



FUEL

**PURITY FOR
LIFE**

MY HEART FOR THE KING



PURITY FOR LIFE

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The Core: A Seven-Volume Series

My Life of Purity

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Getting Started

We are so excited that you have chosen to be a part of Discipleship Community! It is our prayer that God will use this study to deepen your relationship with Him. The contents of this material include core truths that we want you to learn so that you will have a firm foundation in your faith. The goal is for you to begin Discipleship Community your seventh-grade year and continue the series until you graduate from high school. This book will lead you to take time each day to read God's Word and to pray.

Plan on spending 15 – 30 minutes each day of the week with God. This spiritual discipline will help you to grow to be more and more like Jesus Christ. In this book, we have used the English Standard Version of the Bible (ESV). Please keep this version of the Bible nearby while doing this study, or refer to an online Bible, such as the one at www.biblegateway.com.

This material is written based upon our Milestone Strategy here at Carmel. The Essentials are the core principles and truths that we want to teach for each of the Milestones. The Milestones and Essentials are as follows which ultimately lead to Life in Christ:

Milestone 4: Purity for Life

ESSENTIALS:

Biblical Purity, Healthy Relationships, Identity in Christ, Biblical Sex

Milestone 5: Rite of Passage

ESSENTIALS:

Roles of Men and Women, Spiritual Gifts and Service, Catechism

Milestone 6: High School Graduation

ESSENTIALS:

Apologetics, Dating/Marriage, God's Plan for Me, Person of Influence, Life Skills

Life in Christ

ESSENTIALS:

Scripture, Prayer, Authentic Faith, Obedient Follower, Disciple-Maker, Generous Living, Biblical Community

At the end of every year, you will be challenged to complete a project that demonstrates your growth in Christ. Be ready to be challenged. We are confident that God will amaze you as you get to know Him through these studies. It has been a great joy to write these books, knowing that you will get to know the one true God in a deeper way!

Spiritually

Pure

GENESIS 3:1-7 & COLOSSIANS 1:22

WEEK

1

Leading up to this study, we have studied the Old Testament kings and how they lived up to the standards set before them. Though it may not have seemed like it, we were studying purity. Those studies helped to lay a foundation about choices for your life of purity. This study will transition to an in-depth look at your personal life of purity.

God has cared about purity from the beginning. To begin our understanding of purity, we must first take a look at the onset of impurity in mankind. Before Adam and Eve's sinful choice, they were pure before God. Sin had not yet entered the equation. However, they chose to disobey God's command and ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. As a result, they were no longer pure before God, but rather they became impure.

*Describe what it means to be spiritually pure?
When do you recognize the battle for your spiritual purity?*

To be pure means to be morally clean. Impurity entered the human race when Adam and Eve sinned. Ever since then, all people have been born with a sin nature. Before you became a Christian, you were ruled by your sinful nature. You couldn't help but sin because you were simply living out who you truly were.

God is perfectly holy and righteous and cannot tolerate sin. This creates a dilemma: God loves His children, but He hates their sin. Sin requires a payment in order to satisfy God's wrath. So God did the unthinkable; in the midst of man's sin, He sent His one and only Son to earth to take on human flesh and then purposed for Him to die a horrible death on a cross. Jesus' death on the cross in the place of sinful man satisfied the wrath of God.

Ultimately, purity begins with a changed heart from a relationship with Jesus. A changed heart leads to changed behavior. We will continue to look into God's Word to learn how to be pure in today's world. No doubt, we are all bombarded with the temptation to act in impure ways, but with God's help and His Word, we can truly live pure lives.

5-Minute Commentary

Col. 1:21–22 once ... now. Paul presents a strong contrast between the Colossians' pre-Christian status and their favorable situation now as Christians. alienated. Sin has resulted in estrangement from God (Eph. 2:12; 4:18) and thus creates the need for reconciliation. The result of reconciliation is that Christ is now working in all the believers to present you holy and blameless before God. This is the same language used in the OT to describe the unblemished animals that the Levitical priest would bring for a sacrifice to God. When Christ brings his followers to the Father for inspection, they will be found to be above reproach.

FALLEN NATURE

Total depravity is an important concept to understand. This term expresses that humans are completely corrupt apart from God and that there is nothing man can do to earn God's favor and salvation. In other words, we are all doomed without Christ.

Describe how different our world would be if all people were controlled by their sinful natures?

Apart from Christ, nothing good lives in you. Before Christ, you were controlled by your fallen nature. You needed help, and only One could provide the help that you needed. His name is Jesus.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Romans 5:8.

While you were still a sinner, Jesus died for you. He didn't wait for you to get better; He took your penalty upon Himself so that you would have a way to be saved. Hopefully, you are beginning to grasp the seriousness of this issue.

NEW NATURE

Read Romans 6:6-7 and 2 Corinthians 5:17.

How do these verses describe an individual's nature before believing in Jesus?

Before becoming a Christian, you were a slave to sin. You couldn't help but sin because it was in your nature to do so. However, your sin nature was rendered powerless when you were born again. You now have the power to overcome sin because of your new nature in Christ.

Read Romans 7:15-25.

Summarize what Paul is saying in these verses.

According to verse 25, how did Paul find freedom over this struggle in his life?

Without Christ, you have no chance of living a holy life. With Him, you are freed from being a slave to sin as He daily empowers you to not give in to the sinful nature.

Discuss

Think for a moment about the seriousness of your sin. You were separated from your Creator God because of your sin nature. Where would you be without Jesus? What would your life be like if Jesus hadn't rescued you from darkness? What would our world be like without Jesus?

Reference

Galatians 5:19-21

Point to Make

There is a battle raging in your soul. Even though you are a new creation in Christ, you still struggle with the sin nature.

Rom. 6:6 The power of sin has been broken in those who believe, for their old self (lit., "old man," meaning who they were in Adam) was crucified and put to death with Christ. They were born into the world as sinners, with the result that their bodies were ruled by sin. Body of sin refers to the rule of sin, but without excluding the involvement of the personal self that lives through the body. Sin's rule, however, was broken when Christians died with Christ, and therefore they are no longer enslaved to sin. Paul does not argue that Christians do not sin at all (a view called sinless perfection); instead, the tyranny, domination, and rule of sin have been defeated for them. This means that the normal pattern of life for Christians should be progressive growth in sanctification, resulting in ever greater maturity and conformity to God's moral law in thought and action.

GOD'S POINT OF VIEW

Read Colossians 1:15–23.

What does it mean to be reconciled to God?

Did you catch the part that God now sees you as holy? You are holy in God's sight! You probably don't see yourself as holy, but what God sees is far more important than what you see. However, you are not holy on your own accord; it is only because of Christ's work on the cross for you.

The word holy means, "to possess certain divine qualities that are in contrast with what is human." As a Christ follower, you now have divine qualities.

What does it mean to be without blemish?

Read Hebrews 9:14 and 1 Peter 1:19.

What words or phrases are used to describe Jesus?

According to Colossians 1:22, how does Christ present you to God?

Even though we are wretched sinners, through Christ's blood God now sees believers without any blemish. The word used to describe us as without blemish in Colossians 1:22 is the same word used to describe Christ as the Son of God without blemish. That means God compares our holiness to the holiness of the Son of God.

So while you and I would not likely describe ourselves as spotless and sinless, God sees us as holy and without blemish. This is an amazing truth for all Christians to know.

So how does this truth affect your life of purity?

THE PROCESS OF PURITY

You have likely wondered, "If God sees me as holy, how come I don't live a holy life as a Christian?" Paul could completely identify with you.

Read Romans 7:15.

Rom. 7:24–25 The living presence of Jesus Christ is the answer to the problem of sin in one's life.

Heb. 9:14 Jesus was both the high priest (for "offered," see 5:1, 3; 8:3; 9:7; esp. 10:11–12) and the sacrifice itself (offered "himself"; cf. 9:25–26), but this verse specifies that the Holy Spirit in some way aided or empowered Christ in making this offering. OT sacrifices had to be without blemish; Jesus is "holy, innocent, unstained" (see 7:26). Purify our conscience. Mosaic sacrifices did not affect the conscience (9:9; cf. 10:2), but Christ's sacrifice purifies the innermost being (10:22).

1 Pet. 1:18–19 Believers were ransomed by Christ's precious blood. "Ransom" recalls Israel's deliv-

Point to Make

To reconcile means "to reestablish proper friendly interpersonal relations after these have been disrupted or broken." Our relationship with God was disrupted when sin entered the world, but through Christ's sacrifice, we can once more have a relationship with God.

Point to Make

Students probably hear the word blemish used in today's world in reference to someone who has acne. To be without blemish means having no defect, or to be blameless.

Point to Make

When you understand how the God of the universe sees you, you no longer live like the world, giving in to every sinful temptation. You desire to live as God sees you, as a pure and holy follower of Jesus.

What is Paul saying in this Scripture?

It's true that even though God sees us as holy, we still struggle to walk in holiness every day of our lives. However, as we live our lives on earth, God will help us to walk in holiness. This process of growing in holiness is called sanctification.

Read John 17:17.

Who said these words and how are believers to be sanctified?

The word sanctify means "to make holy." Jesus is asking the Father to make His followers holy.

God's Word is the key to growing in our walk with the Lord. God has chosen to use His Word to sanctify us. If you pick up your Bible only once a week, you will not grow in your faith.

So how does this affect your life of purity? If you want to live a pure, holy, sanctified life, you have to be a dedicated student of God's Word.

GLORIFICATION

Justification, sanctification, and glorification are all big words, but they are important truths for you to know in your pursuit of purity.

Read Philippians 3:20–21 and 1 John 3:2.

According to these verses, what does glorification mean?

Read Romans 8:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51–58.

Describe the future of a follower of Jesus.

It is likely that you will grow weary of pursuing purity in our world today. Knowing that Christ will come again one day and remove sin from your life should give you hope to press on. Let's face it. It is hard. Yet, it is worth the struggle.

Point to Make

If you need help in this area, find an accountability partner to remind and encourage you to read God's Word every day. An accountability partner should be a strong Christian friend (same gender) whom you can trust. This person must be able to speak God's truth to you even when it isn't what you want to hear. If you don't have an accountability partner, ask God to show you who it could be.

Point to Make

Glorification will happen for believers at the second coming of Jesus Christ. When Jesus returns to earth to get His bride, He will transform our bodies to be like Him, pure in every way. We cannot attain this level of purity on earth, but one day we will. Glorification is God's final removal of sin from His followers.

erance from Egypt (Deut. 7:8; 9:26; 15:15; 24:18), which in turn points to the greater deliverance accomplished by Jesus Christ. Christ's sacrifice is compared to a lamb without blemish or spot. The references to "lamb" and "blood" point to the OT sacrifices and especially to Christ as the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12) and the servant of the Lord (cf. "lamb," Isa. 53:7). As the perfect sacrifice, Christ atoned for the sins of the unrighteous (cf. John 1:29; 1 Pet. 3:18).

John 17:17 The sanctification of Christians is a lifelong process. It involves both a relational component (separation from participating in and being influenced by evil) and a moral component (growth in holiness or moral purity in attitudes, thoughts, and actions). This occurs as Christians believe,

NOW WHAT?

Take a moment to do an honest assessment of your commitment to God's Word. Answer each question below.

Do you spend time every day reading God's Word?

Do you regularly meditate (think deeply) about God's Word?

Do you memorize Scripture?

How have you noticed God's Word transforming you to live a holier life?

You have learned some pretty deep spiritual truths this week. Ask God to plant these truths deep in your heart so that the Holy Spirit can recall them to you as you live for Him. If necessary, recommit yourself to taking time to truly study God's Word. His book, the Bible, is the only book that is living and active and capable of changing your life. No other book can make that claim.

How does understanding your complete depravity (wickedness) help you understand the deep need you have for Christ?

GOING DEEPER

Why does it require the help of the Holy Spirit for you to live a pure life?

Why is it worth your time to think deeply about God's Word?

PRAYER:

Spend time thanking God for the amazing price Jesus paid so that you could be reconciled to God. Then ask God to help you live like He sees you.

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Colossians 1:22

think, and live according to "the truth" in relation to God, themselves, and the world.

Rom. 8:18 The glory that Christians will receive is so stupendous that the sufferings of this present time are insignificant in comparison (cf. 2 Cor. 4:17). They look forward both to the resurrection of the body (1 Thess. 4:13–18) and to the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1–22:5; see Isa. 65:17).

1 Cor. 15:51–53 Christians who are alive at the time of the resurrection will be transformed so that their bodies become spiritual and immortal like the bodies of those who are resurrected from the dead. (See 1 Thess. 4:13–18.)

REAP

DAY

1

PROVERBS 20:9 & ROMANS 3:10

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is the obvious answer to the question in Proverbs 20:9?

Why is it not possible to cleanse yourself from sin?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

ROMANS 7:18-25

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What causes the struggle between doing right and wrong?

How do verses 24-25 provide you hope?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

TITUS 3:3-7

3

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe the practical change that takes place in the life of a believer in Christ.

Write a prayer to God thanking Him for rescuing you from your sinful nature.

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

4

ROMANS 6:10-14

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What responsibility do you have in regards to your choices?

How can you offer yourself as an instrument of righteousness?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

TITUS 2:11-14

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How should we love while we wait for Christ's return?

What characteristics of God does Jesus reveal in this circumstance?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

1 JOHN 2:28-3:10

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How does this passage describe a way to be confident in the second coming of Jesus?

Describe the danger of living in a continual pattern of sin.

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

COLOSSIANS 1:21-23

7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe how a changed heart leads to changed behavior.

As a follower of Christ, what responsibility do you have to be a servant of the gospel of Jesus?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

Emotionally

Pure

PROVERBS 4:23

WEEK

2

This week we are going to talk about what it means to be emotionally pure. Our emotions are at the center of our beings, stemming from our hearts. Our words and actions also come from our hearts. Our hearts, therefore, are a really big deal to God.

If we want to be emotionally pure, we must be careful to guard our hearts. Scripture is full of warnings about what kind of heart to avoid. If we are diligent to protect our hearts, our pursuit of purity will be much more successful.

***What are you willing to do to protect your heart?
Why are your emotions tied to what you treasure in your heart?***

Spend some time in prayer for the following areas of your heart. *Ask students to put their hand over their hearts and lead them through the following time in prayer.* Open the time of prayer by reading Psalm 139:23-24 and ask God to search hearts in the following time of prayer.

- 1) Ask God to unite your heart with his.
- 2) Ask God to reveal any stubbornness in your heart.
- 3) Ask God to help you have a high view of him rather than yourself.
- 4) Ask God to help you trust him with your heart and future.
- 5) Ask Go to show you how to guard your heart.

You can be sure that when you understand spiritual purity and pursue emotional purity by guarding your heart, you will make wise decisions in the area of physical purity. This week, as we study the heart from God's perspective, ask Him to do something for your heart—ask Him to open it, guide it, and change it in ways you didn't realize He could.

5-Minute Commentary

Prov. 4:20–23 Heart in Proverbs regularly refers to the center of one's inner life and orientation to God, from which a person does all thinking, feeling, and choosing. Taking words of wisdom into the heart is vital (they are life, v. 22), and wisdom's presence in the heart is worth guarding because out of the heart flow all the thoughts and words and choices of a person's life.

Prov. 28:13–14 To fear the Lord involves confessing and forsaking one's sins, rather than concealing them and hardening one's heart. Such a person receives mercy and is therefore truly happy.

A DOUBLE HEART

Read Psalm 12:2.

According to this Scripture, what kind of heart should we avoid?

Based on this Scripture, what does it mean to have a double heart?

Read Proverbs 10:9.

To have a double heart is the opposite of having integrity. A person of integrity has a heart and a lifestyle that match. God cares if we walk with integrity of heart. Our hearts and our lives need to say the same thing; they need to be united.

DOUBLE HEART EXAMPLES:

1) Sara tells everyone that she is a Christian, but she doesn't act like it when she is at school. She can often be found talking bad about her teachers, cheating on tests, and using foul language in the halls. Even though she says she is a Christian, her life does not demonstrate it. She has a double heart.

2) Mark tells everyone that he is called to missions. Mark, however, has never shared his faith with anyone. He has a lot of friends who are not Christians, but he never takes the time to tell them about Jesus. Mark's heart for missions and his lifestyle do not match. He has a double heart.

3) When Taylor attends church on Sundays, she loves the praise and worship time. She often raises her hands, closes her eyes, and is quite expressive in her worship. However, in her heart, she is only thinking about herself and what other Christians think about her. Her focus is not on the Lord, but rather on herself. Her heart and her actions do not match. She acts like she is praising God, but her heart is not in a posture of true worship. She has a double heart.

Why do you think it is important to avoid a double heart in your pursuit of purity?

A HARD HEART

Read Proverbs 28:14, Mark 3:5 and 16:14.

What does it mean to have a stubborn, or hard, heart before God?

Example

If someone has flattering lips, his speech and his heart do not match. He does not mean what he is saying. This is a warning sign of a double heart.

Interact

Have students respond to the double heart examples. These examples are meant to help students search their own hearts. Ask students when they have a double heart. If we are honest, we all do at times. Ask students if they can think of another example of someone with a double heart.

