



Leader’s Discussion Guide -- Sexuality

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Church of the Nazarene

**Sexuality**

**Note to Leader:** It is very likely that some in your group have engaged in premarital sex or may be currently living with someone outside of marriage. The presentation of this material may be very sensitive to some. Pray that God will guide you as you present biblical truth in love.

**Session Goal:** To help participants gain a biblical understanding of sexuality, explore Christian standards for sexual relationships, and be encouraged to live according to God’s perspective and plan.

**Are You Ready?**

 Pray for God’s direction as you prepare for the session. Pray that participants will be open to

God’s truth and be ready to apply it to their lives.

 Read the entire leader’s guide and background material (available at [Mor2Lif.nazarene.org](http://mor2lif.nazarene.org/)) to get an overview of the session.

 View the video, *Sexuality.*

 Be prepared to show the Mor2Lif video, *Sexuality.*

 Choose one or two questions from the “So What?” section as a follow-up to the video and an intro to the study.

 Determine which *Option* you will use from the “Now What?” section of the session.

 Be prepared or enlist several people to read: Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians

5:21-33; Psalm 139:13-16; Romans 13:12-14; 1 John 1:9.

 Prepare copies of the participant outline, *Sexuality.*

**Introduction**

The Bible is full of wonderful love stories: Abram and Sarai, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel. The love-at-first-sight quality of Ruth would make a best-seller in the romance genre. And who can read the portrayal of sexual love in Song of Solomon and not sense the beauty, respect, and sanctity of the physical and spiritual union mirrored in it? Sadly, Satan has taken something good God created and twisted it into something far less than was intended. Think about the following questions as you prepare to lead the session.

 What does it mean to be a sexual being?

 How does being a sexual being influence my thoughts and actions?

 What influence have movies, books, TV programs, and social practices had on my concept of sex and sexuality?

 What does God’s Word have to say about sexuality and sexual relationships?

**So What?**

View the video, *Sexuality.* Choose one or more of the following questions that best fits the needs/dynamics of your group.

 Which of the characters do you most identify with in the video?

 How did your parents affect your view of sex as a healthy, God-ordained relationship? Were your parents positive or negative role models for you?

 Christina jokes that fairy tales should be banned. Do you think women today still expect to find

Prince Charming and to live happily ever after?

 What was the most valuable impression you received by watching this video?

**What Does the Bible Say?**

**Say**, God’s Word can help guide us as we seek to honor God with our whole being - spiritually and physically. In this session, we will explore some passages that reveal God’s view of human sexuality in and out of marriage.

*Biblical View of Sex*

The story of creation in Genesis 1:27 comes to a climax as the author records the final acts of creation “in

the image of God . . . male and female he created them” and ends with the declaration that God “looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!” (Genesis 1:31, NLT). The point is that both male and female, with all their similarities and differences, are created in the image of God and deemed “good.”

In the more specific account found in Genesis 2, we find the words, “It is not good for the man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18, NLT). The Lord then causes Adam to fall into a deep sleep, takes one of his ribs, and fashions it into a companion “custom-made for fellowship”. The chapter concludes with God’s declaration: “they will become one flesh” (v. 24) implying “both the closeness and the permanence of the relationship” (Morris, pp. 16-17). The importance of this relationship is further underscored by God’s command to place it above other relationships (such as father and mother). And finally, God’s

endorsement of this special relationship is sealed with the words, “The man and his wife were both naked,

and they felt no shame” (v. 25).

This verse envisions a marriage characterized by complete openness and trust. Such a relationship can never be one-sided. It is the picture of both partners placing themselves—emotionally, spiritually, physically, and intellectually—in the hands of the other in the confidence that they will not be betrayed or hurt. (Morris, p. 17)

Read or ask someone to read Genesis 2:23-24 and Jesus’ words recorded in Matthew 19:4-6.

 What do you think is meant by “no longer two but one”?

 How do you interpret the statements: “leaving father and mother” and “joined to wife”?

Consider how loving God is to have created humans with the capacity for pleasure in intimacy. Not only is sex good, but it is the Creator’s plan from the beginning. For an “up-close and personal” look at the physical love God has ordained for marriage, challenge participants to read one or more of the love poems found in Song of Songs this week.

*Biblical View of Marriage*

Read or have someone read, Ephesians 5:21-33.

**Say,** Paul’s writings in Ephesians 5 talk about the kind of mutual love God intends for healthy marital relationships. God’s plan in marriage begins with a willingness on the part of each person to be mutually submissive (v. 21).

