The purpose of sexual intimacy within God's good creation is to unite those who are different in a lifelong covenantal relationship. That is why God created sex."
- "A resource in our own backyard
 - Where Grace Abounds. (Where Grace Abounds (WGA) exists to guide and support men and women who seek to understand sexuality and relationship, and to inspire all people to know and personally appropriate God's plan for their sexuality and relationships.)"

Group Prayer (15 Min)

Trios (20 Min)

Same gender groups of three. If numbers are uneven, go to groups of two.

- **Spiritual Velocity:**
 - How did you see God at work in your life this week?
 - What has God been teaching you in His Word as you've encountered it in this week's Life Journal readings, Sunday message, or LIFEGroup study?
 - What's an area of your life in which you know you need to repent or grow? Is there an area of your life in which you'd like a friend to check in on you periodically?
- **Joining Jesus on His Mission:**
 - What kind of conversations are you having with non-Christians? How's your 3-2-1 challenge going? Share about connections you're building and spiritual conversations you're having with non-believing neighbors and friends.
 - List the names of non-Christians in your life that you can pray for:

 - What good can we do around here? (Missional party? Service project?)
 - How can we help each other, our neighbors, and our city in prayer?