Reference

Encourage students to underline the type of heart to avoid in their Bibles.

Mark 3:3–5 Jesus is not intimidated by his opponents; he makes the Sabbath healing (cf. v. 2) an intentionally public incident. They were silent. The silence of the opponents displays their hardness of heart, and Jesus' anger shows that his question, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm ...?" should have been answered: "to do good." This would not violate the OT law, but it would violate the opponents' extrabiblical, mostly Pharisaic tradition. Their tradition misses the point of the Mosaic law: to love God and one's neighbor (cf. 12:29–31).

Mark 16:9–20 In summary, vv. 9–20 should be read with caution. As in many translations, the editors of the esv have placed the section within brackets, showing their doubts as to whether it was

None of us are immune to this temptation. A hard heart is not pleasing to God. To have a hard heart means “to be stubborn, to be unyielding and resisting in an event; or lack humility before a superior.”

How might a hard heart be dangerous in your pursuit of purity?

Read Ezekiel 11:19.

God desires that you have a heart of flesh that He can easily mold. If you want to have a pure heart, you will certainly need a soft heart before God. By taking time each day to spend time in God’s Word, you are allowing God to mold and shape you to be who He wants you to be.

A PROUD HEART

To be proud means to be “arrogant, pertaining to an exalted view of self that is improper.”

The Bible has a lot to say about pride. Look up each of the following Scriptures and match them to the correct answer.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| A) Psalm 10:4 | 1) Pride brings destruction. |
| B) Proverbs 16:18 | 2) Pride is sin. |
| C) Proverbs 21:4 | 3) God opposes the proud. |
| D) 1 Peter 5:5 | 4) Love is not proud. |
| E) 1 Corinthians 13:4 | 5) A prideful person does not seek God. |

What did you learn about pride from the above verses?

How do you think a prideful heart can negatively affect your pursuit of purity?

Read Psalm 148.

Prideful people think too highly of themselves and think too often about themselves. To fight against having a prideful heart, we need to think often and highly of God.

AN UNBELIEVING HEART

Read Hebrews 3:12.

What does it mean to have an unbelieving heart?

Illustrate

Imagine meeting a person that you are interested in dating. If God knows this person is not good for you, He will show you this through your parents, Christian friends, or sometimes even through an unsettled feeling in your heart. If you have a hard heart, you are likely to ignore this leading and to be unyielding and resistant to God, but if you have a soft heart, you are likely to listen to God and not pursue that relationship.

Illustrate

Imagine holding a rock in one hand and some Play-Doh in another. God wants your heart to be like the Play-Doh, easily moldable by Him.

Matching

A) – 5; B) – 1; C) – 2;
D) – 3; E) – 4

originally part of what Mark wrote, but also recognizing its long history of acceptance by many in the church. The content of vv. 9–20 is best explained by reference to other passages in the Gospels and the rest of the NT. (Most of its content is found elsewhere, and no point of doctrine is affected by the absence or presence of vv. 9–20.)

Heb. 3:12–13 Drawing on several key words in Psalm 95, Hebrews warns against allowing the unbelief of a hardened, sinful heart to cause one to fall away (Gk. *apostēnai*, “turn away from, forsake, apostatize from”; cf. Luke 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1). His counter to this danger is both to encourage personal commitment (take care) and to call on the church to walk together in mutual encouragement (exhort

A person with an unbelieving heart refuses to trust God. Trusting God for your dating life and future marriage is sometimes hard to do. Oftentimes people want to take this into their own hands.

Read Jeremiah 1:5 and 29:11.

It is important not to take these verses out of context. These verses speak to the ultimate plans and purposes of God that are always fulfilled. Therefore, these verses provide hope for our own future because they point to God's sovereignty and ultimately the redemption of his people.

God knows you better than you know yourself. He created every part of you and every part of your personality. Therefore, He knows what is best for you in your dating life and future marriage. He knows the type of person that you need to marry. God knows you better than you know yourself, therefore, you can trust Him to provide the right person for you to date and marry one day.

How can you use Scripture to make decisions about your future college choice, career choice and even to whom you get married?

Many people worry about having a boyfriend or a girlfriend and wonder whether they will ever get married. To trust God means to believe that His plans for you are for good and not for evil, to believe that He plans to prosper you and to give you a hope and a future.

Read 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1.

Through this Scripture passage, what can we learn about God's will for dating relationships?

How well do you trust God for your dating relationships and future marriage? Explain.

How would dating a non-Christian express your distrust of God to provide a Christian boyfriend or girlfriend for you?

An unbelieving heart is often revealed in an inability or unwillingness to trust God for a future godly spouse. If you don't trust God in this area of your life, you are likely to jump at any dating opportunity.

THREE TRUTHS FROM GOD'S WORD

1. God created you and knows you better than you know yourself. Therefore, He knows the best person for you to marry.
2. God has a plan for your life that is for good and not harm.
3. It is God's will for Christians to date and marry other Christians, not non-Christians.

Point to Make

If our minds and hearts are focused on God, we will desire what He desires and want what He wants. This is an extremely important place to be as a follower of Christ.

Point to Make

God's revealed will for us is to love God and to love people. When we do those two things we are within the will of God and our choices about the future reflect our relationship with him.

one another). as long as it is called "today." From the perspective of God's saving plans for world history, the church lives in a special moment in which the Lord has come, spoken, and gone, and believers await his return—faith is called for in this hour, and mutual exhortation sustains and strengthens faith.

Jer. 1:5 God is completely sovereign. He knows all things even before they happen, so he knew Jeremiah even before he was formed in his mother's womb. God's plan for Jeremiah was that he be consecrated, or "set apart," for preaching God's word. Jeremiah's ministry is to be a prophet to the nations, not just to Israel (25:1–14; 46:1–51:64).

AN UNGUARDED HEART

When it comes to dating, both guys and girls often enjoy the emotional connection they experience with a girlfriend or boyfriend. It feels good to have a trusted person with whom to share your thoughts, fears, and dreams. This is often where couples go wrong. All young people in dating relationships need to be wise in how often and how much of their hearts they share. Once again, it is imperative that we guard our hearts. Consider the following scenarios:

1) Kelly and Ben have been dating for a few months. When they first started to date, they texted just a few times each day, but that quickly changed. Kelly and Ben were soon texting each other non-stop. They often stayed up late talking on the phone too. They started out just sharing about their day, but then they began sharing about their pasts, their inner thoughts, and future dreams. This caused them to form a strong emotional bond very quickly. When they broke up months later, they were both heartbroken because they had given so much of their hearts to each other and now were apart.

How could Kelly and Ben have better guarded their hearts?

2) Rebecca and Sam started out as just close friends, but both decided that they wanted to be more than friends. They spent so much time together that they both abandoned their other friends. When something good or bad happened in one of their lives, they both immediately called the other person. They acted as if they were the only two people in the world. Rebecca and Sam often told each other how much they loved each other and how they wanted to get married one day. Since they felt that they were in love, they decided it was okay to become sexually active. Then one day they got into a big fight, and Rebecca broke up with Sam. They were both heartbroken.

How could Rebecca and Sam have better guarded their hearts?

What are some practical ways to pursue emotional purity?

The pursuit of emotional purity is vital in your pursuit of physical purity. If you decide to guard your heart when dating someone, you are much more likely to walk in physical purity.

Example

Examples might include limiting the number of times you text or talk in a day, etc.

2 Cor. 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. This command, which is Paul's main point in 6:14–7:1, will be restated in different words at the end of the section (7:1). To be "unequally yoked" is to be "hitched up" or even crossbred with another animal who is not the same (Gk. heterozygeō; the related adjective is found in Lev. 19:19; see also Deut. 22:10, though the word does not occur there). It is thus an image for being allied or identified wrongly with unbelievers. In context, it refers especially to those who are still rebelling against Paul within the church, whom Paul now shockingly labels unbelievers (he clearly thinks it possible that some are [2 Cor. 13:5], though he hopes not), but the principle has wider application to other situations where (as with animals yoked together) one person's conduct and direction of life strongly influences or controls the other's.

NOW WHAT?

Take some time to think about your own heart. Answer the following questions honestly.

- 1) Does my heart match my lifestyle?
- 2) Am I a person of integrity?
- 3) Am I ever stubborn in my relationship with God?
- 4) Am I unwilling to give up my will for God's will?
- 5) Is my heart stiff and hardened towards God?
- 6) Am I unyielding to God's ways?
- 7) Do I resist being obedient to God?
- 8) Do I lack humility before God?
- 9) Do I ignore Biblical advice from spiritual leaders?
- 10) Do I consider myself first in circumstances?
- 11) Do I really trust God to provide a godly spouse?
- 12) Am I willing to date someone who is not actively pursuing a relationship with Jesus?
- 13) How often do I communicate with my boyfriend/girlfriend?
- 14) How much of my heart am I willing to give away?

After answering the questions above you may realize that it is time to repent and change the way you guard your heart. Remember, a pure heart is a soft heart before God.

GOING DEEPER

Describe some new ways that you have learned how to guard your heart.

How does knowing God created you, knows you intimately, and has good plans for your life impact your trust in Him for providing a future spouse?

PRAYER:

Take some time to pray for your future spouse. Ask God to bless and protect that person. Ask God to develop your future spouse in his or her relationship with Him.

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Proverbs 4:23

2 Cor. 6:15 Belial (Gk. Beliar, also spelled Belial, from a Hb. term meaning "worthlessness" or possibly "destruction"). This name for Satan is not found elsewhere in the OT or NT but was used in the Judaism of Paul's day. Derived from one of Satan's characteristics (i.e., that he is "worthless" or "treacherous"; see the same word in Deut. 13:13; 15:9; Judg. 19:22; 1 Kings 21:13; etc.), it was often used in contexts that stress Satan's activity as an opponent of God, which fits Paul's concern with his opponents.

REAP

DAY

1

PROVERBS 4:23

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does it require to have a physically healthy heart?

What does it require to have a spiritually healthy heart?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

PROVERBS 19:20

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Who gives you the best advice? Why are you willing to accept their instruction?

How can you spend more time with that individual?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

PSALM 146

3

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe how God works according to this passage of Scripture.

Based on this passage, describe how God is a sure hope for those who trust in him?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-7:1

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe the danger of dating someone who is not actively pursuing a relationship with Jesus?

What is the ultimate purpose behind being careful with whom you are united?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

LUKE 6:45

5

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How does your speech or jokes with your friends about the opposite sex impact your dating life?

How can this verse serve as a warning about whom you should date?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

MATTHEW 6:21

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

List five things that you think about most often?

What do these things communicate about what you treasure?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

MATTHEW 7:7-11

7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe the level of value you place on your future spouse to be godly.

According to this passage, how can you know that God will grant your desire for a godly spouse?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

Purity in Dating

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

WEEK

3

Dating—it's something that is sure to be of interest to you at some point in your life. At this stage in your life, you might be longing to be in a dating relationship, or you might not be interested in dating at all. Wherever you find yourself, it is important that you know what you believe about dating. You need to have clear standards and boundaries set up before you start to date anyone.

Dating can be an unclear issue to Christians. Many don't know how to go about dating and how to honor God in it. This week we will take a look at some wise principles to live by in your dating relationships.

*What is the appropriate age to start dating?
What pressures in culture impact you the most about dating?*

In 1 Corinthians 10:31, the people were debating an issue that was unclear to some. It specifically had to do with eating certain foods. Although this Scripture is not talking specifically about dating, there is an underlying principle we can learn. This guiding principle can bring great clarity for an appropriate path in dating.

Whatever you do in your dating relationships, ask yourself this question:

"AM I BRINGING GLORY TO GOD THROUGH THIS?"

The answer to that question is quite telling. An honest answer is essential to staying on the path of purity in dating. The enemy is constantly going to try to convince you otherwise.

This week we are going to see what we can learn from God's Word about dating. Ask God to transform your mind this week as you study His Word to ensure that your future dating relationships are pleasing to God.

5-Minute Commentary

1 Cor. 10:31 Every aspect of every Christian's life has the potential to honor God.

Rom. 12:2 The present evil age still threatens those who belong to Christ, so they must resist its pressure. Their lives are changed as their minds are made new (contrast 1:28), so that they are able to "discern" God's will. By testing you may discern translates Greek dokimazō, which often has the sense of finding out the worth of something by putting it to use or testing it in actual practice.

2 Cor. 6:14 This command, which is Paul's main point in 6:14–7:1, will be restated in different words

TRANSFORMED

Describe the kind of dating advice teen magazines provide.

If you were to write a letter to God asking for dating advice, what advice might you receive?

When comparing teen magazines and God's letter, which is the most trustworthy source?

Why do most people date in junior high and high school?

Write below what you think is the purpose of dating. Then discuss it.

Some people date because they want to be loved, desire to be popular, or like the feeling of having someone like them. It is true that the purpose of many dating relationships is not right. Ultimately, the purpose of dating is to find a life partner with whom you can serve God. With this in mind, you can probably think of many dating relationships that do not serve a Godly purpose.

Read Romans 12:2.

According to this Scripture, how can you know God's will?

If you want to know God's will for your dating life, you have to renew your mind with God's Word. If you spend most of your time reading teen magazines or getting dating tips from movies and television, you are sure to miss God's will. If you take time to read and study God's Word, the will of God will be clear to you. It's true that you won't find the words dating, boyfriend, or girlfriend in Scripture, but that doesn't mean God's Word doesn't give guidelines on how to date in a way that is pleasing to God and safe for you.

FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31.

What do you think it means to bring glory to God?

Point to Make

Who better to give you direction in your life than the One who spoke life into existence? What the world says is right and what God says is right about dating are two totally different things.

Interact

Student opinion will be varied. Some will repeat what their parents have told them, some may give their perspective based on movies or books, and others may give their own personal opinion. Students may write that dating is for fun, to prepare for marriage, or to find a future spouse. Be aware of your response. The purpose of this question is to get conversation going. Be careful how you express your opinion on this topic.

at the end of the section (7:1). To be "unequally yoked" is to be "hitched up" or even crossbred with another animal who is not the same. It is thus an image for being allied or identified wrongly with unbelievers. In context, it refers especially to those who are still rebelling against Paul within the church, whom Paul now shockingly labels unbelievers (he clearly thinks it possible that some are [2 Cor. 13:5], though he hopes not), but the principle has wider application to other situations where (as with animals yoked together) one person's conduct and direction of life strongly influences or controls the other's.

Deut. 22:9-11 These laws prohibit mixing various items, reflecting God's ordering of creation "ac-

To bring Him glory means to bring Him praise and honor by what we do. Our Christian behavior in every area of our lives, and especially in our dating lives, should be for the glory of God.

How do you think a dating relationship can bring praise and honor to God?

How can a dating relationship not bring praise and honor to God?

Describe what a dating relationship looks like that brings glory to God.

IF YOU EVER FIND YOURSELF IN A DATING RELATIONSHIP THAT DOES NOT BRING GLORY TO GOD, YOU MUST END IT.

UNEQUALLY YOKED

Read 2 Corinthians 6:14–15.

A yoke is a wooden bar that sits across the necks of two animals and binds them together for their work. If one of the animals turns to the left, the other animal must also turn to the left. They influence and affect each other because they are yoked together.

Read Deuteronomy 22:10.

Which two animals were not to be yoked together?

Read Deuteronomy 14:1–8.

A donkey does not chew the cud. Was a donkey considered to be clean to eat? An ox?

With this image of animals yoked together in mind, why do you think God would instruct believers not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers?

Consider King Solomon. God specifically warned against marrying foreign women because they would turn his heart away from Him. If you yoke yourself with an unbeliever in a dating relationship, that person will negatively influence you. Even if you have good intentions to influence that person for Christ, the likelihood is that you will compromise your faith for this person.

Point to Make

Remember, your life as a Christian exists to bring praise, honor, and glory to God.

Point to Make

The donkey was considered unclean to eat. The ox could be eaten. Since one animal was considered clean and the other unclean, they were not to be yoked together. When Paul taught the people in 2 Corinthians 6:14–15 that they weren't to be unequally yoked, they knew what that meant.

Point to Make

Don't missionary date!

according to its kind" (e.g., Gen. 1:25). They also reminded Israelites that God had separated them from other peoples to be distinct and holy (Deut. 14:2).

Matt. 10:34–37 Sword is a metaphor for the inevitable separation between those who believe in Christ and those who do not, even within a family. Jesus' own family opposed him before they came to recognize his true identity (13:53–58; Mark 3:21; John 7:3–5). Thus, whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Jesus asked for unqualified allegiance, something even the most esteemed rabbi did not demand. The central point of Matt. 10:34–37 is that love of God and his kingdom must take precedence over every other human relationship.

In 2 Corinthians 6:14–15, Paul used eight descriptive words contrasting what it is like when a believer is yoked with an unbeliever. Write the positive descriptions on the left and their counterparts on the right.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| A) Righteousness | _____ |
| B) _____ | Darkness |
| C) _____ | Belial (Belial is a name for the devil.) |
| D) Believer | _____ |

Notice the stark contrast between each pair of words. God wants us to see how foolish it is to yoke ourselves with unbelievers.

