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# COMMUNITY GROUPS

**RIVERS CROSSING CHURCH**  
Community Group Discussion Guide  
March 5, 2023  
Shame Free Sex Week #3  
Single and Sex / Joel Montgomery

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. This is the final week of the Winter Quarter for Community Groups, so spend time reflecting and celebrating! The questions below set the stage for this time together.
  - a) Reflect on your time in Community Group thus far in 2023. What has God been teaching you and where have you grown in your faith? How have your group members supported you during this season?

Note: If it helps with reflection, recall that Community Groups have studied through the Seek First and Shame Free Sex sermon series this Winter.

- b) The Spring Quarter begins on March 26th. Assuming you plan to continue meeting, are there any changes you'd like to implement? For example - shared group leadership, logistical changes (day, time, childcare plans), welcoming new group members, increased focus on prayer, etc.
2. Thinking back on this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
  3. When you reflect on your own singleness - whether that's in the past or is your current stage of life - what emotions stir up within you? Explain.

If you're single, do you have a desire to be married? If yes, why do you have this desire? If you don't desire to be married, share about why.

## DIVING DEEPER

4. In his first letter to the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul addresses singleness *and* marriage. Read a portion of this writing before discussing the following questions.  
1 Corinthians 6:15-20, 7:1-9,17-35 (NLT) - <sup>15</sup>Don't you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup>And don't you realize that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, "The two are united into one."  
<sup>17</sup>But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him. <sup>18</sup>Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. <sup>19</sup>Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, <sup>20</sup>for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.  
<sup>1</sup>Now regarding the questions you asked in your letter. Yes, it is good to abstain from sexual relations. <sup>2</sup>But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. <sup>3</sup>The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. <sup>4</sup>The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his

body to his wife. <sup>5</sup>Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control. <sup>6</sup>I say this as a concession, not as a command. <sup>7</sup>But I wish everyone were single, just as I am. Yet each person has a special gift from God, of one kind or another. <sup>8</sup>So I say to those who aren't married and to widows—it's better to stay unmarried, just as I am. <sup>9</sup>But if they can't control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn with lust.

<sup>17</sup>Each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you, and remain as you were when God first called you. This is my rule for all the churches. <sup>18</sup>For instance, a man who was circumcised before he became a believer should not try to reverse it. And the man who was uncircumcised when he became a believer should not be circumcised now. <sup>19</sup>For it makes no difference whether or not a man has been circumcised. The important thing is to keep God's commandments. <sup>20</sup>Yes, each of you should remain as you were when God called you. <sup>21</sup>Are you a slave? Don't let that worry you—but if you get a chance to be free, take it. <sup>22</sup>And remember, if you were a slave when the Lord called you, you are now free in the Lord. And if you were free when the Lord called you, you are now a slave of Christ. <sup>23</sup>God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world. <sup>24</sup>Each of you, dear brothers and sisters, should remain as you were when God first called you. <sup>25</sup>Now regarding your question about the young women who are not yet married. I do not have a command from the Lord for them. But the Lord in his mercy has given me wisdom that can be trusted, and I will share it with you. <sup>26</sup>Because of the present crisis, I think it is best to remain as you are. <sup>27</sup>If you have a wife, do not seek to end the marriage. If you do not have a wife, do not seek to get married. <sup>28</sup>But if you do get married, it is not a sin. And if a young woman gets married, it is not a sin. However, those who get married at this time will have troubles, and I am trying to spare you those problems.

<sup>29</sup>But let me say this, dear brothers and sisters: The time that remains is very short. So from now on, those with wives should not focus only on their marriage. <sup>30</sup>Those who weep or who rejoice or who buy things should not be absorbed by their weeping or their joy or their possessions. <sup>31</sup>Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away. <sup>32</sup>I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord's work and thinking how to please him. <sup>33</sup>But a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. <sup>34</sup>His interests are divided. In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has never been married can be devoted to the Lord and holy in body and in spirit. But a married woman has to think about her earthly responsibilities and how to please her husband. <sup>35</sup>I am saying this for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions as possible.

a) Based on the Apostle Paul's writing, what is the appropriate and God-honoring environment for sexual relations to occur? Support your answer from the text.

b) What wisdom does the Apostle Paul have for those who are single? How does he see singleness as an advantage when it comes to following Jesus?

c) What reality does the Apostle Paul speak to for those who are married and following Jesus? Is this a tension you've felt? How has your marriage and family helped you understand the gospel and impacted the way you minister to others?

