



HSM PRESENTS: HIM + HER



SMALL GROUP LEADER CORNER

Hey Small Group Leaders! We've got a series coming up where you will have a lot of opportunity to speak truth in students' lives to help them navigate a particularly difficult area – relationships and sex.

WHAT THIS SERIES IS NOT:

- It's not an encouragement to date.
- It's not a sex education class.

WHAT THIS SERIES IS:

- **An opportunity to open communication channels** and encourage students to seek Godly wisdom and advice in an area they may not feel comfortable to bring up on their own.
- **An opportunity for students to build some Biblical foundations** in a pivotal area of life that can have huge impact on their future.
- **An opportunity to partner with parents** by not only sharing what we are talking about with them in advance, but consistently encouraging our students to have conversations with their parents on this topic at home.

IS IT TOO EARLY TO HAVE THESE CONVERSATIONS?

- Crushes, new feelings, attractions, urges and even pressures to date are becoming more and more of our students' worlds as they grow up. **We want to have age-appropriate conversations that prepare students.**
- We intentionally have it built into the first message for the speaker to say "sex" on stage because it's a word that carries a lot of weight, and we want to break the ice from stage that church is a safe place to talk about sex.
- Did you know **the average age of exposure to porn is 8-11 years old?** 80% of this happens within the home. Our goal is to equip students to know how to respond Biblically when sexual temptations arise.

HOW WILL WE HELP YOU PREPARE TO LEAD DISCUSSIONS FOR THIS SERIES?

- We will be sharing our whole series resources with you further in advance so you can BEGIN PRAYING AND PREPARING NOW for leading your students through this.
- This packet includes extra resources to help you navigate different conversations your students may bring up during this lesson.

WHAT DO MY STUDENTS NEED FROM ME?

- Your students don't need you to have all the right answers. They are in a phase where an important part of owning their faith means discovering the right answer themselves. They simply need you to be a safe place to have conversations, seek answers, and guide them in the right direction.
- Your students don't need you to teach your opinion but for you to help them understand God's word.
- You don't need to have a perfect past-record in this area to lead, simply a heart that has repented towards God and is strongly seeking to take steps in the right direction. Letting students know some of your past struggles may even help them relate to you and trust your advice, but remember to keep conversations age-appropriate. Be cautious when you share, speaking generally and avoiding specifics or graphic comments. If you question if sharing would cause a student to struggle, then hold off sharing.

FREQUENTLY ASKED STUDENT RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS AND WISDOM TO HELP YOU ANSWER

WHEN CAN YOU HAVE SEX?

Officially, sexual immorality is used in the Bible to describe sex outside of marriage, including lust. Sex is beautifully designed to bring together a man and woman in marriage. If you aren't close to thinking about getting married, the wise thing to do is to create healthy boundaries in your life so you are staying far from sexual sin.

HOW FAR IS TOO FAR TO GO BEFORE MARRIAGE?

"How far is too far" is a BIG question that comes up a lot, but really it can be the wrong question if we are just asking "How far can I go before I sin?" It's like walking up to the edge of the cliff, putting one foot over the edge, and hoping not to fall. Not the wisest. The wiser thing to ask is, "Is this wise to do? Is this tempting me to go farther?" If it's tempting you to go farther, then STOP!

Relevant Bible verses:

- "So be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but try to understand what the Lord wants you to do." – Ephesians 5:15-17
- "Run away from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Or don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God?" – 1 Corinthians 6:18-19

BUT CAN'T WE SLEEP TOGETHER IF WE ARE IN LOVE?

God's healthy boundaries for sex isn't love, it's in marriage. Love may "feel" right, but there are negative consequences of having sex outside of marriage. In God's definition of love, love is patient and kind; it does not seek to please itself, nor does it delight in evil, but is always hopeful (1 Corinthians 13). True love would be patient in waiting for the proper time for sex. It would be kind to future spouses by not pre-harming marital intimacy. True love would be unselfish in placing God's desires and the needs of others above itself. It would not delight in the evil of disobedience, nor would it force another to disobey God. Love could never be a reason for premarital sex; rather, it should be one of the greatest reasons to avoid premarital sex. "But we're going to be married anyway." This is another common excuse. Along with being presumptuous, this stance will almost certainly leave one question unanswered: If one gives in to moral temptation before marriage, what's to stop him or her from giving in to moral temptation once married?