SUPREME AFFECTION

A common pitfall in dating relationships happens when the boyfriend or girlfriend becomes more important than God to the other person.

Have you ever heard someone in a dating relationship say that the other person was “everything” to them and that they could not live without him or her? Explain the danger in that thought.

Read Matthew 10:37.

In this verse, Jesus was teaching that our love for our family should not be greater than our love for God. The same truth can be applied to a dating relationship. If a guy or girl becomes more important than God to you, then that relationship is not pleasing to Him.

Read Luke 14:26.

The word hate in this passage does not mean hate like we understand it today. It means to love less. Our love for God should be so strong that every other love in our lives looks like hate in comparison.

GOD DESIRES AND DESERVES TO BE THE OBJECT OF OUR SUPREME AFFECTION.

Read Exodus 20:3–5.

The Bible teaches that God is a jealous God. Only God is worthy of our worship and praise. Think now about a dating relationship. Make it your goal to always give God your supreme affection. May God—never a guy or girl—always be your everything.

How can you ensure to always give God your supreme affection?

Comparison

- A) Righteousness – Lawlessness
- B) Light – Darkness
- C) Christ – Belial
- D) Believer – Unbeliever

Luke 14:26 Those who would be Christ’s disciples must (1) love their family less than they love Christ (14:26); (2) bear the cross and follow Christ (v. 27); and (3) relinquish everything (v. 33). These are complementary ways of describing complete commitment. The first condition for discipleship is to hate one’s father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and life (cf. 18:29; see 6:20–22). “Hating” is a Semitic expression for loving less (cf. Gen. 29:30–31; Deut. 21:15–17; Matt. 10:37).

Ex. 20:3 Yahweh demands exclusive covenant loyalty. As the one true God of heaven and earth, Yahweh cannot and will not tolerate the worship of any “other gods” (cf. 22:20; 23:13, 24, 32); in other words, monotheism, the worship of the one true God, is the only acceptable belief and prac-

CHECKLIST

Read Ephesians 5:15.

By learning the following tips, you are being careful to live as wise rather than unwise.

1) Honor and obey your parents' rules about dating. God has given your parents wisdom and responsibility for you. They love you more than you know and want to protect you. Although their rules may be hard to follow at times, it is for your good to obey them.

2) Engage in group dating. When you choose to spend one-on-one time with a guy or girl that you like, you are making emotional and physical purity that much harder to maintain. Hang out in groups with your friends. You will still have the chance to get to know the other person better, but you will be protecting your purity.

3) Have accountability in your life. Make sure there is someone in your life who will ask you the tough questions about your relationships. Below are some sample questions that an accountability partner might ask you about a dating relationship.

- A) Are you honoring and obeying your parents in this relationship?
- B) Are you intentionally spending time in groups rather than alone together?
- C) Does your relationship bring glory to God?
- D) Is this person leading you closer to God or further away from Him?
- E) Do you love God more than you love this person?
- F) Are you guarding your heart with this person?
- G) Is your relationship sexually pure?

4. Keep in mind that the ultimate purpose in dating is to find a future mate with whom you can share your life and serve God. If the person you are dating is not someone that you can see yourself marrying, then the relationship needs to end immediately.

What are your parents' rules for you concerning dating relationships?

Now comes a big challenge. Take some time this week to talk to your parents about what you have learned this week. Ask them to hold you accountable to walk in wisdom in your dating relationships. This conversation may seem awkward and hard, but it is good to have open communication with your parents about such an important topic in your life.

Interact

Encourage students to respond with their opinions about these tips.

tice. Even though this commandment does not comment on whether these "other gods" might have some real existence, Moses' statement to a later generation makes clear that only "the Lord is God; there is no other besides him" (Deut. 4:35, 39; see also Ps. 86:10; Isa. 44:6, 8; 45:5, 6, 18; and 1 Cor. 8:4-6).

Ex. 20:4-6 The gods of both Egypt and Canaan were often associated with some aspect of creation and worshiped as, or through, an object that represented them. The Lord has made it clear, through the plagues and the exodus, that he has power over every aspect of creation because the whole earth is his (9:29; 19:5), and thus he commands Israel to refrain from crafting an image of anything in

NOW WHAT?

Write down the top things that you hope to remember from this week's lessons.

PRAYER:

Thank God for His Word and for the instruction it provides for your life. Ask Him to help you to remember these truths as you date in the future.

Identify someone older than you whose dating advice you can trust. Write their name below.

What are your standards for dating someone?

Take some time today, if you are willing, to commit to date only a Christian who is passionately following Jesus. Your decision now will affect your life forever.

GOING DEEPER

If you were a parent, what advice would you give your children about dating?

What would help you to have meaningful discussions with your parents about dating?

In humility, make a list of what you hope for in a future spouse.

PRAYER:

Write a prayer to God expressing your desire to make Him the object of your supreme affection.

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

1 Corinthians 10:31

heaven or earth for worship (20:4–5a). The prohibition is grounded in the fact that the Lord is a jealous God (see 34:14; Deut. 6:15), and that the Lord has no physical form, and should not be thought to be localized in one (Deut. 4:15–20). Israel saw what happened to Egypt when Pharaoh refused to acknowledge what was being revealed about the Lord; here Israel is warned against doing the same, while also being reassured that their God is merciful and gracious (see Ex. 34:6–7).

Ex. 20:5–6 a jealous God. God the Creator is worthy of all honor from his creation. Indeed, his creatures (mankind esp.) are functioning properly only when they give God the honor and worship that he deserves. God's jealousy is therefore also his zeal for his creatures' well-being.

REAP

DAY

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What qualities do you struggle fulfilling the most in caring for others?

How do you think these qualities will impact your dating relationships?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

PSALM 96:3

2

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How can you ensure that your future spouse wants to declare God's glory among the nations?

Describe the importance of having the same mindset of missions within your dating relationships?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

PSALM 72:19

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How can your dating relationships communicate God's glory within your friend circle?

How would that be making disciples of those nearest?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

4

PROVERBS 3:5-6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why should you not lean on your own understanding?

How does this passage encourage you to trust God in regards to your future spouse?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How does humility play an important part in dating relationships?

What does it require to look out for the interests of your boyfriend/girlfriend rather than yourself?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

MATTHEW 5:13-16

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How can your dating relationship shine the light of Jesus into the world?

Describe what it means for your dating relationship be a city on a hill. Does that create pressure?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

EXODUS 20:3

7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describing your boyfriend/girlfriend as your "everything" is idolatry. Why?

How can you guard against having an attitude that your boyfriend/girlfriend is your "everything?"

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

Sexual Purity

SONG OF SOLOMON 8:4

WEEK

4

Interact

The contents of this material may be sensitive to some students because of their experiences or the experiences of loved ones. If a student has already had sex encourage them that Jesus died for that sin. They can repent and ask for forgiveness. He wants to restore them and they can be made new in Christ. Please be considerate in your presentation of the lesson.

By this point in your life, you've heard a lot about sex. You see it in the movies, on television, in magazines, on the Internet, and have heard your friends talk about it. It seems to be everywhere. You probably have a lot of bad ideas and beliefs about sex. The hope this week is that you will learn about sex from God's perspective.

*Describe why you appreciate something more after you have learned how it was created?
How do you think that the media distrorts sex?*

God created sex. It was His idea. We know that whatever God creates is good, not bad. We also know that Satan tries to imitate and destroy anything good that God has created. That is why sex can be so dangerous. The Bible is very clear that God designed sex for a man and woman within the covenant relationship of marriage.

However, when sex is not handled God's way, it brings destruction, heartache, and sometimes even death. Sexually transmitted diseases, guilt, shame, unwanted pregnancies, forced sex, and human trafficking are all things that happen when sex occurs outside of God's plan.

Understanding God's purposes for sex is so important to your life as a teenager. When you fully understand the purpose behind the design it helps you to appreciate what was created. Knowledge helps you to make good decisions. Your decision about sex needs to be informed by God's Word.

Illustrate: Imagine two doors. Each one represents a path that you can take. Door 1 represents a path where you will have moments of pleasure but they are fleeting. Walking through this door will lead to shame, guilt, pain, broken-heartedness, broken relationships, disease and regret. Door 2 represents a path where you will say no to difficult temptations. Walking through this door will lead to tremendous pleasure free of guilt and shame and will fulfill your heart.

Knowing the outcome of each path in advance, which would you choose? We know God's plan in advance about sex and marriage. Ask God to open your heart and mind as you study His Word this week.

5-Minute Commentary

Song 8:4 Here at the end of the period of longing and waiting is the final instance of the refrain urging the daughters of Jerusalem not to stir up or awaken love until the appropriate time (cf. 2:7; 3:5); it is now time to move on to the marriage (cf. 8:5, where the consummation is indicated by her finally "awakening" him).

Gen. 1:28 Be fruitful and multiply. This theme recurs throughout Genesis in association with divine blessing (see 9:1, 7; 17:20; 28:3; 35:11; 48:4) and serves as the basis of the biblical view that raising faithful children is a part of God's creation plan for mankind. God's creation plan is that the whole

SEX IS A GOOD THING

We know that God created sex, but why did He create it? This week we are going to look at six reasons that God created sex so that we can have a better understanding of the perfect way God designed sex.

- 1) To create life.
- 2) To foster intimate oneness.
- 3) To promote knowledge.
- 4) To provide pleasure.
- 5) To act as a defense against temptation.
- 6) To be a source of comfort.

CREATE LIFE

Read Genesis 1:28.

To whom is God speaking in this verse?

Read Genesis 9:1.

What did God tell Noah and his sons?

One of the main purposes of sex is to create more people. In the creation story, Adam and Eve had sex and thus created Cain. If your parents did not have sex, you would not have been born! You are here on this planet because two people had sex. Yes, it's weird to think about that, so keep moving on!

INTIMATE ONENESS

Read Genesis 2:24–25.

What does it mean that the two would become one flesh?

This can help you to understand why sex before marriage is so emotionally difficult for people. If you have sex with someone before marriage, you are becoming one when it was not meant to happen. When that relationship ends, you still feel connected to that person. This was not how God intended it to be. God desires that you share that oneness with one person only: your spouse.

To whom does the verse say that man should be united?

Point to Make

This same command is given again to Noah and his sons after the great flood. God told them to fill the earth with people.

Point to Make

Becoming one flesh is more than just physical. When two people come together it is about the body, mind, and spirit becoming one. God sees them as one instead of two.

Point to Make

This is not describing a one-night stand, a casual hookup, or a dating relationship. This is talking about a husband and wife who have made a covenant to God in marriage. That is why God sees them as one. God created sex to be experienced within the covenant of marriage.

earth should be populated by those who know him and who serve wisely as his vice-regents or representatives.

Gen. 2:23–24 The text highlights the sense of oneness that exists between the man and the woman. This sentence and the story of Eve's creation both make the point that marriage creates the closest of all human relationships. It is also important to observe that God creates only one Eve for Adam, not several Eves or another Adam. This points to heterosexual monogamy as the divine pattern for marriage that God established at creation. Moreover, the kinship between husband and wife creates obligations that override even duty to one's parents (therefore a man shall leave his father and his

Read Ephesians 5:31–32.

Select the phrase that best describes what sex was created to be like.

- A) All about my desires and wants.
- B) Dirty and disgusting.
- C) Something you have to do when you are married.
- D) An earthly picture of Christ and the church.

The oneness of a husband and wife is a picture of the intimacy between Christ and His believers. God desires to have intimacy with you. To be intimate with someone means to know that person very closely. God already knows you well, but He desires that you know Him in a close, intimate relationship.

KNOWLEDGE

Read Genesis 4:1.

In the ESV, the word “knew” is a way of saying “had sexual relations with,” because it describes a kind of knowledge about someone that is gained only through sexual contact. Today, of course, we use the word “knew” in a totally different way. When we say we know someone, it means that the person is a friend or someone we have met. It does not mean we know them in a sexual way.

To have intimate knowledge of a person through sex is to know someone in a way that no other person can know him or her. You want only one other person on the planet to have that kind of knowledge of you. It is not meant to be shared with many people. The more partners you have, the less intimate you can be, because others “know” you too.

PLEASURE

Did you know there is a book in the Bible that talks about a husband and wife’s sex life? In this book, we see God’s design and desire for sex to be pleasurable. Solomon and his wife’s honeymoon night is described in chapter 4 of Song of Solomon. In Song of Solomon 5:1, Solomon speaks about the pleasure he finds in his wife. In the last part of verse 1, someone says, “Eat, O friends and drink; drink your fill, O lovers.”

It is highly unlikely that friends or wedding guests would have been present in the bedroom with Solomon and his bride. It is believed that God Himself speaks the last part of verse 1.

What is God saying to the two lovers?

SEX, WHEN DONE GOD’S WAY, IS A HOLY INTERACTION.
IT IS NOT ONLY A PHYSICAL ACT, BUT A SPIRITUAL ONE TOO. GOD IS PRESENT.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:18–20.

mother and hold fast to his wife, 2:24). They “left” their parents in the sense of putting their wife’s welfare before that of their parents. As a result of this special affiliation, Gen. 2:24 observes that when a man leaves his parents and takes a wife, they shall become one flesh, i.e., one unit (a union of man and woman, consummated in sexual intercourse). Jesus appeals to this verse and 1:27 in setting out his view of marriage (Matt. 19:4–5).

Eph. 5:31 one flesh. Marriage from the beginning of creation (Genesis 1) was created by God to be a reflection of and patterned after Christ’s relation to the church. Thus Paul’s commands regarding the roles of husbands and wives do not merely reflect the culture of his day but present God’s ideal for

Point to Make

Have you ever thought about the intimacy that God desires with you through Christ? He loves you so much that He wants to be one with you. While a marriage relationship and the intimacy that it provides is satisfying, it doesn’t compare to the satisfaction found in an intimate relationship with Christ.

Point to Make

God was with them in that moment and told them to enjoy themselves! Even though this may seem odd to you, this is a beautiful thing.

As a believer, you are a temple, or a house, for the Holy Spirit, therefore, sexual sin is a big deal to God. It is committed against your body, where the Spirit of God dwells.

Are you seeing it more clearly now? Satan twists what is supposed to be wonderful, pleasurable, and fun and makes it dirty, nasty, shameful, and full of guilt. God is not the one who created sex trafficking, pornography, prostitution, and rape. It is important to hear that again: God created none of these!

Why do these terrible distortions of sex happen?

However, true pleasure does not cause guilt or carry with it the fear of being caught. All those things mentioned above are wrong and destructive. When someone is being injured or filled with shame, guilt, or pain, it is not pleasurable. It is Satan's way of twisting something good into something that can destroy us. God created sex for pleasure between a husband and a wife. When it is expressed that way, it is not destructive; rather, it draws the couple much closer.

DEFENSE AGAINST TEMPTATION

Read Proverbs 5:1–15.

After reading the passage, what do you think verse 15 is saying?

Read Proverbs 5:18–22.

God has designed marriage in such a way that a man and woman are sexually satisfied within their marriage and therefore have no need to seek sexual satisfaction in other places. Sex within the marriage relationship helps to defend against pornography, prostitution, adultery, and other traps from the enemy.

If you haven't already, you will soon experience sexual desires that cannot yet be fulfilled because you are not married. You will face temptations such as pornography, masturbation, and other sexual sins.

Look up the following Scriptures and record how you can guard against these temptations that you will face.

A) Matthew 6:13

B) Mark 14:38

C) Matthew 4:1–11

D) 1 Corinthians 10:13

E) James 4:7

Point to Make

It is what happens when men and women go outside of God's perfect design. The world says that pleasure happens when we engage in all those nasty things.

Point to Make

Proverbs is using an illustration of drinking water from your own well. To drink water from your own well means to have sex only with your marriage partner, not with someone else's spouse (or from another well).

all marriages at all times, as exemplified by the relationship between the bride of Christ (the church) and Christ himself, the Son of God.

1 Cor. 6:16–18 Unity with Christ is incompatible with all sin (Rom. 6:6) but particularly with sexual sin. Because sexual union has a spiritual component, sexual activity outside marriage is a unique sin both against Christ (1 Cor. 6:15) and one's own body (v. 18; see Prov. 6:26, 32). Within marriage, sexual union is not only allowed but has positive spiritual significance (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:22–33). temple of the Holy Spirit within you. The Spirit of the Lord lives within individual Christians (v. 17), making each Christian's body a temple just as the church, corporately conceived, is also a temple where God's

You can resist sexual temptation through prayer, memorizing God's Word, resisting the enemy, and realizing that God always provides a way out of temptation. The question is, are you going to make the effort to honor Him in this area of your life? The rewards are worth it.

COMFORT

Read 2 Samuel 11:26-27 and 12:24.

When Bathsheba was grieving the loss of their son David comforted her through sex. When words were not enough to help her soul after the death of their child, David showed compassion and love by giving her another child. Solomon, was created from the act of a husband comforting his wife.

When sex occurs within the marriage covenant between a husband and a wife, new life, intimate oneness, knowledge, pleasure, defense against temptation, and comfort are natural results. Consider the alternative, sex outside of marriage brings unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, broken hearts, guilt, shame, and regret.

