



KEY TAKEAWAY: When our hearts become infected, our spiritual life is affected. God wants to move you from admiration to adoration.

KEY VERSES: 1 Corinthians 6:18; John 3:16

[**Author Note:** Pull out the dried-up flower from the first two weeks. Show students how its lack of life has made it flimsy and brittle. Maybe crush it up a little and hand it to your students so that they can see and feel what happens when we're thirsty.]

INTRO

One of my favorite words that has popped up in teen culture is the word “thirsty.” Here’s how it’s used: “That girl loves attention. She’s thirsty.” If you’re not a culture snob and have no idea what I’m talking about, “thirsty” literally means desperate. It’s when someone would do anything to capture the affection and attention of others. They do this through the selfies they post and the way they dress. Being “thirsty” is not a term of endearment.

I love this term because it does a great job of describing the “why” behind our behavior. When a plant starts to dry out, its roots will spread in every direction possible to get some moisture. When a human is thirsty for attention, they will cross any boundary and sacrifice their last shred of dignity to get attention.

But before we cast judgement on those we deem thirsty, we all need to be honest. Everybody is thirsty for attention. We live in a culture that is thirsty for attention and admiration. Thanks to smartphones, our accessibility to getting attention has made people more desperate than ever. You now have an audience of millions of people who are capable of giving you the attention you crave.

When accessibility becomes easier; the value of that object cheapens—which is exactly what has happened with how we view sex and the value it actually has.

THIS WILL LEAVE A MARK

There’s a tension when we talk about sex in church, because it always brings up the conversation of sex before marriage. I’m sure you’ve heard it

all: “Don’t have sex, because you might have babies or get an STD.” But I want to talk about something more destructive than being 15 and pregnant or contracting something painful. I want to talk about the danger of losing your soul and who you really are. You may now collectively groan, but stay with me here.

We love to focus on the physical dangers of sex, and we tend to completely ignore the spiritual consequences. Sex is physical, emotional, and spiritual. It’s physical in how it feels and the desire we have. It’s emotional in the fact that liking the person is usually required to initiate or receive it. It’s spiritual because it was designed to take two people and make them one.

1 Corinthians 6:16 (MSG)

There’s more to sex than mere skin on skin. Sex is as much spiritual mystery as physical fact. As written in Scripture, “The two become one.”

Sex is more than what’s happening on the outside. It affects us from the inside out and shapes who we are becoming. It’s why so many married couples end up in counseling. They offered their bodies to so many different partners before getting married, that now they’re dealing with emotional scars on their heart. When our hearts become infected, our spiritual life is affected.

God designed sex to be life-giving and to lead us into a relationship that is so close, He describes the married couple as “one flesh.” The two people come together in a collision of love, and the two become one. But when you try to have sex before marriage and go against God’s design, that collision of love looks more like a car wreck. A piece of your heart is given to someone, they’ll hold onto it for the rest of their lives, and a hole is left in your heart. That’s gonna leave a mark.

ADMIRATION

We’re all thirsty. We all have a desire to be with someone someday. But God has a plan for how that should happen. Not because He’s keeping something from us, but because He’s leading us to something better. God has a plan for us called purity.

Remember when we talked about purity in week one? Purity doesn’t mean you’ve never had sex. Purity is the quality of your heart and knowing that sin doesn’t drive your desires. Having a sex drive is actually good. God

designed you that way. It's when we let that sex drive control us, we get into trouble. Before we ever feel it spiritually, we experience it emotionally.

1 Corinthians 6:17 (MSG)

Since we want to become spiritually one with the Master, we must not pursue the kind of sex that avoids commitment and intimacy, leaving us more lonely than ever—the kind of sex that can never “become one.”

The type of commitment and intimacy that Paul is talking about is the kind that happens in marriage. Purity—meaning God's plan to having a high-quality heart—will always lead us to a better life. Purity leads to intimacy.

This intimacy goes beyond being admired. We like to think that admiration is the same as love or intimacy, but it's not. *Admiration is the approval we get for what we've done.* It's temporary, and it's only good for a short time before you have to do something more to keep it alive. When we use our bodies to seek admiration, we end up destroying ourselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually. That's why God never intended for you to be admired. God created you to be adored.

ADORATION

Remember, admiration is the approval we get for what we have done. *Adoration is the love we receive for who we are.* In the beginning, God created Adam and Eve, and He adored Him. There was nothing they could have done to earn His adoration. He loved them for who they were, and He still loved them after they messed up.

Can you imagine if God based His love on approval? The Genesis story would look like this: God created Adam and Eve, and they messed up, so God walked away to try something else.

Does this story sound familiar? It's how you and I treat everyone because we are thirsty and we reach out for admiration. But God adores you, and the Genesis story turns toward hope instead of abandonment. God made a way to restore Adam and Eve because they were His children and He adored them.

God adores you, too, and His heart probably aches every time you abandon His adoration for other people's admiration. You were created for a purpose and to reflect a God who loves you. That's why Paul writes this:

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (MSG)

Don't you see that you can't live however you please, squandering what God paid such a high price for? The physical part of you is not some piece of property belonging to the spiritual part of you. God owns the whole works. So let people see God in and through your body.

LANDING

You were created to be loved and adored. You were not made to settle for the approval of others. You were made for unconditional love. Only God's adoration will give you life. Anything else will make you look like that dried-up flower.

Today, you need to make a decision. Will you settle for the world's admiration? Or will you seek God's adoration?

What will you use to quench your thirst? One will dry you up and leave you empty. The other will lead you to life everlasting and a pure heart.