WHAT IF I'VE ALREADY GONE TOO FAR?

Good question! Certainly a person cannot reverse the past, but there are a number of steps one should take to keep from further damaging his or her intimacy with God and others.

First, acknowledge your actions as sin. For those who have accepted Christ's payment of the penalty for their sins, He asks only that they confess - agree with God that they are sinful.

Second, maintain purity from this moment forward. Jesus told the woman caught in sexual sin to "go and sin no more" (John 8:11). You cannot change what's been done, but you can keep yourself and others from any further damage by avoiding situations which might cause you to compromise your commitment to sexual purity. Paul advised Timothy to run away from temptation (2 Timothy 2:22), and Joseph is famous for running from moral danger (Genesis 39:7-12).

WHAT IF I'M DATING SOMEONE AND I KNOW THEY ARE NOT THE BEST FOR ME RIGHT NOW?

This is a tough place to be because you likely care deeply for the person. You need to break up with them ASAP. The longer you wait, the more you are wasting your time and theirs. You can be kind when you break up with them, but be clear. The purpose of dating is not to be on the mission field; the purpose of dating is not to be someone's support system. You shouldn't feel pressure to date for either of these reasons. Pray for God to guide you in breaking up with them.

PORNOGRAPHY AND MASTURBATION

IS MASTURBATION AND/OR PORNOGRAPHY A SIN?

One can not point to a verse in the Bible and read that masturbation is wrong. However, what accompanies the act of masturbation is usually something visual—whether only in the mind or by viewing pornography in pictures or video. Those things would fall under the category of immorality since giving in to immoral thoughts is sin—masturbation is enacting sex with an object (woman or man) in mind. Jesus even said that a married man commits adultery when he thinks lustfully after a woman (Matthew 5:27-28). So to masturbate—enacting sex—while thinking of a man or woman who is not your spouse is sinful because it is immoral. Sex is meant to be between a man and a woman in the context—and only in the context—of marriage. This is saying nothing about masturbation creating an emotional guilt that is hard to relieve until the act and/or habit is stopped.

I'M STRUGGLING TO STOP, HOW CAN I STOP?

If you are struggling with masturbation and/or pornography and want to stop, several things are helpful.

1. First, **acknowledge that it is sin** and that it brings emotional guilt.
2. Second, **make a decision to stop**.
3. Third, **have a plan not to do it again**. It is this third and final step that most people don't do. Good intentions without a solid plan inevitably leads to repetition.

A good plan always includes accountability. Find a God centered adult, maybe a parent or guardian or small group leader; that you can tell in confidence who will follow up and ask you if you are victorious. A good plan also includes what action you will take when you are tempted. Maybe get up and go hang out with someone else, pray, memorize Scripture, sing praise songs. How can you lean into God to help you fight in the moment of temptation?

Be aware of when you are most susceptible to masturbating: Stress? After you are away from your boyfriend or girlfriend and begin thinking of them in a sexual way? Pornography? The books you read? Once you determine the contributing factors, tell your accountability partner. Knowing the factors and telling someone trustworthy are ways to break the cycle of repetition.

ACCOUNTABILITY SOFTWARE RESOURCES

- Ever Accountable: <https://www.everaccountable.com/>
- Accountable2you.app: <https://www.accountable2you.com/features>
- Covenant eyes (better for computer): <http://www.covenanteyes.com/>
- Net Nanny (gives deeper parental controls): <https://www.netnanny.com>
- Triple X Church (free but limited): <https://x3watch.com/>

PURSUING SEXUAL INTEGRITY

We encourage staff, leaders, and parents to use the language “sexual integrity” over “sexual purity” because the term “sexual purity” can have a lot of baggage associated with it. What if a student has crossed a line and sexually or lustfully sinned? There is grace, redemption, and power when they turn to Jesus in repentance! **Sexual integrity is about saying, “YES!” to living a faithful, abundant life as a sexual being according to how God has designed you.**

Our students need to know God's love them first and foremost. Our goal for this series is not simply behavior modification or for students to try to self-will themselves to stay virgins, but for students connect with the transformational work of Jesus in their lives and live in His design for them. **All of our obedience, all of our ability to pursue sexual integrity, is a response of God's love for us and through His power working within us.**

Leading in Grace and Truth

With an LGBT emphasis
(lesbian - gay - bisexual - transgender)

Main Goal: Create a Safe Place to Belong

Lead your group to value acceptance, confidentiality, and honesty. Also, know what you can and can not keep confidential.