There is a reason why God wants you to wait for your marriage partner before having sex. He wants to bless you sexually as well as spiritually. God created sex to be good. Sex is a blessed and holy event within marriage and certainly worth the wait!

Do any of the six reasons why God created sex surprise you? If so, which one?

By learning these truths, you are arming yourself for a healthy and pure marriage one day. As a student who is not yet married, how does this help you in the meantime?

Reference

Do you remember the story of David and Bathsheba? David sinned against God by sleeping with Bathsheba, a married woman. David then had her husband killed when he learned that Bathsheba was pregnant. David took Bathsheba as his wife, and when the time came for their baby to be born, the child died.

Spirit dwells (3:16). You are not your own. As with other gifts from God (4:2, 7), Christians are to exercise responsible stewardship over their bodies. 1 Cor. 6:20 bought with a price. The image is borrowed from the slave market (7:23; see also Rom. 6:17–18), Christ's blood being the purchase price (Eph. 1:7; see also 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:9).

Prov. 5:1–23 After the introductory words in vv. 1–2, the entire appeal concerns matters of sexual morality. First, the immoral woman is introduced: she is alluring but deadly (vv. 3–6). An exhortation to stay far from such promiscuous women follows (vv. 7–14). The text then gives a brief but powerful presentation of the essentials of biblical teaching on sexual ethics. It asserts that sexual pleasure

REAP

DAY

EPHESIANS 5:31-32

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

In this passage, how is the union between a man and wife related to the union between Christ and the Church?

How does it make you feel to know that God desires this same kind of intimacy with you?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:1-16

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How does Solomon describe his new bride?

Describe how God is pleased with Solomon and his bride's actions?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

1 CORINTHIANS 6:18-20

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does this passage say about your body?

How can we, as this passage says, "flee sexual immorality?"

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

MATTHEW 4:1-11

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How does Satan try to tempt Jesus?

How does Jesus respond to these temptations?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

PROVERBS 5:1-15

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does this passage say to avoid?

What does this passage say about sex?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

1 PETER 5:6-11

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage, whom should you resist?

How can you resist the temptations of the Devil in your daily life?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-12

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage, what has God called us to have?

What changes do you need to make in your life to live a life of purity?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

How Far is Too Far?

EPHESIANS 5:3

WEEK

5

Human beings have a tendency to push boundaries. For instance, we have speed limit signs. Many of us would be very upset at an officer for pulling us over and giving us a ticket if we were traveling 2 mph over the limit. Unfortunately, we take this same reasoning when it comes to the subject of sex.

Even though we have learned that God intends for sex to be fulfilled in a marriage relationship, many people still want to know, "how far is too far?" Most of us in this room have either asked or answered that question before. Let's be honest, you still have certain feelings, thoughts, and desires long before you are married, right? This week we will look at some Scriptures that will help to serve as a guide to answer this question.

*So how do you know what kind of behavior is acceptable to God?
Why does God give us boundaries for dating relationships?*

Our culture says that many things are okay. We are living in a world where people are playing around with sexual activity like it's just a form of entertainment. Some people say you can still honor God if you do certain things as long as you don't go all the way and have intercourse. Truth is, anything that even "hints" of sexual immorality is inappropriate for a Christian.

Briefly describe circumstances that display a hint of sexual immorality such as heavy touching in public. Make this conversation light. Everyone has seen that couple. It makes a person wonder what they are willing to do behind closed doors.

Here is an idea: make a commitment to not do anything alone with your boyfriend/girlfriend that you wouldn't do in front of each other's parents. The more a married couple has to share exclusively between themselves, the more special and unique the sexual relationship in that marriage becomes.

The Bible does not give us a list of what qualifies as a "hint", or tell us what physical activities are approved for a couple to engage in before marriage. It really comes down to a matter of what your heart is pursuing. Are you pursuing physical satisfaction, or righteousness? Caring for our bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit begins with a heart that is pursuing a healthy relationship with God.

5-Minute Commentary

Eph. 5:3 sexual immorality. This general term (Gk. *porneia*) covers all sexual sins, including adultery, fornication, homosexuality, etc. Covetousness is a jealous longing for what others possess (Ex. 20:17), and it amounts to idolatry (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5).

James 1:13-14 God tests his people (e.g., Abraham, Genesis 22; Israel, Ex. 16:4; Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 32:31) so that their character is strengthened, but he never tempts (i.e., lures people into sin). Since God cannot be tempted with evil, and he is unreservedly good, he would never entice human beings to sin or seek to harm their faith. God brings trials in order to strengthen the Christian's faith. He

RECOGNIZING TEMPTATION

What types of things does our culture say are okay to practice in a dating relationship without going “all the way”?

Read James 1:13–17.

Sexual intercourse is not the only type of sexual sin. Sexual foreplay or sexual acts that may lead to intercourse are also sexual sins. There should not be even a hint of sexual immorality in a Christian’s life. To better understand how to avoid these temptations, we need to learn the root of them.

For our purposes this week, consider sexual foreplay or sexual acts other than intercourse when you read about temptation and sin.

According to verse 14, where does temptation start?

What happens when you dwell on a temptation and think about it all the time? Does it make you more likely to give in or more likely to stand strong?

According to verse 15, after we have dwelled on the temptation, or conceived the idea to act on it, to what does it give birth? Then what?

It is important to recognize temptations for what they truly are. As a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit within you to give you the strength to withstand those temptations and to walk in sexual purity. Temptations come from the lust and desire within our own hearts. When we dwell on tempting thoughts too long, they can weaken us and cause us to miss the mark of purity.

When you sin, describe other ways death occurs besides physical death? What might this type of death look like in your relationships with your boyfriend or girlfriend, your friends, your parents, etc.? How are these relationships affected?

Does God desire for you to sin? Does He want you to experience the death that is brought by surrendering to temptation? Does He want you to experience life to the full? Explain.

Point to Make

Temptations come in different forms, not just sexual ones. The Bible says that temptation presents itself when we are enticed by our own lust or desire. Even though we were each given a new nature when we became a Christian, we still battle our old nature. One way to avoid the temptation of sexual sin is to choose not to dwell on the temptation.

Point to Make

If you give in to sexual temptation, you are destroying your trust with your parents and friends, the purity within your relationship, and your clear conscience. It is not worth it!

Point to Make

See John 10:10. You will often be tempted to stray from God’s path and to follow the standards of our culture, but it always leads to death.

never tempts, however, because he never desires his people to sin. Christians should never blame God when they do wrong. lured and enticed. A fishing metaphor for drawing prey away from shelter in order to trap them with a deadly hook. Here it is the person’s evil desire that ensnares; in 1 Pet. 5:8–9 it is Satan who “seeks to devour.” Sin is never God’s fault.

James 1:15 This dramatic depiction shows the terrible result when one gives in to temptation. James 1:17 James moves from evil temptations (which God never gives) to the observation that every good gift and every perfect gift comes from God (cf. Matt. 7:11). As in James 1:5, James reminds the readers of God’s goodness. In their trials, God is not tempting them to sin, but the difficulties in life

SHIFT YOUR FOCUS

Read 2 Timothy 2:22

According to this passage, what we are to flee? Give an example.

PURSUE – TO STRIVE TO DO SOMETHING WITH AN INTENSE EFFORT TOWARDS A GOAL.

What does it mean to pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace?

How might striving to do these things with an intense effort keep you from giving in to temptation?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.

What is the promise of God regarding temptation?

Who or what in your life can help you escape temptation and pursue faith, love, peace, and righteousness?

A good question to ask yourself is, "what are you pursuing...sexual satisfaction and the allure of fun, or your relationship and the glory of God?"

The heart of a follower of Jesus must shift to a life that pursues faith, love, peace and righteousness. When you allow your heart to do this your question shifts from "how far is too far?" to "how can I honor God in my dating relationships?"

The Bible is a love letter that shows us a better way to live. When we live life God's way, we avoid the negative consequences of living in a way that does not honor Him.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote a letter to a group of people who had been told by their culture that it was okay to use their bodies for things that did not honor God. Paul, however, taught the Corinthians that everything has a proper use and that to use things improperly is not good.

Point to Make

If you focus your attention on striving towards righteousness, faith, love and peace, fleeing temptation will be much easier. It is important to be aware of temptation so you can follow through with what you know you should do when you are tempted.

Discuss

See Matthew 5:8. Why is seeing God motivation to be pure? We should so long for God that we are passionately pursuing and longing to see him rather than determining how impure we can be and still "see God."

are intended to strengthen and perfect them and make them more like God. God's intentions for them are always for good (cf. Rom. 8:28). There is nothing in this world that is truly good that has any other origin than from above, namely heaven, descending from the Father of lights, which refers to God as creator of the heavenly "lights" (Ps. 74:16; 136:7-9)—a prime example of his good gifts. God is unchanging in his character and therefore in his giving of good, unlike the variation of the night changing to day or the shifting shadow caused by the sun or moon.

2 Tim. 2:22 "Passions" in this context refers to sinful desires in general (not only sexual desire) that tend to be characteristic of youth. The command to flee wrong is combined with the command to

Read 1 Corinthians 6:13–20.

For each of the verses listed below, write what Paul says about the body or the actions of the body.

Verse 13:

Verse 15:

Verse 18:

Verse 19:

Verse 20:

Looking at what you wrote about the body, what is the proper use for your body?

In other words, “how far is too far?” can be answered in this way: It is too far sexually when . . .

- 1) You are not glorifying God.
- 2) You violate your body, which is the temple of God and where His Holy Spirit dwells.
- 3) You are united with someone in the oneness He desires us to have with Him and our spouse in a marriage covenant.

Which of these behaviors are bait that would entice you to come out from under God’s protection?

- Holding hands
- Kissing
- Touching another person sexually
- Touching yourself sexually
- Being alone with your boyfriend/girlfriend
- Allowing your thoughts to be constantly on another person
- Putting more importance on a relationship with another person than you put on your relationship with God (time, thoughts, money, etc.)
- Watching provocative images
- Listening to provocative music
- Joking about sexual content with friends

HONEST DISCUSSION

What is the purpose of having physical boundaries in a relationship?

Point to Make

Our bodies were bought for a price and are not meant for sexual immorality, rather, they are meant to be a member of the body of Christ and a temple for the Holy Spirit. Therefore, flee sexual immorality.

Point to Make

Some actions listed are certainly sinful, but some actions can go either way. For example, holding hands and kissing can cause us to think about things that will tempt us to live in a way that will not honor God. See 1 Cor. 10:13.

pursue what is right. The pursuit of right is to be done along with other believers. Connection with the community of faith is essential for both progress in sanctification and perseverance in the faith.

1 Cor. 10:13 Even when Christians face morally confusing situations, they should never think that they have no options other than sinful ones. There will always be a morally right solution that does not require disobedience to any of God’s moral laws.

1 Cor. 6:12–20 Some of the Corinthian Christians were using prostitutes, theorizing that bodily appetites were matters of indifference for Christians just as they apparently were for everyone else. Paul

What boundaries do you need to establish in order to avoid the temptations you may face in a dating relationship?

How early do you need to set the physical boundaries in your relationship?

How would you set up physical boundaries in a relationship?

Who should be involved in setting those standards?

How is staying out of dating relationships until you have the opportunity to take the marriage step a way to protect yourself from going too far?

In your own words, what has God shown you about the answer to the question, "how far is too far?"

Point to Make

Setting boundaries are important. It is most wise to establish rules when your clothes are on you are thinking clearly. Don't be a fool and think that you can stop when you want.

reminds them that the bodies of Christians are one with the resurrected Christ and, in risen form, the Christian's body will be eternal. What they do with them now, therefore, is important. 1 Cor. 6:12–13 "All things are lawful" & "Food ... for the stomach." Are probably commonly used slogans among the Corinthians. The Corinthians have adopted from the culture around them the idea that the body is permitted to have everything that it craves. Paul knows that human desires are tainted with sin, which uses these desires to master the person for its own evil purposes (Rom. 6:6, 12, 16–22; 7:7–25). 1 Cor. 6:15 bodies ... members of Christ. Unity with Christ is incompatible with all sin (Rom. 6:6) but particularly with sexual sin. Because sexual union has a spiritual component, sexual activity outside marriage is a unique sin both against Christ (1 Cor. 6:15) and one's own body (v. 18; see Prov.

NOW WHAT?

When are you most vulnerable to sexual temptation? Are there certain times of day, certain people, or certain circumstances connected with these desires? Be specific.

How will you handle a circumstance when your boyfriend/girlfriend wants to go further than you are comfortable?

PRAYER:

Ask God to help you to not be deceived, but to clearly recognize when you are being tempted to sin. Ask God to help you to resist those temptations and thus honor Him. Ask God to show you how you can pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace and how you can flee from the temptations of lust and desire. Thank Him for providing you the means of escape when confronted with situations that make you want to go too far.

GOING DEEPER

Read 2 Samuel 13:1–17 and James 1:14.

Look at the progression of temptation and sin in this story. In James 1:14, the Bible says that a person is tempted when he is enticed by his own evil desire. The word enticed portrays the idea of a baited hook that lures fish from their protective spot or a hunter who sets a trap for an animal. You can see this idea of enticement in the story you just read.

List each action Amnon did to act on his temptation to be with Tamar (see verses 6, 8-11, 14).

After Amnon acted on his temptation, how did it produce the kind of death that James described (see verses 14-17)?

Have you ever done things that you knew didn't please God in order to get what you wanted? Did you find that once you had what you thought you wanted, you experienced anger, guilt, or frustration?

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Ephesians 5:3

6:26, 32). Within marriage, sexual union is not only allowed but has positive spiritual significance (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:22–33). Flee. Paul also tells the Corinthians to “flee from idolatry” in 1 Cor. 10:14. Idolatry and sexual immorality were closely connected in Israel's history (Ex. 32:6; Num. 25:1–2) as well as in Paul's thinking about the problems in Corinth (1 Cor. 10:7–8).

1 Cor. 6:19 The Spirit of the Lord lives within individual Christians (v. 17), making each Christian's body a temple just as the church, corporately conceived, is also a temple where God's Spirit dwells (3:16). You are not your own. As with other gifts from God (4:2, 7), Christians are to exercise responsible stewardship over their bodies. 1 Cor. 6:20 bought with a price.

REAP

DAY

COLOSSIANS 2:8

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

When have you given in to temptation because it looked like the right choice?

How can you follow the warning in this verse?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Do you trust this promise?

Describe an example when you have noticed God provided a way out of temptation?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

ROMANS 7:18-25

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

If your goal is to live in purity, what types of temptations would cause you to miss the mark.

Describe the hope that Paul has at the end of this passage?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-8

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe the reason that Christians should live differently according to verse 5.

Describe the stern warning against rejecting the teaching found in this passage.

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

GALATIANS 5:19-26

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Is it possible to display all the fruit of the Spirit and participate in the acts listed in verse 19-21?

How important is self-control for the life of a follower of Jesus?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

ROMANS 13:11-14

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe the imagery of living in the daytime versus the night illustrated in this passage.

How are your heart's desires impacted by the amount of time you spend thinking about them?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2 TIMOTHY 2:20-22

7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How does fleeing from sexual immorality prepare you to be used by God?

Describe the role of the church (the people) in helping each other pursue righteousness?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

For Girls/Guys Only

EPHESIANS 5:22-33

WEEK

6

Leader Note

This week girls and guys will study similar topics however the lesson is divided into two studies. Girls will study pages 69-72 and the guys will study pages 73-76. The Now What and Going Deeper section will apply to both groups.

It is important to remember God's plan for leadership within a relationship. (See Genesis 2:7; 18-22; 3:8-9.) By reading Scripture, you can clearly see the responsibility to lead in the marriage relationship falls on the man. The fact that God chose to create man first and to address him first after the fall illustrates His heart for men to lead. Husbands are to love their wives in a self-sacrificial manner, following the example of Christ, who "gave himself up for" the church in loving self-sacrifice. The biblical picture of a husband laying down his life for his wife is directly opposed to any kind of male tyranny or oppression. The husband is bound by love to ensure that his wife finds their marriage a source of rich fulfillment and joyful service to the Lord.

You might be thinking, "I'm not even close to being married, so how does this apply to me?" While it's true that you are not yet married (or even close), that doesn't mean you should ignore these future roles, especially when the purpose of dating is to find a future spouse. In the meantime, you should expect the guys in your life to begin leading now. The following four truths are only a few of the ways a young man should be leading in a dating relationship.

- 1) **Pursue the girl.** Girls, this is up to the guy to do. It takes courage and confidence for both of you to do this. The guy should be the one to take the initiative to call the girl, introduce himself to her parents, and ask her on a date. In his pursuit, he should communicate his dating intentions clearly.
- 2) **Protect her.** This goes beyond physical protection. As the leader, guys have the responsibility to help guard her heart with their actions and words.
- 3) **Lead her closer to God.** As we have already established, the girl he is pursuing needs to be a strong Christian. It should be his goal to sharpen her in her walk with God.
- 4) **Serve her.** In His relationship with His bride, Jesus set the perfect example of the best way to show love. He served. Men should do the same.

Which of the four tips is the most desirable trait in a future boyfriend or spouse? Why? Why is it important to think about these things now?