5. Singleness isn't a holding pattern until marriage, as if it were marriage that qualifies us for ministry and not God Himself. Singles who profess faith in Jesus and are filled with the Holy Spirit are already equipped to be fully-utilized by God!

a) If you're single, do you agree with this assertion or is it something you struggle to believe about yourself? Explain your answer.

b) Singleness often provides advantages that can make you very effective in your efforts to care for one another and be the hands and feet of Jesus. For example...

- Greater flexibility when it comes to your schedule/time
- Greater flexibility when it comes to your finances
- A lack of fear to take risks and do radical things for God

If you're single, how might God be calling you to be more fully devoted to doing His work and thinking how to please Him?

"One of your greatest spiritual gifts as a single person is your 'Yes.' Yes to a random phone conversation. Yes to coffee. Yes to help with the move. Yes to stepping in when someone's sick. Yes to a late-night move or the special event downtown. You have the unbelievable freedom to yes when married people can't even ask the question. When the spouse doesn't exist, you can't hurt them with your selfless, impulsive decisions. Be willing to say Yes! And bless others, even when you don't always feel like it." – Marshall Segal

6. Joel shared that our singleness either tells a story of shame or a story of self-control. We can expand this to say that whether we're single or married, our life either tells a story of shame or a story of self-control. Read the following verses and discuss the corresponding questions.

**2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT)** – For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

**2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NLT)** – <sup>3</sup>We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. <sup>4</sup>We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. <sup>5</sup>We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

**1 Corinthians 10:12-13 (NLT)** – <sup>12</sup>If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. <sup>13</sup>The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

Where is God calling you to exercise greater self-control as a means of honoring Him and honoring your earthly relationships? If you're willing, share about that with the group. What is your next step to begin living this out?

## TAKING IT HOME

7. Group Reflection and Prayer | Read Psalm 37:1-9 together, then close your time in group by praying these verses back to God as they fit your personal circumstances. You're also encouraged to pray for one another during this time!

Psalm 37:1-9 (NLT) – <sup>1</sup>Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong; <sup>2</sup>for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away. <sup>3</sup>Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. <sup>4</sup>Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. <sup>5</sup>Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: <sup>6</sup>He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun. <sup>7</sup>Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. <sup>8</sup>Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil. <sup>9</sup>For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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## RIVERS CROSSING - THINGS TO KNOW

1. Group Connect – Spring 2023 | Life is better when it's done together. That's why we encourage everyone to get plugged into a group. Join us in the lobby after each service on March 12th to learn more about the groups that are available at Rivers Crossing and connect with a group!

We're always looking to partner with and equip new Community Group leaders! Doing this allows us to reach more of the people whom God is bringing to Rivers Crossing. If you're interested in leading your own group, talk with your group leaders and let our staff know: <https://riverscrossing.churchcenter.com/people/forms/414625>.

2. When Ordinary Becomes Extraordinary | Join us for a night of worship and prophetic ministry on Sunday, March 19th at 6pm at our Mason campus. When Ordinary Becomes Extraordinary is an incredible way to experience God's power firsthand in a tangible way through extended worship, ministry time, and corporate prayer. Come expectantly and join us as we seek the extraordinary life together.
3. 2023 Global Trips | Have you ever wanted to serve on a Global trip to help our international church partners? From Ghana to Guatemala, this year might be the best time for you to get involved with what God is doing beyond our borders through Rivers Crossing! Find out more information by clicking the link below! <https://riverscrossing.com/global/>
4. 2023 RC Students Summer Camp | Next summer (June 19-24, 2023), RC Students is going to Eagle Sky of the Ozarks for camp! We truly believe that Summer Camp is one of the best ways for your Junior High or High School student to get connected in RC Students. They'll build lasting bonds with other students and their leaders that will continue throughout the year. Most importantly, your student will have a week to focus on connecting with Jesus in a new way. Learn more and register below: <https://riverscrossing.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1450605>