Atmosphere of Grace: An atmosphere begins with the heart but it is reflected in speech. Even casually using the phrase "that's so gay" in a derogatory manner shuts down an atmosphere of grace. Do not speak this way and immediately correct students who do. All students belong in

our ministry - no matter their beliefs or behavior.



A storm cloud can form in the soul when an individual feels tension between their religious and sexual identities.

What do I do if a student shares they have a sexual identity struggle?

First, remember the A.T.A.'s (below). Then, mentor and resource.

1

ACKNOWLEDGE

Acknowledge their **COURAGE** in sharing such personal information with you

2

THANK

THANK them and show your **GRATITUDE** for their **TRUST** in you

3

ASSURE

Assure them that if it's best to share with others you will let them know and give them a chance to do so first

Great resources for further information and help:

Is God anti-gay?

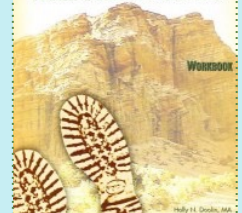
And other questions about homosexuality, the Bible and same-sex attraction



Is God Anti-gay? By Sam Allberry

A Biblical look at homosexuality and same-sex

TRAIL GUIDE TO COPING



attraction

A Trail Guide to Coping

A workbook for teens struggling with sexual identity

What does the Bible say?

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right." - 2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)

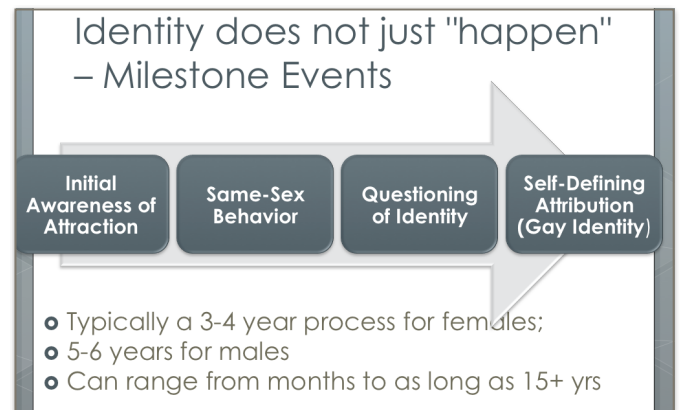
- ▶ God created us male and female (Genesis 1:27 & 5:2)
- ▶ Homosexual behavior is a sin (Leviticus 18:22 & Romans 1:18-27)
- ▶ We are ALL sinners in need of Jesus' forgiveness and grace! (Romans 3:23)
- ▶ We are called to speak the TRUTH IN LOVE (Ephesians 4:15)

What is a choice?

We are all tempted with various sins, some stronger to us than others. **Being tempted is NOT a choice but how we respond is our choice.** Having same-sex attractions or transgender feelings are NOT a choice. Claiming a same-sex/transgender identity label or participating in same-sex behavior IS a choice.

Adolescent Development

Sexual identity does not just happen instantaneously. There is a progression of milestones that happen as a person wrestles with their inner storm. **Encourage your student not to label themselves but to seek godly wisdom and support.** Adolescence is a time of significant



physical, cognitive, and social development. Teens are in the Identity Role vs. Role Confusion Stage; The two main questions they ask themselves are, "Who am I?" and "Where do I belong?" It's important the church has supportive answers for both. Lots of shame, guilt, and depression can come with this storm, but **remind your students that Jesus came to set us free and overcome shame, guilt, and depression!**

LAST THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- 1) CREATE A SAFE PLACE IN SMALL GROUPS
- 2) WE CAN NOT TEACH OUR OPINION
- 3) WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

We don't have to have all the answers when we lead, we just need to walk alongside with the One who does!

You, your student, and their family are NOT alone. Student Ministry staff are here to partner with you and your students in helping them discover and follow God's incredible plan for their life! **Talk to your campus staff ASAP if a transgender student wants to be in a different small group than their physical gender.** If you have more to talk through, contact Student Ministry Staff.