Look for these qualities in a guy who might be a potential boyfriend or spouse. When men lead like Jesus it makes it easy for their wives to follow their leadership. Today as we look at some specific topics it is important for all of us to know the man should lead in these areas of the relationship.

This lesson is divided into two sections in order to specifically speak to guys and girls. This study should teach you what qualities you should strive for and what to look for in a future spouse. Don't settle to be passive as a man, and ladies don't settle for a man that is passive about these topics.

5-Minute Commentary

1 Tim. 2:8-10 the men should ... likewise also that women. Paul addresses particular concerns in regard to each gender. The issue for men is anger and for women it is modesty and proper submission. not with ... gold or pearls or costly attire. Paul is not prohibiting the wearing of jewelry; the principle is that women should not dress gaudily or seductively, but in a way that is proper.

Matt. 22:39 Love signifies a concrete responsibility to seek the greatest good of one's neighbors, both Jew and Gentile.

For Girls Only

THE IMPORTANCE OF MODESTY

Read 1 Timothy 2:9–10.

What do you think it means for a woman to dress modestly?

Do you find it hard to dress modestly in today's world?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Read Matthew 22:39.

How might this Scripture apply to dressing modestly?

If you haven't already figured this out, it's time you know. Most guys are visually stimulated. What they see affects their physical bodies. When they see a girl dressed immodestly, showing lots of skin, revealing her body through tight clothes, guys often fall into the trap of lustful thoughts. As young Christian women, you are to love your brothers in Christ (and non-Christian guys as well). One way to do this is to help protect them from lustful thoughts by dressing modestly.

Read Romans 14:13.

Think through your wardrobe. Does your choice of clothing ever lead a guy to sin?

Yes

No

Maybe

It is true that guys have a responsibility to choose not to look or to dwell on a girl's immodest clothing. It's a both/and kind of situation. Girls need to love their brothers and honor God by dressing modestly. Guys need to love their sisters and honor God by choosing to look away and avoid lustful thoughts.

When you choose to dress modestly, you allow a guy to like you for who you are (your heart and personality) rather than for how you look. Your looks are temporary. Even though it is true that immodest clothing will get you attention from many guys, is that the type of guy you want to attract? It's likely that the guys you attract because of your immodest dress are after more than your heart.

Write down a few ways you have learned to dress modestly.

Much of today's fashion is immodest. If you like fashionable clothing, you will likely face a hard decision when considering what kinds of clothes to buy. Please know that it is still possible to dress fashionably and modestly. It will take a little more work, but it is definitely worth it!

Interact

It's true that each person's definition of modesty will be different, and it's also true that the Bible does not give a list of trending immodest and modest clothing. So what's a girl to do?

Definition

A stumbling block is something a person trips over, and an obstacle is anything that leads another person to sin.

Discuss

What should you do with the clothing that is immodest?

Discuss

Have you considered that dressing modestly is an act of worship? It shows whom you truly treasure.

Discuss

What is more important: to be fashionable or to prevent a brother from sinning?

Prov. 4:20–23 Heart in Proverbs regularly refers to the center of one's inner life and orientation to God, from which a person does all thinking, feeling, and choosing. Taking words of wisdom into the heart is vital (they are life, v. 22), and wisdom's presence in the heart is worth guarding because out of the heart flow all the thoughts and words and choices of a person's life.

1 Pet. 3:3–4 Do not let your adorning be external. Peter's instructions here were common in his day. Such "external ... adorning" can be witnessed in portraits and sculptures from the first century, where the elaborate braiding of women's hair and the wearing of gaudy jewelry was common in upper-class Roman society. In contrast to this, the Christian woman should focus on inner (hid-

GUARD YOUR HEART

Read Proverbs 4:23.

What do you think it means to guard your heart? Why is it important to guard your heart?

Things To Do:

- 1) **Pursue Jesus.** He will not break your heart. No man will ever love you more than him.
- 2) **Maintain close female friendships.** If you abandon your friendships with other girls, you will look to a guy to meet all your emotional needs. This is not healthy.
- 3) **Be careful of flattery.** Many guys are genuine and it's great to hear compliments. However, it makes it more difficult to guard your heart because the desire for more compliments may change your actions. Sometimes, this is a manipulative way for guys to get what they want.
- 4) **Have another girl hold you accountable in your relationships with guys.** Ask her to ask you hard questions. You can use the suggestions listed here as a guide.
- 5) **Spend time together in groups.** This will help you to avoid frequent heart-to-heart conversations.
- 6) **Avoid frequent late-night talks.** It's often during late-night talks, that you will reveal your deepest thoughts. This forms an emotional bond that is not healthy for young relationships.
- 7) **Don't make promises you can't keep.** Yes, your intent in dating is to find a future spouse. However, avoid planning your future together. If you continuously talk about one day getting married or even dating for a long time, you are giving more of your heart to him.
- 8) **Avoid one-on-one prayer time together.** Yes, you are both Christians. Yes, you should pray for each other. However, prayer is an intimate thing. By avoiding one-on-one prayer time together, you are helping to guard your heart.

While these tips may seem too strict, they will help you and the guy more than you know. By taking these precautions, you love your neighbor as yourself. If you put these tips into practice, a possible future breakup will be less heartbreaking and leave you both with a whole heart.

When have you struggled to follow through with the actions mentioned above? Why?

TRUE BEAUTY

How does our culture define beauty?

Read 1 Peter 3:3-4 and Proverbs 31:30.

What do these passages teach us about beauty?

Point to Make

Many girls are emotionally stimulated and the emotional ups and downs of a relationship can take a toll on your heart. Remember, what you do now impacts your future.

Point to Make

A woman's beauty should not come from fancy hair, jewelry, and clothes, but rather from a beautiful heart. Peter is not saying that women shouldn't wear nice clothes and jewelry, but rather that those things are not the source of genuine beauty.

den) beauty of the heart. What matters to God is the godly character of the wife, characterized by a gentle and quiet spirit. It is clear that Peter is not literally prohibiting all braiding of hair or all wearing of gold jewelry! Instead, Peter warns against both an inordinate preoccupation with personal appearance and material excess in such matters.

Prov. 31:30 The mention of a woman who fears the Lord at the end of this long list of excellent qualities brings back the theme of the book of Proverbs stated in 1:7. It reminds readers that this woman excels in her fear of the Lord, and therefore that she is a model of the character traits and wisdom taught throughout the book's 31 chapters. The appearance of this woman's fear of the Lord at the

Let this be an encouragement to you as a young woman. In a world that worships external beauty, it's hard to keep up. You probably often feel like you have to buy the newest fashions and have the best body and hair to be beautiful. God's Word gives a far different and better definition of beauty. It's what is on the inside that is of great worth! If you disagree, ask your grandmother and grandfather how they define beauty. It's likely that their external appearances have changed a bit over the years!

What word does 1 Peter 3:3–4 use to describe beauty that is found in a gentle and quiet spirit?

Which do you spend more time on in the morning? Circle one.

External Beauty

Internal Beauty

If we are honest, we all probably spend more time on our external beauty. We might read the Bible or pray for five minutes, but then we take forty-five minutes to fix our hair. Let this be a challenge to take more time each day to grow in inner beauty through reading God's Word and praying to Him!

What do you think guys focus on when they are telling a friend about a girl they are attracted to? Circle one.

External Beauty

Internal Beauty

Many girls care about external beauty because they think that is what a guy cares about most. However, you want them to be attracted to your external and inner beauty. A godly guy will elevate the inner because he knows God's definition of beauty. It is worth waiting for a guy like that.

Remember the definition of true beauty. It's hard when the world is screaming a different message, but just tune your ears to God's voice, and you will be on the right path.

BOUNCE YOUR EYES

Even though this may seem like a guy issue. Many girls are tempted visually as well. Like girls, guys have responsibility to dress and carry themselves modestly as well, but that doesn't mean you don't have a responsibility too!

So what are you to do when you see a guy dressed immodestly? Circle your answer.

- A) Stare.
- B) Share it on social media. (#mancrushmonday or dream guy board on Pinterest)
- C) Turn your eyes away from him.
- D) Fantasize about him.
- E) Store the picture in your mind.

If you are honest, you are likely tempted to do all of the above. God cares about what you put before your eyes. It's true that guys can be immodest, but it's up to you to turn away when you see them.

Read Psalm 101:2-4.

Point to Make

Unfading and imperishable beauty is beauty that doesn't change over time. External beauty will eventually fade, but true inner beauty grows over time.

Point to Make

Most girls probably focus on external beauty because they know that will get attention. A godly guy will elevate inner beauty because he knows God's definition of beauty.

Discuss

Don't dismiss this topic for girls. Many girls secretly struggle with this temptation.

end of this list is also a reminder that this quality is more important than even great skill and talent, and is foundational to the wise and right use of all activities and skills. A godly woman may well have outward charm and beauty, but these are of secondary importance to her godliness.

Ps. 101:1–4 The King Will Aim to Be Blameless. The song opens by declaring the king's firm commitment to live out covenant faithfulness: he will ponder the way that is blameless (cf. 18:32; 119:1; Prov. 11:20; 13:6) in order to walk in that way (cf. Ps. 101:6, which echoes v. 2 here); he wants to display integrity of heart within his own house (i.e., in his private life); when it comes to whose advice and help he will seek in ruling, he will also reject those who fall away and those who have a

David, the psalmist, wanted to guard his eyes from anything that was not worthy of his walk with God. God desires for a woman to delight in one man's body, and that is her husband's. Girls, guard your eyes. Save the stares for your future husband. You not only honor him when you do this, but you also honor God.

How exactly can you bounce your eyes when you see an attractive image?

It is inevitable that you will see these images, but it is up to you whether you will dwell on those images or bounce your eyes to something else. It has been said that if you choose to bounce your eyes immediately, your mind does not have time to entertain those images.

You must be careful of the images, stories and songs that you fill your mind about relationships. It becomes hard to distinguish between fantasy and reality. Don't be fooled into believing that images and stories don't create an impression in your mind. They can lead you down a road of future disappointment when you find that no man can measure up to your expectations.

Read Proverbs 7:6–27.

Even though this story is about a male falling into a trap, the principle of being slowly seduced into believing lies applies to girls as well. Pay close attention to verses 21–23. You have got to make wise decisions in order to pursue purity in your life. By choosing to bounce your eyes, you are choosing to keep your mind and thoughts pure, and you are therefore honoring God with your thoughts.

Point to Make

Simply put, when your eyes are drawn to a sexy image, you must immediately turn them away. For example, if you see a racy image on television, turn away or leave the room. If there is a suggestive image in a movie, focus your eyes downward until the scene is over. If you see someone in public who is dressed immodestly, look in the opposite direction.

Interact

Have your students practice the look away. Notice the guys who do this well. They might be a guy worth dating.

perverse heart (i.e., those who are openly unfaithful). The policies and plans of a Davidic king should be focused on serving the people, especially in promoting the conditions in which piety can flourish; unfaithful advisers do not share these goals.

Prov. 7:1–27 The appeal begins with the plea for the son to take the father's wise instruction to heart in order to keep himself away from the adulteress (vv. 1–5). The main section is a narrative about a man who willingly allows himself to be entrapped by the adulteress (vv. 6–23). The final verses appeal to the sons (plural, v. 24) to learn the point of the narrative: wisdom includes keeping off paths that one knows will lead to temptation, paths on which many have walked naively to their own ruin

For Guys Only

GUARD HER HEART

Read Proverbs 4:23.

What do you think it means to guard her heart? Why is it important to guard her heart?

Things To Do:

- 1) **Pursue Jesus.** A passionate relationship with him will give you a passionate desire to protect her.
- 2) **Encourage her to maintain close female friendships.** If she abandons her friendships with other girls, she will look to you to meet all her emotional needs. This is not healthy.
- 3) **Be careful of flattery.** Yes, you can give genuine compliments. However, don't use this as a way to manipulate her to get what you want.
- 4) **Have another guy hold you accountable in your relationships with girls.** Ask him to ask you hard questions. You can use the suggestions listed here as a guide.
- 5) **Spend time together in groups.** This will help you to avoid frequent heart-to-heart conversations.
- 6) **Avoid frequent late-night talks.** It's often during late-night talks, either on the phone or in person, that a girl will reveal her deepest thoughts to you. This forms an emotional bond that is not healthy for young relationships.
- 7) **Don't make promises you can't keep.** Yes, your intent in dating is to find a future spouse. However, avoid planning your future together. If you talk about one day getting married or even dating for a long time continuously, the girl will likely give more of her heart to you.
- 8) **Avoid one-on-one prayer time together.** Yes, you are both Christians. Yes, you should pray for each other. However, prayer is an intimate thing. By avoiding one-on-one prayer time together, you are helping to guard her heart.

While these tips may seem too strict, they will help you and the girl more than you know. By taking these precautions, you love your neighbor as yourself. If you put these tips into practice, a possible future breakup will be less heartbreaking and leave both you and the girl with a whole heart.

Which of the tips is most challenging to you? Why?

THE IMPORTANCE OF MODESTY

As you know, most guys are visually stimulated, meaning that what we see affects our physical bodies. When girls dress immodestly, showing lots of skin, revealing their bodies through tight clothes or low-cut shirts, guys often fall into the trap of lustful thoughts.

Read 1 Timothy 2:9–10.

Reference

Appendix 1 at the back of this study is designed to help guys understand their role as a leader of the relationship and give them tips on how to lead.

Point to Make

Many girls are emotionally stimulated and the emotional ups and downs of a relationship can take a toll on her heart. As the leader in the relationship guys need to be careful to help guard a girl's heart. Remember, what you do now impacts both your futures.

(vv. 24–26). This is the third paternal warning about adultery (see 5:1–23; 6:20–35).

Prov. 31:10–31 An Alphabet of Womanly Excellence. This wisdom poem is an acrostic, in which each verse begins with the successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The poem begins and ends with mention of the woman's "excellence" (vv. 10, 29–31). The probable intention of putting this together with the acrostic pattern is to show that this woman's character runs the whole range of excellence. The woman is married (as expected in that culture), and she is devoted to the well-being of her household (vv. 11–13, 15, 17, 19, 21–22, 25, 27), to which she contributes by her participation in outside economic concerns (vv. 14, 16, 18, 24). At the same time she makes her home the center of

What do you think it means for a woman to dress modestly?

Read Matthew 22:39.

How might this Scripture apply to dressing modestly?

Read Romans 14:13.

Now, guys, before you think that your lustful thoughts can be totally blamed on girls, stop for a moment and think. You still have a responsibility to choose not to look or to dwell on a girl's immodest clothing. It's a both/and kind of situation. Girls, need to love their brothers and honor God by dressing modestly. Guys, you need to love your sisters and honor God by choosing to look away and avoid lustful thoughts.

When a girl dresses modestly it is an act of worship to the God who loves her. Don't encourage her to dress immodestly. When a girl chooses to dress modestly, she is allowing a guy to like her for who she is (her heart and personality) rather than for how she looks. Seek after godly girls who dress modestly. This will allow you to appreciate her for her true beauty, which is a heart that loves the Lord.

Write down why you think it is important for girls to dress modestly.

If a girl dresses immodestly, ask yourself what type of guy is she is trying to attract. One that cares about her or her external appearance? It is true that much of today's fashion is immodest. Girls who like fashionable clothing will likely face a hard decision when considering what kinds of clothes to buy. Please know that it is still possible to dress fashionably and modestly. It will take a little more work, but it is definitely worth it! Even though this may seem like only a girl issue. Many girls are tempted visually as well. Like girls, guys also have responsibility to dress and carry themselves modestly!

TRUE BEAUTY

How does our culture define beauty?

Read 1 Peter 3:3-4 and Proverbs 31:10-31.

What do these passages teach us about beauty?

Discuss

How does every new trend make it more difficult to dress modestly?

Definition

A stumbling block is something a person trips over, and an obstacle is anything that leads another person to sin.

Point to Make

A woman's beauty should not come from fancy hair, jewelry, and clothes, but rather from a beautiful heart. Peter is not saying that women shouldn't wear nice clothes and jewelry, but rather that those things are not the source of genuine beauty.

ministry by giving generously to the poor (v. 20) and by instructing her children and household workers in true kindness (v. 26; neighbors may be included in this audience). So her husband and children enjoy their lot and honor her for her industry (vv. 11–12, 23, 28–29). This lofty portrait of excellence sets such a high standard that it can be depressing to godly women today until its purpose is understood. First, the woman embodies in all areas of life the full character of wisdom commended throughout this book. This shows that even though the concrete situations up to now have generally envisioned a cast of males, the teaching of the entire book is intended for all of God's people. Second, as with other character types, this profile is an ideal: a particular example of full-scale virtue and wisdom toward which the faithful are willing to be molded. It is not expected that any one woman

In a world that worships external beauty, it's hard for girls to keep up. Girls often feel like they have to buy the newest fashions and have the best body and hair to be beautiful. God's Word gives a far different and better definition of beauty. It's what is on the inside that has great worth! If you disagree, ask your grandmother and grandfather how they define beauty. It's likely that their external appearances have changed a bit over the years!

What word does 1 Peter 3:3-4 use to describe beauty that is found in a gentle and quiet spirit?

