

Grace Downtown CG Discussion Guide

May 14- May 17, 2018

Topic: The Bible and Sexuality

Series: Theology in Life



Announcements:

CHPC Baby Bottle Fundraiser Begins: Support the ministry of the Capitol Hill Pregnancy Center, one of our partner ministries, in our Baby Bottle Fundraiser. Pick up a bottle at the Welcome Table, fill it with change, and bring it back by Father's Day!

Spring Get Away (6/2): Bring your friends and family to the Strawberry Jubilee Festival at Great Country Farms in Bluemont, VA. Enjoy playgrounds, wagon rides, a jumping pillow, farm animals, a pie-eating contest, and more. **Saturday June 2.** Pick your own strawberries 9-11 am and/or gather with Grace Downtown from 11 am- 3 pm. Cost: \$8. More details on website. Contact: Mazaré at mazare@gracedc.net.

Commons Weekly Intern Dinner (6/5): If you're an intern in DC this summer, you're invited to COMMONS, a weekly dinner and discussion group on Tuesday nights at 7pm, 2908 18th St NW. Contact sampsoncm1@gmail.com with questions or for more info. Starts **Tuesday June 5.**

Reminder: CG leaders, please complete the 5 minute survey about service you received from Laura Niver on the Diaconate.

The Bible and Sexuality

Note to CG Leaders:

As elders we want to err on the side of giving you too much rather than giving you too little. We recommend that you read the discussion guide and prioritize relevant thoughts and questions for focused group discussion rather than trying to cover all the material. The guide is to assist you, so feel free to tailor it as you see fit.

Scriptures: Gen. 2:18-15, Ex. 20:1-17, Song of Solomon chapter 4, Matt. 5:27-30, Mark. 7:20-23, Rom. 1:24-32, Gal. 5:19-21, I Cor. 7:1-5

Introduction:

We know that all good gifts come from God, and this is true as well with God's gift of sex. God created sexual intercourse as the way that new life would come to be, and as a means of pleasure in uniting a husband and wife.

Adam was created first and God said it was not good for the man to be alone. So God created Eve from one of Adam's ribs, and Scripture tells us, "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." (Gen. 2:24).

Sexual intercourse brings about new life from the husband-wife union, and it is involved in the husband and wife becoming “one flesh.”

Throughout Scripture we are told that this sexual gift is intended by God to be experienced only within the covenantal union of a one-man, one-woman, marriage. Any and all other sexual expressions are sinful, displeasing to God. When two people have sex but are not married, the ‘one-fleshness’ is ripped out of its holistic framework and the bond that is created is incomplete and temporal.

Read and Discuss:

A. Read Genesis 2:18-25

1. List everything you see here about the nature and purpose of marriage.
2. What are the different ways (spiritually, emotionally, physically) in which marriage is God’s antidote to Adam’s aloneness problem?

B. Read Exodus 20: 1-17

1. How does the seventh commandment, “You shall not commit adultery” (v. 14), fit in with the other commandments? (In what ways are murder, adultery, stealing and lying similar to one another?)
2. Why is adultery that big of a deal? If a man has feelings towards another man’s wife, why is it so wrong for him to express these feelings by having sexual intercourse with her (as long as there is mutual consent and not force)?

C. From the Westminster Shorter Catechism:

“Q. 71: What is required in the seventh commandment?”

A. The seventh commandment requires the preservation of our own and our neighbor’s chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior.

Q. 72: What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?”

A. The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.”

1. In what ways are thoughts, words and actions related when it comes to sexual sin?

2. What does it mean, practically, to “preserve our own and our neighbor’s chastity”?
- D. Read a few of the lists of sins mentioned in the New Testament: Mark 7:20-23; Romans 1:24-32; Galatians 5:19-21.
1. What are some similarities and differences between the different sins listed?
 2. In what ways are sexual sins included in these lists?
- E. Read Matthew 5:27-30
1. How would you define “lust”?
 2. How are our thoughts and actions related?
 3. What do you see as Jesus’ main point here regarding adultery?

Application:

1. Sexuality is one issue where the larger American culture and Christianity have very different perspectives. There are many similarities between Christians and non-Christians when it comes to how we think about murder, stealing, lying, caring for the poor, social justice, etc, but our differences are more noticeable when it comes to sexual ethics. Compare and contrast a Hollywood and a Christian understanding of the purpose of sex, when sex should be expressed, the relationship between sex and marriage, virginity, etc.
2. What is the big deal, really, with the biblical exhortations against sexual sin? If two people love each other, why not communicate this affirmation to one another through sex? As long as there is love, what is the big deal with what we do with our sex organs?
3. In what ways are one’s *identity* and *actions* related when it comes to sex? How would you respond to a man who says, “I *am* gay; therefore, I should *act* out my

identity by having sex with other men”? How would you respond to the woman who says, “I am a man trapped in a woman’s body. So I must be true to myself and undergo a sex change so that the ‘real me’ aligns with my physical body”?

4. Many in our culture today would say that it is unhealthy to suppress our sexual desires. “If you have strong sexual desires, you must express them!” Is there a difference between suppression and repression? In what ways is sexual self-control in fact actually a sign of spiritual and emotional health rather than the opposite? (Compare self-control of sexual desires with self-control of other desires—e.g. desires for food.)
5. Why do you think God chose the sex act as His means for the procreation of the human species? Given that procreation is one (though not the only) purpose of sex, how does this buttress the argument for sex to take place only between one man and one woman, in marriage?

Prayer:

The Grace Downtown Prayer Team creates opportunities for our community to learn more about prayer together for our church family, our city, and our world. Throughout the coming week, the Prayer Team is asking our church community to pray...

... for all the moms in our community. Let us give thanks to God for our mothers, grandmothers, and the wise women who have raised us up in our faith, for "a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised" (Proverbs 31:30).

... for those in our community mourning a loss. We ask that the Lord would bring peace and comfort to those celebrating the memory of wise women and mothers in their life, and that they would know "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

... for those in authority in our government, as we ought always to pray for. We ask for the Lord to strengthen us daily as we pray for those authorities instituted by God (Romans 13:1), and that the Lord would open our eyes this week to a new way in which each member of our community may "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 13:14).