References: Dr. Yarhouse, Sam Allberry, The Holy Bible, Lead Small



HSM PRESENTS: HIM + HER SERIES OVERVIEW



SERIES AT A GLANCE

TEACHING THEME

Moral Boundaries

Think of moral boundaries like a fence: on one side is all the good, moral behaviors we can freely act on and outside the fence are the immoral behaviors. Jesus doesn't want us to just see a list of yes and no's, but the Bible does give us moral boundary guidelines because **God knows that boundaries protect us.** God sees a bigger picture for our lives full of hope, joy, peace, freedom, etc. Learning how to protect our bodies and emotions, **to honor God's plan for sex and morality**, and respect ourselves and others - **it's not about restrictions, it's actually about living more in God's freedom.**

SERIES OVERVIEW

Guys and girls can be vastly different. They do say that opposites attract. **But how can we honor each other and God in our dating relationships?** We are going to dive into some advice the Bible has for us on how to pursue true love, respect each other, and not rush but look for God's leading.

HIGH SCHOOL HACK

Your high school students probably already feel a social pressure to date. Every week, let your students know: **This series isn't an encouragement to date, it's an encouragement for students to use godly wisdom when they date.** Some students in your group may not be dating yet, and that is ok! In fact, Paul says it's better to stay single (1 Corinthians 7:10) and our last week we are going to talk about not rushing – so if your students aren't dating or don't feel ready yet – GREAT! This lesson is still good wisdom and discussion for them because chances are one day they will start dating and when they do – they'll be able to start on a great foundation of Biblical wisdom!

WEEK BY WEEK

WEEK 1: WEEK OF MARCH 7, 2021*

- MAIN POINTS:
 1. Know what you're pursuing and
 2. Don't make excuses or settle for less.
- MAIN SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 31:10-31
- JESUS CONNECTION: God wrote the greatest love story ever told because of how much He loves you!

WEEK 2: WEEK OF MARCH 14

- MAIN POINTS:
 1. Guys and girls may be different, but we can still seek to understand and respect one another.
 2. Respect God with your body.
- MAIN SCRIPTURES: 1 Peter 2:15-17 & 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5
- JESUS CONNECTION: We all were born slaves to sin but God sent Jesus to die on the cross to rescue us from our sins and death.

WEEK 3: WEEK OF MARCH 21 WHAT ABOUT SAME-SEX SEXUALITY?

- MAIN POINT: As Christians we are called to balance living in God's grace and truth.
- MAIN SCRIPTURES: Zacchaeus story overview, Romans 2:4, Matthew 19:4-5, Romans 1:26-30
- JESUS CONNECTION: We have all sinned and all need forgiveness that only Jesus can give to us.
- TEACHING POINTS (GRACE):
 1. Zacchaeus example: Zacchaeus was a tax-collector in an anti-tax collector culture. Zacchaeus encountered God's kindness in Jesus before he began following Jesus.
 2. What is Sin? Attractions and temptations are not sin, but acting on lust or engaging in sexual behavior outside of God's design of marriage is sin.
- TEACHING POINTS (TRUTH):
 1. Jesus and the Bible define marriage as a union between a man and a woman.
 2. The Bible defines same-sex relationships as sin.
 3. God loves all people but hates all sin. That's why we all need Jesus. We have all sinned and all need forgiveness that only Jesus can give to us.

WEEK 4: WEEK OF MARCH 28

- MAIN POINTS:
 1. Be willing to slow down and look for God's leading.
 2. Honor God with your dating life.
- MAIN SCRIPTURES: Song of Solomon 2:7 & Hebrews 12:1-2
- JESUS CONNECTION: It was Jesus' joy to suffer on the cross – because He loves you and wants a relationship with you.

**HSM Campus Pastors have the option to choose between their groups going through this week's curriculum OR having a Party Break week to hang out, have fun, and emphasize student inviting friends. Talk to your HSM Campus Pastor to discuss the best choice for your group.*



HIM + HER STUDY GUIDE WEEK 1



MAIN SCRIPTURES:
Proverbs 31:10-31

MAIN POINTS:
1. Know what you're pursuing.
2. Don't make excuses or settle for less.

JESUS CONNECTION:
God wrote the greatest love story every told because of how much He loves you!

@HopeHSM

1. READ *The Bible*

Yessss! We are glad you are here because taking time on your own to study God's word is an amazing way to grow in your relationship with Him. Life with Jesus is the best life! Take a moment to pray and ask God to lead you as you study this Scripture; then read the Scripture (*from your Bible or it's on the back*).