Guys, when you tell a friend about a girl you are attracted to, what do you focus on? Circle one.

External Beauty

Internal Beauty

You might have always determined a girl's beauty by her outer appearance. While it is okay to be attracted by a girl's appearance, make sure you take time to get to know her heart as well.

Inner beauty is much more important than outer beauty. Have you ever noticed how a really attractive girl doesn't seem so attractive if she is mean and rude? Guys, let this challenge you to keep your tongue in check when speaking about girls. Let it also challenge you to look deeper than what is on the surface. Remember the definition of true beauty. It's hard when the world is screaming a different message, but just tune your ears to God's voice, and you will be on the right path.

BOUNCE YOUR EYES

So what are you to do when you see a girl dressed immodestly? Circle your answer.

- A) Stare.
- B) Share it on social media (#womancrushwednesday)
- C) Turn your eyes away from her.
- D) Fantasize about her.
- E) Store the picture in your mind.

If you are honest, you are likely tempted to do all of the above. God cares about what you put before your eyes. It's true that immodest girls are everywhere, but it's up to you to choose to turn away when you see them.

Read Psalm 101:2-4.

David, the psalmist, wanted to guard his eyes from anything that was not worthy of his walk with God. God desires for a man to delight in one woman's body, and that is his wife's. Guard your eyes. Save the stares for your future wife. You not only honor her when you do this, but you also honor God.

How exactly can you bounce your eyes when you see a provocative image?

Point to Make

Unfading and imperishable beauty is beauty that doesn't change over time. External beauty will eventually fade, but true inner beauty grows over time.

Point to Make

It certainly is a Christian girl's responsibility to dress modestly to help protect guys, but that doesn't mean you don't have a responsibility too!

Point to Make

Simply put, when your eyes are drawn to a sexy image, you must immediately turn them away. For example, if you see a racy image on television, turn away or leave the room. If there is a suggestive image in a movie, focus your eyes downward until the scene is over. If you see someone in public who is dressed immodestly, look in the opposite direction.

will look exactly like this in every respect.

It is inevitable that you will see these images, but it is up to you whether you will dwell on those images or bounce your eyes to something else. It has been said that if you choose to bounce your eyes immediately, your mind does not have time to entertain those images.

When you choose to look away, how are you promoting modesty?

Read Proverbs 7:6–27.

What was the cause of this young man's downfall?

Describe modern examples of how Satan baits people into a circumstance like the young man in the passage.

Don't be fooled into believing that images and stories don't create an impression in your mind. They can lead you down a road of future disappointment when you find that no woman can measure up to your expectations. You must be careful of the images, stories and songs that you fill your mind about relationships. It becomes hard to distinguish between fantasy and reality.

Not every girl is a Christian. Therefore, they will not practice modesty. By choosing to bounce your eyes, you are choosing to keep your mind and thoughts pure, and you are therefore honoring God with your thoughts.

Interact

Have your students practice the look away. Challenge the students to only look at the opposite sex above the shoulders.

Point to Make

Notice verses 8–9. The young man was putting himself in a tempting situation by going near this woman's house. He went at night, when his judgment was not as sharp. Pay close attention to the principle of being slowly seduced into believing lies in verses 21–23. You have got to make wise decisions in order to pursue purity in your life.

NOW WHAT?

Look back over the lesson today. What did God teach you?

How has God shown you to better guard your heart from this lesson?

Why is it crucial for the man to lead in a relationship?

Who can hold you accountable about looking away?

In your own words, describe the Bible's definition of beauty.

How can you promote modesty?

GOING DEEPER

Describe a marriage that you admire?

How does the husband lead and serve his bride?

How does their marriage impact your view of a great marriage?

What would cause our culture to shift perspectives about beauty and modesty?

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Psalm 101:3

REAP

DAY

1

GENESIS 2:18-24

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What does this passage reveal about God's plan for leadership within a relationship?

How can you live out God's plan for leadership in your life?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

MATTHEW 22:39

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage, why is modesty important?

What would it require of you to focus on dressing modestly?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

PROVERBS 4:23

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How can one keep their "heart pure?"

Why is it important to keep your heart pure for your future?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

1 PETER 3:3-4

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage, where is true beauty found?

How can you focus more on "inner beauty" than "outer beauty?"

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

PSALM 101:2-4

5

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage what are you to do when you are tempted to stare/lust over a guy/girl?

What kind of heart/life should we be striving to have/live?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

ROMANS 14:13-19

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What are areas in life do you strive to make sure you are not a stumbling block for someone?

How is dressing modestly an act of worship?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

7

PROVERBS 31:10-31

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How is a woman who portrays these traits beautiful?

How does having a heart that fears the Lord as your first priority impact your relationships?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

A Pure Mind

PSALM 139:1-12, 23-24

WEEK

7

Living a life of purity means you seek to honor God and choose to be set apart for His purposes in every aspect of your life, from your prayer life to your school life, in both daytime and nighttime, in a crowd and alone, on the inside and out. You have already learned how to honor God emotionally and physically, and this week we are going to talk about honoring Him in your mind.

*What is the purpose of asking God to search us if he already knows our thoughts and actions?
What anxious thoughts do you desire to be free of?*

God knows your thoughts. He knows what you are thinking, whether you speak it out loud or remain silent. He knows the desires of your heart, both good and bad. The secrets you keep are laid bare before Him, whether you purposely show Him or try to conceal them.

You could choose to be afraid or intimidated by God's ability to know your deepest thoughts and desires. If you do, you will miss out on the freedom you could experience in this knowledge. Instead of coming to God like a whimpering child expecting to be punished for doing something wrong, come before Him knowing that His light exposes sin so that He can help you get rid of it. Instead of being afraid to pray because you don't know what to say about your situation or your sin, dive right into prayer, knowing that God knows your circumstances and is right there in the middle of it with you, waiting to help and forgive.

There is no pretending with God—no masks to wear, fake attitudes to assume, or popularity contests to win. Let that be a freeing thought to you today.

Consider spending time talking to God this week about the things He already knows are happening in your mind. Have an open conversation with Him about your desires, fears, and sins. Discuss the good and the bad. He already knows both sides. Experience the freedom it brings to talk to the One who knows you better than you know yourself.

God desires purity, not only in our physical lives, but also in our minds.

5-Minute Commentary

Psalm 139. In this hymn the closing request echoes the opening statement. The key word of the psalm is "know": God knows (vv. 1, 2, 4, 6, 23), and the faithful soul knows (v. 14). These features highlight the Psalm's theme: God's intimate knowledge of his people (a theme that vv. 1–6 begins). God knows all of my activities, all of my words, even my inmost thoughts. The response (v. 6) is, such knowledge is beyond my ability to comprehend. Then vv. 7–12 declare that there is no place one can go to get away from that knowledge, and vv. there is nowhere in the universe that God will not be present to lead and hold the believer (vv. 7–10). Some have supposed that the impulse to flee (v. 7) comes from a guilty conscience, or from a desire for independence, but this is unlikely: these

PURPOSE OF THE MIND

Read the following verses. In the space to the right, write down what you learn from the verse about the mind (characteristics, functions, importance, etc.).

- 1) Jeremiah 17:10 –
- 2) Matthew 22:37 –
- 3) Romans 8:6–7 –
- 4) Romans 12:2 –
- 5) 1 Corinthians 2:16 –

WHO CONTROLS YOUR MIND?

Read Ephesians 2:1-3.

According to this Scripture, who ruled our minds when we were lost?

Real-Life Story

"I became a Christian when I was sixteen years old. I can look back and see the difference in my life from before I met Christ and after I met Christ. Before, I was ruled by my sinful nature. The way I thought and acted did not honor God. For example, I did not see anything wrong with gossiping about people. I thought it was okay to have sex with my boyfriend if I loved him. I also believed that it was okay to cheat on tests and to lie to people. I certainly didn't see anything wrong with thoughts that didn't honor God. I was ruled by my sinful nature. After I became a Christian, I noticed a difference in my life. I wanted to honor God with my life and my thoughts. I started to think differently. Not only did I not want to sin, I didn't even want to think sinful thoughts. It's still an everyday battle with the sinful nature, but now I have the power through God's Holy Spirit to live differently. I was given a new nature as a Christian, and God totally changed my life."

Can you relate to the story above? Can you recall how God changed your heart and mind to want to honor Him rather than to live according to your sinful nature? Explain.

Read Ephesians 2:4–7.

To have a pure mind before God, you must first realize that God has given you a new nature. You no longer have to dwell on impure things and act according to your sinful nature. Choose today to dwell only on things that are pure.

GUARDING YOUR MIND

God desires purity in our innermost lives, even our thoughts. This is really hard in our culture today. We are bombarded with impure images and influences.

Point to Make

We are all born with a sin nature. Before we choose to follow Jesus, that sin nature rules our lives and our thoughts. We cannot help but sin because we are living according to our sinful nature. However, when we trust Jesus as Savior, we are given a new nature. We no longer have to sin; by God's power, we can resist temptation and live pure lives.

Discuss

It may be difficult for students to remember what they thought about before they chose to follow Christ. Help them to see they were not good and became better. They were dead and now alive. Encourage them to see the difference between doing good to stay out of trouble and doing the right thing out of worship for a God who loves them.

verses take delight in the fact that God will "lead" him, an entirely positive benefit, and "hold" him. There is no place where he is beyond God's care. 13–16 illustrate the point by describing life in a very dark place (the mother's womb). Verses 17–18 exclaim how delightful this "knowledge of God's knowledge" is; vv. 19–22 affirm the singer's loyalty to the Lord; and vv. 23–24 invite God to continue examining the singer's inner life, in order to purge it from all that hinders him from walking in "the way everlasting."

Eph. 2:1–3 "God helps those who help themselves" is not from the Bible but from the ancient Greeks. As Paul emphasizes in this section, the truth is the exact opposite: God helps the helpless!

Read Matthew 15:18–20.

According to verse 18, what is the source of the things that come out of the mouth?

Ultimately, Jesus is saying that we need to be careful about what we think because it will eventually come out in our actions.

A huge negative influence on people today is pornography. It is easy to access and addictive once you start to look at it. This is a very dangerous road you do not want to go down. The world wants you to think that there is nothing wrong with looking at pornography. The truth is that it can and will destroy you if you allow it to take hold in your life and eventually it will play out in your actions. You will likely choose to be sexually active before marriage if you continually look at pornography. You will find yourself often lusting after people because of what you have allowed your eyes to see. The guilt and shame not only hurts your closeness to God, but it also affects your daily decisions and can affect your future marriage.

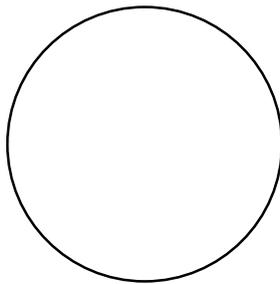
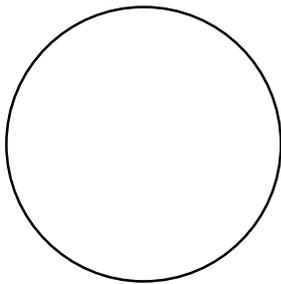
Resist this Temptation

- 1) **Walk closely with God.** Commit to read His Word and pray daily. When you are tempted to look at pornography, pick up your Bible instead, and read it until the temptation leaves you.
- 2) **Set up accountability in your life.** If you do not have software to either block or report pornography, ask your parents to install this on your devices. It may be embarrassing to ask your parents to do this, but it is worth it to protect you. Also, have a parent, a Bible-study leader, or a strong Christian friend to ask you weekly if you have looked at pornography.
- 3) **Use electronic devices only in the family room.** Being alone with a device is only asking for trouble.

AN INNER LOOK

The amount of time you spend with a person or in an activity can determine how much influence you allow them to have in your life. It can also help you identify a habit, addiction, or relationship that you need to reevaluate or get rid of in order to allow more time for Christ’s influence in your life.

The circles below represent a normal week (not counting sleep). Divide the first circle into pie pieces based on the activities you spend your time. Divide the second circle based on who you spend your time and how much time you spend with each person. Label each piece of the pie.



Discuss

Have you ever heard the phrase “Garbage in, garbage out”? It means that if you choose to let impure things into your life, you will eventually make impure choices.

Reference

Heart in Matt. 15:18 has a special emphasis on thoughts.

Point to Make

Pornography is a temptation for guys and girls. As a Christian, you are no longer controlled by the sinful nature. God will give you the strength to resist temptation.

Activity

Bigger the slice, the more time you spend in that activity. Have students be specific with activities such as homework, video games, quiet time, texting, social media, online, extracurricular activities, etc. Encourage them to use specific names of friends and family.

Even more, he helps his enemies who have transgressed his holy law.

Eph. 2:4–10 In contrast to the hopeless state of the nonbeliever, Christians exult in hope because of God’s incredible grace and free salvation. Paul accents this grace in contrast to the pre-Christ hopelessness analyzed in vv. 1–3. Eph. 2:4 But God. No hopeless fate looks any grimmer than that which awaits the forlorn company of mankind marching behind the “prince of the power of the air” (v. 2) to their destruction under divine wrath. Just when things look the most desolate, Paul utters the greatest short phrase in the history of human speech: “But God!” rich in mercy. God’s mercy on his helpless enemies flows from his own loving heart, not from anything they have done to deserve it.

You should notice what and who influences you the most. Are these things healthy or unhealthy, positive or negative? Do they help you grow spiritually or stand in the way?

Read the following definitions. In the column to the far right, note any areas of your life that may be addicting or habitual. Be honest and take a hard look at yourself.

DEFINITIONS	EXAMPLES	IN MY LIFE
Habit—"involuntary pattern of behavior acquired by frequent repetition." In other words, this is something you've repeated enough that it's become natural for you to do. You don't have to think about doing it; you just do it. Keep in mind, there can be positive and negative habits.	Nail-biting Cussing Quiet time	
Addiction—"a habit so strong that it is <i>not easily given up</i> ; compulsive need for and use of a habit-forming substance; persistent, compulsive use of a substance known to be <i>harmful</i> ." Look at the italicized key words and phrases in this definition. Things that may start off as innocent and not harmful can turn into harmful addictions when they take control of us. Are there things you do that you just can't live without doing? Are there things you can't give up? Are there things you do in excess that you can't seem to limit?	Alcohol Pornography Texting Food	

Hopefully, you have a new awareness of yourself and your activities and relationships. Recognizing harmful habits and addictions is an important step in moving forward in your life of purity.

RENEWING YOUR MIND

Read Romans 12:2.

TRANSFORM - TO CHANGE OR ALTER COMPLETELY IN NATURE, FORM, OR FUNCTION.

RENEW - TO RESTORE FRESHNESS OR PERFECTION.

According to this verse, how can you move forward in the Spirit and away from the flesh?

Example

If a band said, "Our music is mainly influenced by the Beatles," do you think they heard only one song from the Beatles and never listened to them again? Or did they hear a whole album and play the songs over and over? In order for the Beatles to have a major influence on another band's music, that band had to spend a lot of time listening to the Beatles.

Point to Make

Evaluating the way you spend your time can tell you a lot about whether an activity or relationship you're in is a habit or an addiction.

Point to Make

Christians are transformed by the renewing of the mind through Christ. If something is changed completely, then nothing of the old can remain.

Eph. 2:5 when we were dead. Paul resumes his original thought, which began with "you were dead" in v. 1. made us alive. That is, God gave us regeneration (new spiritual life within). This and the two verbs in v. 6 ("raised up" and "seated with") make up the main verbs of the long sentence in vv. 1-10. Since Christians were dead, they first had to be made alive before they could believe (and God did that together with Christ). This is why salvation is by grace alone.

Eph. 2:6-7 Raised us up with him means that, because of Christ's resurrection, those who believe in him are given new life spiritually in this age (regeneration). They will also be given renewed physical bodies when Christ returns (future resurrection). seated us with him in the heavenly places. God

Is it really possible to take a mind that is trashed with the horrible influences of the world (filthy language, sexual images, etc.) and renew it to perfection? How can that be?

Scripture does not say that you are automatically transformed and renewed. Instead, it begins with a command: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world."

Take a moment and draw a stop sign next to that sentence (feel free to draw one in your Bible as well). God is saying, you've walked according to the way of the world, according to the influences and patterns it sets for you, now stop! Transformation and renewal can't happen if you continue in the old ways and patterns. You have to decide to stop doing the old before the new can develop.

IF YOU WANT TO STAY CLEAN, STOP PLAYING IN THE MUD.

Read Colossians 3:1–2 and Philippians 4:8.

What instructions do these Scriptures give that will help you in your pursuit of a pure mind?

If you are faithful to do what is suggested in these Scriptures, you can have a pure mind and pure life. There is no better way to live!

Point to Make

Reading God's Word is a great way to renew your mind. When you choose to fill your mind with God's truth, a life of purity will follow.

has allowed his people even now to share in a measure of the authority that Christ has, seated at the right hand of God (cf. 1:20–22; 6:10–18; James 4:7; 1 John 4:4). Verse 7 of ch. 2 answers the question of why God lavished such love upon his people: so that they will marvel for all of eternity over the incredible kindness and love of God. It will take all of eternity to fathom God's love, and those who are saved will never plumb the depths of it.