 Describe what you think it means to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

 How do you interpret the wife’s responsibility in light of the words “as to the Lord”?

 How do you interpret the teaching regarding the husband’s responsibility in light of “just as Christ

loved the church and gave himself up for her” (v. 25)?

Paul is clearly teaching that the selfless submission of both wife and husband for the benefit of their spouse can result in a marvelous, reciprocating relationship that mirrors the intimacy between Christ and the Church.

*My Self View Vs God’s View of Me*

Read or have someone read Psalm 139:13-16.

**Say,** This Psalm makes it very clear that God values His human creation; we are “fearfully and wonderfully made.” We are each a wonderful testimony of God the Creator.

Many women have a difficult time seeing themselves as sexually attractive. Reasons for this unhealthy self esteem include exploitation and the distorted manner in which advertisers and secular marketers portray women in the media and the subtle and not-so-subtle messages from the entertainment industry that relationship and sex is synonymous. Throw into the mix the real life factors—weight gain, aging, lack of time and energy at certain phases of a woman’s life—and on and on the negative voices grow louder. It is no wonder concepts of self-esteem, sexuality, wholeness, and even worthiness can get convoluted.

In the video, Jennifer feels the burden of changing roles and diminishing self-worth in how she views her body after having a baby and her relationship with her spouse.

 How do the different roles we have affect our view of sex?

 If you were coaching a young mother like her, what would you do to encourage her?

 What kind of advice would you give to help her recover a personal sense of attractiveness and achieve a balance between her roles of wife and mother?

**How Does This Affect My Life?**

Issues of sex and physical relationships also relate to single women. The church promotes purity and strongly advocates abstinence outside of marriage. However, blasting loudly from TV, movies, music, printed materials, the internet—nearly everywhere—are messages that run contrary to this biblical worldview. It has become all too easy to buy into the lie that casual sexual is expected, “boys will be boys, and that sex outside marriage is the norm for “consenting adults.”

 What messages do you hear about relationships from media?

 Contemplate the reality and/or distortion of these messages. Read or have someone read Romans 13:12-14.

**Say,** In the video, Tiffany points out the difficulty of resisting her own personal desires and pressure from a guy in a relationship to engage in casual sex. It touches on a key element—setting and keeping boundaries.

 What instructions about boundaries do these verses provide?

 What truth does this passage (v. 14) offer for helping to set boundaries?

 What are some of the boundaries that maintain the spiritual integrity of a person’s sexuality?

 When should these boundaries in a relationship be discussed?

*Forgiveness*

Read or have someone read 1 John 1:9. In the video, Christina reflects on engaging in sex before marriage and giving away that which she cannot get back.

 Why do you think she feels this way?

 What does a person need to do about sexual sin in her life?

 How does experiencing God’s grace help overcome the consequences of sexual sins?

It is very probable that some of the women in your group have experienced sex outside of marriage. Refer to the woman at the well (John 4) and the woman caught in adultery (John 8). Remind the group that Jesus grants forgiveness and restoration when we come to Him in genuine repentance and with a desire to abandon the sin in our life.

Pray that God will give you the opportunity to encourage those involved in a sexual relationship outside marriage to become sexually pure until they are married.

**Now What?**

**Say**, As a Christian we are called to “clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 13:14) rather than to give in to the desires of the flesh. As believers we are called to align ourselves with God’s perspective and plan for our life. That plan includes authentic, healthy relationships built on truth and mutual respect.

 In times past, chasteness was something to be protected. Do you think that is true now? Why or why not?

 How has this study shaped your thoughts about sexuality?

 How would you define Christian sexuality in light of this study?

To help apply this session’s truths, choose one of the following options and invite participants to take part.

*Option One*

Form small groups for the purpose of holding each other accountable. For example, for those who are married, have them be accountable for maintaining a balance in roles between wife and mother. Or for those unmarried, have them be accountable for taking the initiative in setting clear boundaries in their dating relationship.

Suggest the groups adapt some of Wesley’s questions (for small groups), for example:

 How well did you maintain the balance in your roles since our last connection? Or, how successful were you in stating and maintaining boundaries in your current relationship?

 In what areas do you need to become more intentional in this integration? Or, in what ways do you need to be more intentional in setting boundaries in your current relationship?

 How can the members of the group help hold you accountable to accomplish this?

*Option Two*

Read or have each person read silently, Psalm 139:13-16. Suggest that participants write a prayer based on Psalm 139.

Close the session by praying for each participant by name.

**Reference**

Morris, Larry. 2007. *Making a Marriage* (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City).