2. OBSERVE *The Straight Facts*

Who: _____

What: _____

Where: _____

Why: _____

How: _____

What is Repetitive?

Highlight it

What is Contrast?

Underline it

3. INTERPRET *What Does the Text Mean?*

Research answers using trusted sources like a Study Bible, BibleProject.com, BlueLetterBible.org, and/or Bible.org

What is the historical and/or cultural context of this Scripture?

Scholars aren't 100% sure who wrote Proverbs 31, but many believe King Lemuel, named in verse 1, is actually King Solomon. What is clear is that it was written as godly-inspired advice for a prince looking for a wife.¹ While you may not be close to thinking of who you want to marry, the principle stands that character traits listed in Proverbs 31 are great standards for us to set on those we date, as well as on the people we want to be!

What else do I know about the author, audience, or context of this passage?

What other Scripture might help me interpret this text?

What is this text's clearest meaning?

4. APPLY *Getting Personal*

How do you relate to any of the characters, events, or words in this Scripture?

What truth(s) from this Scripture can you apply to your life right now?

What is God saying to you through this Scripture?

1. Matthew Henry Commentary on Proverbs 31

MAIN SCRIPTURES

Proverbs 31:10-31 NIV

"A wife of noble character who can find?

She is worth far more than rubies.

¹¹ Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.

¹² She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.

¹³ She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.

¹⁴ She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.

¹⁵ She gets up while it is still night;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her female servants.

¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.

¹⁷ She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.

¹⁸ She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.

19 In her hand she holds the distaff
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.

²⁰ She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.

²¹ When it snows, she has no fear for her household;

for all of them are clothed in scarlet.

²² She makes coverings for her bed;
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.

²³ Her husband is respected at the city gate,
where he takes his seat among the elders of
the land.

²⁴ She makes linen garments and sells them,
and supplies the merchants with sashes.

²⁵ She is clothed with strength and dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.

²⁶ She speaks with wisdom,
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

²⁷ She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

²⁸ Her children arise and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:

²⁹ "Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all."

³⁰ Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be
praised.

31 Honor her for all that her hands have done,
and let her works bring her praise at the city
gate."

NOTES

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DOODLES



Proverbs 31:10-31

1. Know what you're pursuing.
2. Don't make excuses or settle for less.

God wrote the greatest love story
every told because of how much
He loves you!

WHAT are we talking about and WHY does it matter to me? (2-3 min)

- Share an unrealistic picture of dating or love you've seen in a movie, book, social media, etc.
- Share an example of how this "perfect picture" has let you down (bonus points if it's funny)

- The classic picture is painted: Boy meets girl. Girl meets boy. They think each other are cute...begin to discover they have things in common...and live happily ever after.
- From movies to social media, it's easy to get caught up in the idealistic viewpoint of what dating and romance should be like from our culture.
- We've probably all been there: let down by an unrealistic picture painted in the media.

- What reasons or standards do you have when it comes to dating?
- Do you choose someone because you think they are hot, rich, popular, funny, smart? Culture says those are the most important things.
- God has some better standards written down for us we are going to explore tonight.
- Don't get me wrong, those other things aren't bad, but they also aren't enough – relationships based only on these things are superficial & they can't last on their own.

So WHAT does this mean for my faith and life with God? (5-6 min)

- Proverbs 31 shows us a different perspective as it lays out five traits to look for when pursuing someone. It's a long passage so I'm going to jump around a little giving an overview – then we will read & highlight the Scriptures together during our discussion time.
- **Important side note: This series isn't an encouragement or pressure to date.** In fact, Paul says it's better to stay single (1 Corinthians 7:10) so if you aren't dating yet – GREAT! This lesson is still good for you because chances are one day you will start dating and when you do – you'll be able to start on a great foundation of Biblical wisdom!

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NOTES

- This may be the most important thing I say this whole time: DON'T SETTLE FOR ANYTHING LESS.
- Why? Sometimes we are looking for others to complete us or make us a whole, we date to make ourselves feel better or to have a good time, or because we are looking for love or acceptance we make excuses and compromises but I want you to know a few things:
- YOU ARE ENOUGH. You don't need to date someone to make you whole, they can't really do that anyway.
- YOU ARE LOVED. God wrote the greatest love story ever told because of how much HE LOVES YOU!