Rom. 12:2 The present evil age still threatens those who belong to Christ, so they must resist its pressure. Their lives are changed as their minds are made new (contrast 1:28), so that they are able to "discern" God's will. By testing you may discern translates Greek dokimazō, which often has the

NOW WHAT?

How does the new nature you are given in Christ help you to live a pure life and think pure thoughts?

List some things that are negative influences for your mind and thoughts. Be specific.

Describe how you can remove these negative influences from your life and replace them with positive influences.

PRAYER:

Pray this prayer from your heart or make up your own: "Lord, I am surrounded by influences, both good and bad. The world is not going to censor itself for me. It is up to me to be aware of what I'm doing, whom I'm hanging around with, and how I am spending my time. Jesus, keep me aware of those influences that dishonor You, and help me to purposefully guard my heart from them. Help me to walk away from anything that could hinder my Christian walk so that I can live a life of purity."

GOING DEEPER

How does it make you feel to know that God knows your thoughts?

Read Philippians 4:8.

Describe how you can use this verse as a filter for movies, music, conversations, books, attitudes and thoughts.

How will your choices of what you allow yourself to hear impact your relationships?

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Philippians 4:8

sense of finding out the worth of something by putting it to use or testing it in actual practice.

Col. 3:1–2 raised with Christ. See 2:13–14. Set your minds on things that are above contrasts with the things that are on earth and refers to pursuing a deeper knowledge of Christ himself (Phil. 3:10) and all that belongs to living with and for him. This would include seeking first his kingdom (Matt. 6:33) and living a life worthy of his name (Col. 1:10; 2:6). Christ is presently seated at the right hand of God (Ps. 110:1; Eph. 1:20) in a position of authority where he can make intercession with the Father. The false teacher may have claimed to have heavenly secrets, but Paul dismisses his theology as earthly.

REAP

DAY

1

PROVERBS 16:1-9

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage, what is "an abomination to the Lord?"

How can you surrender your heart to the Lord the way it is described in this passage?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

LUKE 8:4-8

2

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Which ground did the seed take root and grow? Why?

How does this parable relate to having a pure heart?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

PSALM 139

3

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Who is speaking in this passage and why is that important?

According to this passage, why is it important to God that we have a pure heart?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

4

ROMANS 12:2

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to these passages, why is it important that we be "transformed?"

How can you transform and renew your mind daily?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

MATTHEW 15:18-20

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage, what "defiles" a person?

At the root, where do the things that come out of your mouth stem from?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

EPHESIANS 2:1-7

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Through what are we saved?

How have you noticed a change in your old life to your new life with Christ?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

COLOSSIANS 3:1-2

7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What should we now seek since we have been raised with Christ?

How have you focused on things above this week?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

Distortions From God's Design

ROMANS 1:18-25

WEEK

8

Leader Note

Parents will be equipped the week of this lesson to lead a discussion with their student(s) about homosexuality, same-sex attraction and the Church. Parents will be encouraged to watch Pastor Alex's message from October 26, 2014 addressing this topic and follow up with a family Bible study that will be provided for them. If this topic is brought up, encourage students to look forward to the discussion that they will have with their families about this topic.

We have learned this semester that sex within marriage is a beautiful and holy thing. Satan is always twisting and distorting the truths of God. In many different ways, our culture has exchanged the truth of God for a lie, but especially in the area of sexuality. Satan has perverted what was meant to be a holy union between a man and woman. As a result, many people face serious consequences from doing things their own way. Here are some examples:

- The divorce rate is over 50 percent.
- There is an increase in sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.
- People dress in ways that portray themselves as sexual objects.
- Many people are forced into the sex trade and slavery.
- Pornography is everywhere.
- Self-esteem is low.
- Suicide, cutting and depression are at all-time highs.

These are just a few examples why God's laws are right and good. Take notice that when humanity allows Satan and the evil desires of the human heart to twist and distort God's plans, nothing good comes from it. It's not that God gives us laws and rules to keep us from having any fun. His ways are perfect and protect us from unnecessary harm. God is so good that even when we break His laws, His grace and mercy are sufficient to heal and restore us.

***Give an example of how Satan distorts God's truth?
How many people do you know that cohabitate?***

If you struggle with or have been affected by any of the issues we discuss this week, know that you are just as loved by God as those who haven't struggled with these issues. We are all striving to live in a way that honors God. This study is not meant to condemn or judge.

While this study won't cover everything, our prayer is that you will be challenged to choose to live according to God's desire and to reject anything else. May we all find the grace of God to live the life He desires us to live.

5-Minute Commentary

Rom. 1:18 The wrath of God refers to his personal anger against sin. God's anger is not selfish or arbitrary but represents his holy and loving response to human wickedness. Some have understood God's wrath in impersonal cause-effect terms, but that would be a deistic worldview rather than a biblical one. Rom. 1:19–20 God's wrath is expressed for good reason since his power and divine nature are clearly revealed through the world he has made, and yet he is rejected by all people.

Rom. 1:21 The root sin is the failure to value God above all things, so that he is not honored and praised as he should be. Human beings are foolish, not in the sense that they are intellectually de-

ADULTERY

Read Genesis 2:23–24 and Mark 10:1–12.

According to verses 6–9, what was God’s original plan for men and women in marriage?

Read Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5:18.

ADULTERY – WHEN A MARRIED PERSON HAS SEXUAL INTIMACY WITH SOMEONE OTHER THAN HIS OR HER SPOUSE.

If you are not married would it be considered adultery on your part if you had sex with someone? Explain.

Read Matthew 5:27–33.

How did Jesus define adultery here?

What does the culture say about looking at someone lustfully (the whole “you can look but don’t touch” idea)? Does it see it as something wrong or sinful? Explain.

Based on what you read in Matthew 5:27–33, what would Jesus say about this? Would He say that looking at someone in this way is (circle the answer):

Sexual distortion

God’s norm

Jesus was and is concerned with the heart. What you take in through your eyes, ears, and thoughts is going to eventually come out. If you choose to look at someone lustfully, you are one step closer to committing a sexual sin physically. Jesus’ solution was to deal with the problem of lust and adultery in the heart before it became the actual act.

Jesus’ solution wasn’t for us to literally cut off our limbs or gouge out our eyes. He was using hyperbole, an exaggeration, to make a point. He was saying that we should do everything possible to keep our hearts pure so that the temptation to act outside of God’s plan will not result in our distorting His intent for marriage.

Read Job 31:1.

May we always strive to follow God’s norm and not allow our culture to lead us toward a distortion of human sexuality.

Point to Make

The idea of becoming “one flesh” is a way of saying “being married.” Notice the design from the beginning: it involved one woman and one man. Jesus reinforces the blueprint for marriage in Mark 10. Adultery is mentioned here because it is an act outside of the original design. It is a distortion of God’s original plan.

Point to Make

Although premarital sex is not considered adultery, it still falls under the category of sexual immorality. When speaking about this topic in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave a new definition of adultery.

Discuss

What did Jesus say to do if your eye or hand caused you to sin? To what extent are you willing to go in order to keep your heart pure?

ficient but in their rejection of God’s lordship over their lives. They knew God not in a saving sense, but they knew of his existence and his attributes.

Rom. 1:22-23 Even brilliant people who do not honor God miss the whole purpose of life and are therefore fools. Idolatry is the fundamental sin. Modern “idols” don’t look like ancient ones; images served today are often mental rather than metal. But people still devote their lives to, and trust in, many things other than God.

Rom. 1:24 Three times Paul says God gave them up (vv. 24, 26, 28). In every instance the giving up

UNWANTED SEXUAL CONTACT

This portion of the lesson deals with one of the most twisted and evil forms of sexual immorality.

Read Deuteronomy 22:25–27.

Summarize what this Scripture teaches.

Moses, the author of Deuteronomy, stated God's laws for the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy 22. In this particular law in verses 25–27, we see God's heart for issues like rape. When sexual contact is forced upon anyone (virgin or not), it is unacceptable to God. It is sinful on the part of the perpetrator.

Forced sexual contact can happen in many different ways. It can be a male forcing himself sexually upon a female or vice versa. Statistics say that three out of every five people have been a victim of unwanted sexual contact. If you have not been exposed to this, it is likely that you know someone who has.

If you have been wounded in this way, it is important that you work through the emotional pain caused by this sexual encounter. By revealing the truth of what happened, you are on your way to working through this difficulty.

In the meantime, there are a few things you should know:

- 1) It is not your fault. Just as Deuteronomy says, the one who is sexually assaulted did nothing wrong.
- 2) Satan wants you to keep this a secret. However, when you do that, you do not have the opportunity to heal emotionally. Don't listen to his lies.
- 3) God is able to heal you emotionally, physically, and mentally.

Take a few moments and pray on the prayer focuses listed below:

- 1) Pray for those who have been wounded by unwanted sexual contact.
- 2) Pray for the perpetrators who have wounded someone through unwanted sexual contact. Ask God to save them and to transform their lives.
- 3) Thank God for His perfect grace and mercy that restores.

COHABITATION

COHABITATION – AN UNMARRIED COUPLE CHOOSES TO LIVE TOGETHER IN THE SAME HOME.

What does our culture say about cohabitation? Is there anything wrong with it? Why or why not?

While it is true that Scripture does not speak directly to cohabitation, it does provide Biblical principles that apply to this topic. First, it should be noted that if a couple has chosen to live together before they are married, they are very likely participating in sexual immorality.

to sin is a result of idolatry, the refusal to make God the center and circumference of all existence, so that in practice the creature is exalted over the Creator. Hence, all individual sins are a consequence of the failure to prize and praise God as the giver of every good thing.

Rom. 1:25 Paul implies that all other religions are based on false ideas about the one true God; they are not just "different paths to one God," as some claim.

Gen. 2:23–24 The text highlights the sense of oneness that exists between the man and the woman. This sentence and the story of Eve's creation both make the point that marriage creates the closest

Interact

This portion of the lesson may be especially difficult to discuss. Take extra care to be sensitive to those in your group who may have loved ones who experienced such circumstances.

Reference

Deut. 22 goes on to talk about a virgin. God's heart is the same. The purpose for the money and marrying the girls appears to be the bride-price (see Ex. 22:16). The law seeks to protect the woman, who is less likely to be married because she has been violated.

Point to Make

If you have ever been wounded by a forced sexual encounter, it is important that you talk to someone about this. Tell your parents, a Bible-study leader, or another trusted adult.

Read each Scripture below and summarize it in the space provided.

A) 1 Corinthians 6:18 –

B) 1 Thessalonians 4:3 –

Scripture clearly teaches that sexual immorality is a sin. What if, you may ask, the couple is not involved sexually? What is wrong with living together then? Though that scenario is highly unlikely, the Bible gives principles that apply. Read the following Scriptures. After reading each one, explain why you think that living together would not be right according to that verse.

A) 1 Thessalonians 5:22 –

B) Ephesians 5:3 –

Even if a couple wanted to live together prior to marriage and set a goal to be sexually abstinent until their wedding day, cohabitation is not a wise decision. We are told to flee sexual immorality, which means to run away from it as fast as possible. If a couple chooses to live together prior to marriage, they are placing themselves in an extremely tempting situation and thus are not fleeing sexual immorality.

Our world is becoming more and more accepting of cohabitation. It is important to note that unbelievers cannot be expected to live up to God's standard. We should be careful not to expect Christian behavior from non-Christians. As Christians, we are called to reflect Christ in our conduct. One way we do this is by living according to God's standards of sexual purity.

It should also be noted that couples who live together before marriage are 46% more likely to divorce than couples who choose to wait to live together until after marriage. God knows what He is talking about! Doing life God's way is always best.

OUR RESPONSE

So many people are hurting and confused and facing the natural consequences that come from not doing things God's way.

How do you think we ought to treat people who participate in sexual distortions?

Read 1 John 4:7–12.

It is often said, "Hate the sin, love the sinner." How exactly does that work?

Point to Make

Though we will often find ourselves going against the grain when we walk in sexual purity, blessing and reward are found there.

Point to Make

As Christians, we are called to love people. We hate sin by refusing to take part in it and by condemning it when we see it. We hate the sin by refusing to condone, ignore, or excuse it.

of all human relationships. It is also important to observe that God creates only one Eve for Adam, not several Eves or another Adam. This points to heterosexual monogamy as the divine pattern for marriage that God established at creation. Moreover, the kinship between husband and wife creates obligations that override even duty to one's parents (therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, 2:24). They "left" their parents in the sense of putting their wife's welfare before that of their parents. As a result of this special affiliation, Gen. 2:24 observes that when a man leaves his parents and takes a wife, they shall become one flesh, i.e., one unit (a union of man and woman, consummated in sexual intercourse). Jesus appeals to this verse and 1:27 in setting out his view of marriage (Matt. 19:4–5).

How do we love the sinners who are living in sin?

We cannot expect non-Christians who are struggling with sexual immorality to walk in purity. They are still controlled by the sinful nature. They need Jesus. We are called to love these people and trust God for a change in their lives. Will you be the one to bring them the good news of Jesus?

If someone is a Christian but still struggles with sexual immorality, a close Christian friend needs to lovingly and gently correct this person. Biblical accountability is a good thing. Again there is no room for mean talk or gossip. Such unkind behavior from a fellow believer will only drive the person further away from Christ.

The fact is, we have all struggled with temptations to live contrary to God's norm and according to the cultural distortions around us. When we give in to those temptations, it not only affects us, but also others. May we commit ourselves to living differently, in a way that shows we love both God and others.

Point to Make

We love them by speaking the truth in love, by being faithful to witness to them. They need to hear about the forgiveness that is available through Jesus Christ. A true act of love is treating people with respect and kindness even when we do not approve of their lifestyle or choices.

Mark 10:5–6 Jesus emphasizes that marriage, as a permanent relationship between a man and a woman, goes back to God's purpose at the beginning of creation (Gen. 1:27; 2:24; Ex. 20:14). Moses' regulations on divorce (Deut. 24:1–3) were not part of God's original ("beginning") plan but were instituted because of your hardness of heart.

Matt. 5:27 Adultery was considered an extremely serious offense (cf. Ex. 20:14) because, in addition to violating another person, it broke the marriage covenant (Mal. 2:14) that was a reflection of the relationship between God and his people.

NOW WHAT?

How do you think we ought to treat people who participate in sexual distortions?

Describe the care that you could give to someone who you know has committed adultery?

How can you pray for those that have unfortunately been a victim of unwanted sexual contact?

What advice would you give to someone who is considering moving in with someone of the opposite sex?

GOING DEEPER

Consider Job 31:1 about making a covenant with your eyes as a way to guard yourself against sexual impurity. Spend some time in prayer, and then write down how God is leading you to protect yourself against adultery in the areas listed below.

Eyes (what you look at, watch, view, and how you look at others):

Ears (what you hear, listen to, consider):

Tongue (what you say, speak about):

Hands (what you touch, hold, how you touch):

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Romans 1:25

Matt. 5:28 with lustful intent (lit., “for the purpose of lusting for her”). Lust begins in the heart, the center of a person’s identity and will. It is not enough to maintain physical purity alone; one must also guard against engaging mentally in an act of unfaithfulness. Jesus is not adding to OT law but correctly interpreting it, for even in the Ten Commandments God had required purity of heart.

1 Thess. 4:3–8 Paul commands the Thessalonians to live in sexual holiness. Some converts may have found it a struggle to adjust to Christianity’s demanding ethical code.

1 Thess. 5:22 Paul now moves on to stress the importance of rejecting every form of evil.

REAP

DAY

1

MATTHEW 5:27-33

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What did Jesus say to do if your eye or hand caused you to sin?

How far are you willing to go to make sure your heart remains pure so that you aren't presented with the temptation to act outside of God's will regarding sex?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

ROMANS 5:8-9

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

To what does this passage compare Satan?

How can you resist his temptations?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

MARK 10:1-12

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage, what is Jesus' definition of adultery?

How does Jesus' definition of adultery change your view on God-honoring actions?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

4

DEUTERONOMY 22:25-27

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage, who is in the wrong?

What does this passage reveal about God's heart toward rape?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-8

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

According to this passage, what is the will of God for you?

How are you to live your life according to this passage?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

1 JOHN 4:7-12

6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

How does this passage relate to what we are studying?

What are we, as Christians, called to do according to this passage?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

ROMANS 1:18-25

7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Why are we without excuse when it comes to knowing God and his standards?

When have you exchanged God's truth for a lie?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

Your Future

WEEK

9

1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-2, 7-9, 32-35

When most people think about their future, they think about the person they will marry. Did you know that you have the option to not marry? The Bible even speaks of this.

Read 1 Corinthians 7:1, 7-8, 32-35.

A single person has a much simpler life than a married person. A married person must look after his or her household, while a single person can wholeheartedly focus on the Lord. This does not mean that it is a sin to get married. God is the Creator and Blessor of marriage, but a life of singleness can also be a gift from the Lord. It really is okay to not get married. This is called celibacy. Choosing to stay single so that you can wholeheartedly devote yourself to the Lord.

God gives you the freedom to choose a single life or a married life. Instead of automatically assuming you will marry, seek the Lord. He may lead you to choose singleness for His glory. While it is true that most people choose marriage, we should at least consider a single life as well.

