

Reconstruction and Sexuality
John 8:2-11
Growth Group Discussion Guide

Begin with prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you all through God's word, and to lead your discussion.

Opening Questions (try to get everyone involved in discussion):

- Our focal passage today involves a woman who is totally “on the spot” in a crowd. Share a time when you felt “on the spot” in front of a group? Or, if you can’t recall one, what would be a nightmare “on the spot” scenario for you? (E.g., you’re at the first night of a play in which you’re starring, and you don’t know the lines; or a church leader calls you up to preach on a moment’s notice!)
- Today’s topic deals with our relationships with sexual minorities, namely people who identify as gay. For some of us this will be a relatively abstract issue, while for others it will be intensely personal. On a scale of 1 to 10, how personal of an issue would you say this is for you? (1 being totally impersonal, 10 being very personal). You are free to elaborate on why you chose that score, if you feel comfortable doing so.
- We’re thinking about the concept of deconstruction during our current sermon series—that some people dismantle and even desert their Christian faith, for a number of reasons. Some people describe the way that Christians have related with sexual minorities as the catalyst for their deconstruction.
 - In your own experience, has this issue posed any problems for your own faith? Why or why not?

Read John 8:2-11, then discuss the questions below.

- The Old Testament Law says that the man caught in adultery was to be stoned as well (see Deut. 22:22 and Lev. 20:13). What does this tell you about the teachers of the Law and Pharisees that they did not drag the man in front of Jesus as well?
- In order to help them see their hypocrisy, Jesus said, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” How does it affect the way that you see another’s sin, when you first have to acknowledge your own?
- In Jesus’ response to the woman, in v. 7, what does he imply about the consequences of her sin? Does he uphold the Jewish law? (Leaders: he implies that the sin is worthy of stoning, and yet, the only one who is worthy to mete out the consequences is the one without sin.)
 - How do you feel about this aspect of his response?
- In what ways does Jesus show the woman compassion? How does he create an emotionally safe environment for her?
- How can Jesus justify letting the woman walk away, without condemnation? (See 2 Cor. 5:21).
- What other examples can you think of in the Gospels, where Jesus hospitably welcomes “sinners,” whom the religious teachers wanted nothing to do with?

- How does Jesus' response to the woman (culminating in v. 11) defy both a "conservative" and a "liberal" response to sexual outcasts?
- Application: Pastor Josh said that we are to welcome gay people hospitably into our lives.
 - How do you feel about this claim?
 - How have you seen this practice modeled by others?
 - How (practically) can we welcome gay people hospitably into our church and lives, and create an emotionally safe place for them? Do you see anything about our current practices that acts as a barrier in this area?
- Josh summarized by saying, "We welcome all people hospitably, while calling them to take up their cross and follow Jesus."
 - What are some ways that taking up our cross impacts us, regardless of our sexual orientation?
 - Josh said, "None of us gets acceptance with God, because of our 'right' sexuality." What does this mean? Do you agree? Why or why not?
 - The sermon argued that God doesn't bless same-sex, sexual intimacy. The basis for this statement was not simply the "prohibitive" passages in Scripture (Genesis 19, Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, Judges 19, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 Timothy 1:10), but "**the positive case that the Bible makes, from cover to cover, for heterosexual marriage and sex.**"
 - What do you think of this argument? How does it impact you?
- For gay people, Josh said, "We believe that God will help you to live a life of faithful obedience to him, in one of two forms (below)". Talk about how God enables these to be possible and joyful, and also how they may present unique challenges to the people involved.
 - Singleness and celibacy
 - Heterosexual marriage.
- What else from this week's sermon resonated with you or did you want to discuss further?
- How do you feel that God is prompting you/us to respond to this sermon and Bible Study?

Share and Pray

- Spend some time sharing with one another about needs that you have. If you are comfortable sharing about where you need prayer related to today's topic, do so.