JESUS CONNECTION

- God created you to be in relationship with Him, but sin broke that relationship before we were ever born.
- God sent Jesus to die on the cross to rescue us from our sin and death; Jesus loves you so incredibly much.

TRANSITION

- Through this study I hope we will gain a greater perspective on dating that will help you truly live your best life – because Jesus has your true best life in mind for you.

NOW WHAT

NOW that I know, HOW can I live this out? (2-3 min)

YOU

- And an extra side note – if we are looking for someone with these traits, we should also be someone with these traits. In other words, be someone the someone you are looking for is looking for.
- Do these traits describe you?
- Do these traits describe the people you date or have crushes on?
- Are you settling for less?

WE

- Ask we talk about this, remember none of us are perfect. But I hope you will be real, engage in conversation, ask questions and be honest with yourself and the people in your group.
- Let's be a safe place for people to talk and share, be real, and not worry about someone gossiping about them afterwards: in other words what is said in small group, stays in small group.

PRAY

- Close your time together in prayer.

NOTES

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HIM + HER DISCUSSION GUIDE — WEEK 1 —



MAIN SCRIPTURES:
Proverbs 31:10-31

MAIN POINT:

1. Know what you're pursuing.
2. Don't make excuses or settle for less.

JESUS CONNECTION:

God wrote the greatest love story every told because of how much He loves you!

LEADER CORNER

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

For students to start, or grow, in using godly wisdom in who they pursue in dating relationships.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Let your students know: This series isn't an encouragement to date, it's an encouragement for students to use godly wisdom when they date. Some students in your group may not be dating yet, and that is ok! In fact, Paul says it's better to stay single (1 Corinthians 7:10) and our last week we are going to talk about not rushing – so if you aren't dating or don't feel ready yet – GREAT! This lesson is still good wisdom and discussion for you because chances are one day you will start dating and when you do – you'll be able to start on a great foundation of Biblical wisdom!

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here. Let the students and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation, too.

CONVERSATION GUIDE

GET THEM TALKING

1. How would you describe how the ways dating and relationships are portrayed in our culture (movies, social media, etc.)?
2. Do you think these portrayals are good, bad, or a mixture? Explain your thoughts.

ACTIVITY

Today we are going to write in our Bibles! It's ok, lighting won't strike you (probably)! If you don't want to write in your Bible then you can pull up a Bible app. As each verse is read, highlight it and write the matching standard to the side (or on your phone make a note on your app – or leaders you can share the Study Guide for this week with your students to make notes on). *TIP: Crayons and colored pencils make good Bible highlighters because they don't bleed through the pages as much as regular highlighters. You can use multiple colors to match your traits & highlights.*

TRAIT 1: READ verse 11; WRITE "Can I trust this person?"

TRAIT 2: READ verses 12 & 23; WRITE "Does this person make me stronger?"

TRAIT 3: READ verses 13-16; WRITE "Is this person responsible?"

TRAIT 4: READ verse 20; WRITE "Is this person generous and kind?"

TRAIT 5: READ verse 30; WRITE "Does this person trust and follow Jesus?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Any other character traits of this woman stand out to you?
2. What are typical traits people look for in those they date?
3. Why would these character traits be good to look for in someone you date?
4. Look back at verse 30. Our culture says physical appearance is a top trait to look for, but this verse mentions something else is much more important. Why do you think this trait is such an important quality (or if you disagree, why)?

NEXT STEPS

1. What are some top character traits you will set as a personal standard for the people you date?
2. Which of these Proverbs 31 character traits can you strive to grow in right now?

PRAYER GUIDE

Ask your students to share their prayer requests and close your time together in prayer.

MAIN SCRIPTURES

Proverbs 31:10-31 NIV

"A wife of noble character who can find?
She is worth far more than rubies.
¹¹ Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.
¹² She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.
¹³ She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.
¹⁴ She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.
¹⁵ She gets up while it is still night;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her female servants.
¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
¹⁷ She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.
¹⁸ She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at night.
¹⁹ In her hand she holds the distaff
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.
²⁰ She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.
²¹ When it snows, she has no fear for her household;
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.
²² She makes coverings for her bed;
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.
²³ Her husband is respected at the city gate,
where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.
²⁴ She makes linen garments and sells them,
and supplies the merchants with sashes.
²⁵ She is clothed with strength and dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.
²⁶ She speaks with wisdom,
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.
²⁷ She watches over the affairs of her household and does not
eat the bread of idleness.
²⁸ Her children arise and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:
²⁹ "Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all."
³⁰ Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
³¹ Honor her for all that her hands have done,
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate."