Read 1 Corinthians 7:1-2, 9.

We must remember that God created marriage in Genesis. Marriage is good. A major reason for marriage is to multiply. This is a good desire but it should happen within the covenant of marriage. If this desire that God put within burns deeply, Paul says to marry so that you may remain pure.

***Why do you think a single life can be a blessing?
Describe your fears about getting married?***

Today, we will look ahead to your future. Does your future include marriage, or will you choose to be single so you can focus solely on the Lord? Even if you remain single only through college and young adulthood, it is still a wonderful time to focus solely on the Lord. There is no reason to rush into marriage. Until then, take some time today to pray about the possibility of singleness for your life. You still have a lot of time before making these important decisions, but believe it or not, your life choices today can affect your future.

5-Minute Commentary

1 Cor. 7:1 Some Corinthian Christians appear to have adopted the view that sexual relations of any kind, even within marriage, should be avoided. Paul seeks to carefully refute this view throughout this chapter (see 7:2, 5, 9, 10, 28, 36). 1 Cor. 7:2 Have probably refers to sexual intercourse (cf. 5:1). Each man ... his own wife and each woman her own husband affirms the goodness of monogamous marriage and excludes polygamy, for a "shared" husband would not be "her own" husband.

1 Cor. 7:6-7 Both marriage and celibacy have their own benefits, and both should be considered "gifts." Paul is happy that God has given him the gift of being content with remaining unmarried,

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT?

If you do choose to marry one day, it is important that you seek a godly spouse. The world often teaches very different traits to look for in a spouse from what the Bible teaches.

If you were to take a poll at your school for the qualities to look for in a boyfriend or girlfriend, what do you think the top answers would be?

Read 2 Corinthians 6:14.

As a Christian, what should your be number one quality at the top of your list?

Read Matthew 12:33.

If the fruit from a person's life does not look like the fruit you would find in Jesus, then that is not the kind of person you want to marry. You want to marry a Christian who is truly walking with God. It's easy to find someone who talks the talk, but you want to find someone who walks the walk as well!

2 EXAMPLES

People base their marriage choice on a variety of reasons. Two of which are looks and money. Neither of these things is evil in and of itself, too much of an emphasis on them can prove unhealthy.

Read the following Scriptures and then record why you think money and looks might not be the most important qualities to look for in a future mate.

- 1) Proverbs 31:30 –
- 2) 1 Timothy 6:10 –

What is a healthy expectation for looks?

1) It is important to be attracted to your future spouse, but it is not good to expect him or her to look like magazine models or movie stars. The unrealistic pictures that we see in magazines simply aren't real. They have been cropped, edited, and retouched to present a person without any flaws.

2) Remember that beauty is fleeting. Look at your grandparents. Though they are still beautiful people, they certainly don't look like they did when they were your age!

What is a healthy expectation for money?

- 1) Money can come and go. Don't expect it to always be there.
- 2) Money can't buy happiness.
- 3) Look for is someone who works hard. If they work hard, they will work hard to meet your basic needs.
- 4) To be financially stable is important, but not the most important thing.

Point to Make

The most important quality your future spouse needs to have is simply to be a Christian. Keep in mind that just because someone says he or she is a Christian doesn't always mean it is true. A true Christian will look and act like a Christian growing in their walk with Christ.

Point to Make

Look for someone who is financially wise. Notice if they spend every dollar they earn or are given, especially when they hang out with friends.

since this permits single-minded devotion to the Lord's work (vv. 32–33, 40). Paul recognizes, however, that his situation is not the norm. Remaining unmarried is a gift that many others do not have. See vv. 28, 36; Matt. 19:12.

2 Cor. 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. This command, which is Paul's main point in 6:14–7:1, will be restated in different words at the end of the section (7:1). To be "unequally yoked" is to be "hitched up" or even crossbred with another animal who is not the same (Gk. heterozygeō). It is thus an image for being allied or identified wrongly with unbelievers. In context, it refers especially to those who are still rebelling against Paul within the church, whom Paul now shockingly labels

A GODLY WIFE

This section is important for both guys and girls to study. Guys, it's important for you as you think about a future spouse, and girls, it's important for you as you prepare yourself for marriage one day.

Proverbs 31 is a well-known passage of Scripture about a godly wife. The words of Proverbs 31 came from a king's mom. It can be understood as a mom's advice to her son. God chose to make these words a part of His Word. Listen well to this wise advice about a godly wife.

Read Proverbs 31:10–31.

What stood out to you as you read this passage?

Many women who read this passage feel a little overwhelmed. The wife described in Proverbs 31 is a superwoman. She can do it all! The point of this passage is not meant to discourage women, but rather to show both guys and girls important qualities for a wife to have.

Below are some of the qualities that are mentioned in Proverbs 31. Guys, choose three qualities that are most important to you, and girls, choose three qualities in which you would like to grow.

- Noble (vv. 10, 25) –
- Respected (v. 28) –
- Diligent (v. 13) –
- Early riser (v. 15) –
- Provider (v. 14) –
- Good steward (vv. 15–16) –
- Wise (vv. 16, 26) –
- Strong (v. 25) –
- Persistent (vv. 19, 27) –
- Resourceful (vv. 18, 21–22) –
- Hospitable (v. 20) –
- Confident (v. 18) –
- Happy (v. 25) –
- Faithful (vv. 27, 30) –
- Blessed (vv. 28–31) –

A word to the girls: Even though you are not yet a wife, that doesn't mean you should ignore this list. You've got to develop in each of these areas as you grow up and prepare to be a wife. When a man puts a ring on your finger one day, you won't just magically become a Proverbs 31 woman. It takes training and practice as a single young woman to adequately prepare for marriage.

Read Proverbs 31:30b.

Interact

Have students explain why they chose the qualities they did. Encourage students to write next to each quality why each quality is important.

unbelievers (he clearly thinks it possible that some are [2 Cor. 13:5], though he hopes not), but the principle has wider application to other situations where (as with animals yoked together) one person's conduct and direction of life strongly influences or controls the other's.

Prov. 31:30 The mention of a woman who fears the Lord at the end of this long list of excellent qualities brings back the theme of the book of Proverbs stated in 1:7. It reminds readers that this woman excels in her fear of the Lord, and therefore that she is a model of the character traits and wisdom taught throughout the book's 31 chapters. The appearance of this woman's fear of the Lord at the end of this list is also a reminder that this quality is more important than even great skill and talent,

It is no accident that this phrase sums up the chapter. First and foremost, young men, you want a wife who fears the Lord. Young women, first and foremost, your goal is to fear the Lord. In this passage, fear is not fear like you might think. It does not mean to be afraid of God, but rather to honor and respect God. It's kind of like the honor and respect you have for your parents. You want to obey your parents out of respect and honor for them. Your attitude towards God should be the same: to obey Him out of respect and honor.

A GODLY HUSBAND

The book of Proverbs does not list the desirable qualities for a husband in one specific chapter, as it does for a godly wife. Rather, these qualities are discussed all throughout Proverbs. Since Proverbs was written to young men who would one day be husbands, there are many verses that teach us what a godly husband should look like.

Look up each of the Scriptures below and write the character qualities described in each verse. Some will be qualities that are good, and some will be qualities that are bad.

- Proverbs 12:10 –
- Proverbs 29:24 –
- Proverbs 12:11; 27:23–27 –
- Proverbs 12:17,19 –
- Proverbs 12:15 –
- Proverbs 12:18 –
- Proverbs 14:21; 28:27 –
- Proverbs 15:12 –
- Proverbs 19:1; 20:7 –
- Proverbs 17:17 –
- Proverbs 29:3 –
- Proverbs 19:11 –
- Proverbs 16:18–19 –
- Proverbs 17:1 –
- Proverbs 14:29; 16:32 –
- Proverbs 20:1 –
- Proverbs 29:7 –
- Proverbs 17:9 –
- Proverbs 13:13 –
- Proverbs 27:4 –
- Proverbs 15:15 –

A word to the guys: After looking through this list, you might feel a little overwhelmed. Don't worry, your future wife will not expect perfection out of you (or at least she shouldn't). You will be working to develop in each of these areas for the rest of your life. God, who began a good work in you at salvation, will continue to work in you for the rest of your life (Philippians 1:6). Trust God to work out these qualities in you. If you simply love Him and walk with Him daily, He will cause you to grow in each of these areas.

Interact

Circle the qualities that are good to pursue.

Interact

Now take a look back over the list. Guys, put a star by the qualities that challenge you the most. Girls, put a star by the qualities that are most important for you to have in a husband.

Reference

Ultimately the guy must be willing to lay down his life just like Jesus did for his bride. See Ephesians 5:25-30.

and is foundational to the wise and right use of all activities and skills. A godly woman may well have outward charm and beauty, but these are of secondary importance to her godliness.

1 Tim. 6:9–10 What is condemned here is the desire to be rich, not material things per se when rightly used for the glory of God. The desire to be rich leads one to fall into temptation. This in turn results in the love of money, which Paul identifies as a root of all kinds of evils (v. 10). The connection between false teaching and the desire to be rich has been a problem from the church's very beginning. wandered away from the faith. The warning is not simply that "love of money" is harmful but that this has led some to deny the faith, showing themselves to be unbelievers (cf. 1:19).

YOUR LIST

Read Proverbs 3:5–6.

Now that you have taken a big-picture look at what qualities are important in a future spouse, in the Going Deeper section of this lesson you will make a list of what is most important to you as you await your future husband or wife. There are a few things to remember in making your list.

- First, no human being is perfect. Every person has flaws. If you look for someone who is perfect, you will never find a spouse!
- A spouse will not complete you. Only God, the Author of your life, can make you whole. A spouse will complement you as a person, but not complete you.
- Don't place undue importance on your list. A list is important to help you stay on track with the type of person you want to marry, but God is bigger than your list. The list just helps you to know what qualities to look for in a person, while also helping to steer you away from someone who might not be good for you.
- Your list might change. As you grow older, God may show you new things that are important to seek in a future spouse. Be open to the Holy Spirit.
- Trust God to provide what He knows is best. Again, if you place too much emphasis on your list, you might miss what God is showing you. Seek God first, and He will lead you.

God will make your path straight when you trust in Him. He is a good and loving Father.

Prov. 31:10–31 An Alphabet of Womanly Excellence. This wisdom poem is an acrostic, in which each verse begins with the successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The poem begins and ends with mention of the woman's "excellence" (vv. 10, 29–31). The probable intention of putting this together with the acrostic pattern is to show that this woman's character runs the whole range of excellence. The woman is married (as expected in that culture), and she is devoted to the well-being of her household (vv. 11–13, 15, 17, 19, 21–22, 25, 27), to which she contributes by her participation in outside economic concerns (vv. 14, 16, 18, 24). At the same time she makes her home the center of ministry by giving generously to the poor (v. 20) and by instructing her children and household workers in true kindness (v. 26; neighbors may be included in this audience). So her husband and children

NOW WHAT?

Why would it be a good thing for you to remain single throughout your life?

What qualities do you need to grow and develop into godly qualities for your future spouse?

Why is it important to grow and develop godly characteristics now as a teenager?

What is your biggest fear in trying to find a godly spouse?

How long should you continue to date an individual that doesn't exhibit godly characteristics?

PRAYER:

Thank God that He is in control of your life. He will provide a Godly spouse for you in His timing if He desires for you to marry. Ask God to help you to trust Him in this area of your life.

GOING DEEPER

Now it's time to begin your list of the qualities you would like to have in a future spouse. First, spend some time in prayer. Ask God to show you the qualities you should seek in a future spouse. After spending time in prayer, search out and write down the qualities that are important. Make sure you have a Scripture verse that goes along with each quality. You can use the Scriptures provided this week or other Scriptures that you may find. Ask your parents to help you make your list. Share your list with your DC group next week. Remember, this is a working list. Add to it when you think of new qualities.

How can you utilize this list to keep you focused when you are in a relationship?

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Proverbs 16:9

enjoy their lot and honor her for her industry (vv. 11–12, 23, 28–29). This lofty portrait of excellence sets such a high standard that it can be depressing to godly women today until its purpose is understood. First, the woman embodies in all areas of life the full character of wisdom commended throughout this book. This shows that even though the concrete situations up to now have generally envisioned a cast of males, the teaching of the entire book is intended for all of God's people. Second, as with other character types, this profile is an ideal: a particular example of full-scale virtue and wisdom toward which the faithful are willing to be molded. It is not expected that any one woman will look exactly like this in every respect.

REAP

DAY

1 CORINTHIANS 7:7-9

1

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Does everyone have to get married?

How can you practice self-control to avoid sexual sin without getting married?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

2

JOHN 13:12-17

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What is Jesus' command?

How does Jesus' actions illustrate the way that you should serve your spouse?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

3

MATTHEW 12:33

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe the importance of acting out your faith.

How does this apply when looking for and becoming the right spouse?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

LUKE 12:22-26

4

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What have you been worrying about related to your future?

Describe the influence that worry has on your attitudes and actions.

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

5

PROVERBS 31:10-31

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Explain what you like about the wife of noble character described in this passage.

Describe the influence the wife of noble character would have on her family.

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

6

PROVERBS 1:5 & 3:5-6

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Describe ways that you could gain guidance about your future.

Why does Scripture tell us to not lean on our own understanding?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

REAP

DAY

MATTHEW 6:25-34

7

READ

Spend time reading the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

What should a believer be seeking above all else?

When do you find yourself seeking after things as if God doesn't already know you need them?

ASK

How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

PRAY

Talk with God about the passage and your application. Ask Him to change your heart and life based on the time you've spent in His Word.

LOOKING BACK

You have done a great job this semester as you have studied the Old Testament kings. All throughout Scripture, God's people are instructed to remember the works and words of God. By doing this, we are better able to keep His law. Take some time to reflect on all that you have learned during this study.

How do you feel now that you have completed this study?

What have you learned about your future during this study?

So now you are thinking, okay, now that I've completed this study, I know everything I need to know now, right?

Psalms 119:55 says, "In the night I remember your name, O LORD, and I will keep your law." Discipleship isn't about completing a study. It is about a lifestyle of learning and living as you follow Jesus throughout your lifetime. What you have learned throughout this study will become more important to your Christian life in the months, even years, to come. Think about some of the major concepts that you have learned and lived out.

- Understand we all have a fallen nature.
- Through Christ we are given a new nature and are to set ourselves apart as holy.
- Examined the importance of having a united heart with God.
- Discovered how to examine our heart.
- Discussed pressures of dating within a fallen world.
- Learned the importance of dating and marrying a follower of Jesus.
- Discovered God must be our supreme affection over anyone or anything else.
- Learned that sex is a good thing within the covenant of marriage.
- Discussed the importance of pursuing holiness rather than determining how far can you go without crossing the line sexually.
- Learned strategies to flee sexual temptation.
- Discovered the importance of modesty and defined true beauty.
- Examined the purpose of guarding and renewing your mind.
- Discussed distortions from God's design for dating, sex, and marriage.
- Discovered that it is okay to remain unmarried so you may devote yourself to the Lord.
- Examined the characteristics defined in Scripture of a godly wife.
- Examined the characteristics defined in Scripture of a godly husband.
- Created a list of characteristics according to Scripture for your potential future spouse.

Wow! That's a lot! Now it's time to continue to live out what you have learned in this study.

APPENDIX 1

WHO IS THE LEADER?

Read Genesis 2:7, 18–22 & 3:8-9.

Whom did God create first? After Adam and Eve sinned, God approached them in the garden, whom did God speak to first?

God has clearly given one gender the responsibility to be the leader in the marriage relationship. God chose to create man first and to address him first after the fall illustrates His heart for men to lead.

Read Ephesians 5:23.

How does this verse describe the role of the husband?

You might be thinking, “I’m not even close to being a husband, so how does this apply to me?” While it’s true that you are not yet a husband (or even close), that doesn’t mean you should ignore your future role, especially when the purpose of dating is to find a future spouse. What should you do in the meantime? You can practice being a leader to the girls in your life now. These four truths are only a few of the ways to be a leader as a young man in a dating relationship.

Guys: How To Be A Leader In Dating Relationships:

- 1) **Pursue the girl.** Oftentimes in today’s culture, girls are taking on this role. Guys, this is for you to do. It takes courage and confidence to do this. You should be the one to take the initiative to call the girl, introduce yourself to her parents, and ask her on a date. In your pursuit of a girl, communicate your dating intentions clearly.
- 2) **Protect her.** This goes beyond physical protection. As the leader, you have the responsibility to help guard her heart. Choose your words wisely. If you sweet-talk a girl all of the time, she is going to have a more difficult time guarding her heart.
- 3) **Lead her closer to God.** As we have already established, the girl you are pursuing needs to be a strong Christian. Make it your goal to sharpen her in her walk with God.
- 4) **Serve her.** In His relationship with His bride, Jesus set the perfect example of the best way to show love. He served. Look for opportunities to serve the girl you are pursuing.

Which of the four tips challenge you the most as the future leader of your home? Why?

Why do you think it is important to begin thinking about these things now, even though you may not yet be ready for a marriage relationship?



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