BONUS LEADER RESOURCE

GAME IDEA: 5 SECOND RULE

IN PERSON INSTRUCTIONS:

ITEM NEEDED: Whip cream, 4 tins, timer with buzzer, 4 towels

HOW TO PLAY: Have 5 student volunteers come up front. They will each have 5 seconds to list 3 things related to a topic you say. If they don't, they will get pied in the face! If a student says something that is debatably related, have your other students vote as to whether it counts or not. These could be run by 1-3 volunteers: 1 to be the host, hype things up, and give the topics. 1 to watch the time and hand out towels. 1 to pie them in the face.

POSSIBLE TOPICS:

- Words that rhyme with red
- Prom
- Tik tok
- Disney
- Couples
- Salad Dressings
- Ocean Animals
- Romantic Movies
- Extreme Sports
- Annoying things cats do
- Getting ready for a date
- Things you find in a coffee shop
- Name one of your small group leaders
- Among Us
- Valentine's Day
- Video Games

VIRTUAL ADAPTATION

Obviously you can't pie your students in the face over a screen. You could play without the punishments OR you could make them do a punishment on screen that needs no or easy to find supplies.

ON SCREEN PUNISHMENT

EXAMPLES:

- Go outside and bark.
- Pour water on your head.
- Pat your head until we tell you to stop.
- Hide under a table or bed the rest of the game.
- Go outside and run around your whole house.
- Eat a spoonful of ketchup.



HIM + HER STUDY GUIDE WEEK 2



MAIN SCRIPTURES:

1 Peter 2:15-17
1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

MAIN POINTS:

1. Guys and girls may be different, but we can still seek to understand and respect one another.
2. Respect God with your body.

JESUS CONNECTION:

We all were born slaves to sin but God sent Jesus to die on the cross to rescue us from our sins and death.

@HopeHSM

1. READ

The Bible

Yessss! We are glad you are here because taking time on your own to study God's word is an amazing way to grow in your relationship with Him. Life with Jesus is the best life! Take a moment to pray and ask God to lead you as you study this Scripture; then read the Scripture (*from your Bible or it's on the back*).

2. OBSERVE

The Straight Facts

Who: _____

What: _____

Where: _____

Why: _____

How: _____

What is Repetitive?

Highlight it

What is Contrast?

Underline it

3. INTERPRET

What Does the Text Mean?

Research answers using trusted sources like a Study Bible, BibleProject.com, BlueLetterBible.org, and/or Bible.org

What is the historical and/or cultural context of this Scripture?

Both 1 Peter and 1 Thessalonians were letters written by early church leaders (Peter and Paul, respectively) to early churches to give them encouragement and instruction on how to grow closer to Jesus and live Christian lives. Though our culture is different from the early churches, many issues we face like greed, oversexualization, selfishness, etc. are the same struggles that flood our culture.

What else do I know about the author, audience, or context of this passage?

What other Scripture might help me interpret this text?

What is this text's clearest meaning?

4. APPLY

Getting Personal

How do you relate to any of the characters, events, or words in this Scripture?

What truth(s) from this Scripture can you apply to your life right now?

What is God saying to you through this Scripture?

MAIN SCRIPTURES

1 Peter 2:15-17 NIV

“¹⁵ For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves. ¹⁷ Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.”

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 NIV

³ It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵ not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God."

NOTES

[illegible]

DOODLES



1 Peter 2:15-17
1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

1. Guys and girls may be different, but we can still seek to understand and respect one another.
2. Respect God with your body.

We all were born slaves to sin
but God sent Jesus to die on
the cross to rescue us from our
sins and death.

WHAT are we talking about and WHY does it matter to me? (2-3 min)

- Guys and girls are different.
- Share a personal story of a stereotypical misunderstanding between you and someone of the opposite gender (bonus points if your story has humor) OR Ask your audience to share different stereotypical differences between guys and girls & be ready to share some of your own. (For example: Guys are more physically wired; Girls are more emotionally driven. Guys fight with their fist, girls fight with their words. Girls speak a secret language guys can't understand. Girls overthink and guys underthink.)
- Guys and girls are different, and that can make understanding each other difficult. It can make dating complicated. We don't act, think, or react like each other. Which is why sometimes the world of dating can be a minefield.

- Even though stereotypes aren't always right, we've all experienced a time where we saw or felt a difference between guys and girls.
- Did you know there actually are differences in the way guys and girls brains are structured and how they process information? Women have bigger memory centers and more white matter, which connects the different parts of their brains more. Guys have more information-containing grey matter.
- You may have heard guys' brains are like waffles, and they have a box for everything. Girls' brains are like spaghetti, and everything is connected.
- The point is: we are different. Sometimes these differences can lead us to misunderstand each other, feeling frustrated or disrespected.

- Even though we are different, we can still seek to understand and respect one another.
- Today we are going to look at 2 different Bible verses and how they center around this idea of guys, girls, dating, and RESPECT – how we can respect each other and God.
- **Important side note reminder: This series isn't an encouragement or pressure to date.** If you aren't dating, this lesson is still good for you because (1) we can seek to understand and respect each other outside of dating and (2) if you start dating in the future, you will have a great foundation of Biblical wisdom!

[illegible]

So WHAT does this mean for my faith and life with God? (5-6 min)

[illegible]

1 PETER 2:15-17

- Let me start by giving a little Biblical background knowledge to this first verse because it talks about something you may find a little strange: it says we are God's slaves.
- You see the Bible says everyone on the planet is essentially a slave, and we have a choice between being slaves between 1 of 2 things:
 1. Sin or evil (or sometimes it's called our flesh)
 2. God or righteousness (or sometimes it's called the spirit)
- Romans 6 lays out a good picture of this, and shares how anyone who has not accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior is a slave to sin/evil, but anyone who has accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior is a slave of God/righteousness.
- Peter is writing to Christians in the early church on how they can live their lives for God and he is giving them some instructions:
- READ 1 PETER 2:15-17. A couple things here:
 1. FIRST, WE ARE FREE. Those who believe in Jesus are set free. Ever done something and said you'll ask for forgiveness after? Some people approach their life with God this way, because they know God will forgive them. Which is the second point and **JESUS CONNECTION:**
 2. SECOND, WE ARE FORGIVEN. No matter who you are you were born a slave to sin but God sent Jesus to die on the cross to rescue us from our sin and death; **When we believe in Jesus our sins are forgiven forever and unconditionally** buried with Jesus and they don't count against us anymore. **That kind of forgiveness brings freedom.** Forgiveness frees us from the weight of guilt and sin. We can mess up – we are free to sin – and God will forgive us not because we earn it, but because His forgiveness is unending.
 3. THIRD, WE HAVE A CHOICE. Not only do we have a choice to follow Jesus or not as our Savior – we have hundreds of choices a day as to whether we will walk in God's ways or sins ways. That battle rages all the time – we have a choice. And here Peter is encouraging us not to use our freedom as an excuse to sin or do evil.
 4. Lastly, there is a lot of good stuff in this small section of the Bible, but I want us to focus in on two words: RESPECT EVERYONE. Not respect those who look or act like you, who are popular, those who are older are in charge: respect everyone. Those who are different from you, those no one else respects, even people younger than you, and yes those who are different a different gender from you.

RESPECTING EACH OTHER WOULD SOLVE A LOT OF PROBLEMS.

- If we truly respected each other, no one would want to use another person for their own pleasure or gain.
- If we truly respected each other, guys would see every girl who walked by, posted a pic, or was in a video as someone to respect and honor – a sister in Christ.
- If girls respected guys, we wouldn't bad mouth them. We wouldn't say that "all guys are liars or out for one thing" because not ALL guys are like that – but ALL guys should be shown respect.
- And not only should we be respecting each other, we should be respecting ourselves.
- We've talked about our differences, but I want to land on something we have in common: God created each and every one of you and He designed you with the capability to share love on an extremely intimate level. This leads into our next Bible verse.

NOTES

1. GOD DESIGNED BOUNDARIES AROUND SEX. If you are wondering, God's design for sexual intimacy is between a man and woman in marriage. Sexual immorality is anything sexually outside of those boundaries. And it can even include things like lust and pornography.
 - Genesis 2:24 "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh."
2. GOD ISN'T AGAINST SEX, HE IS FOR IT. In fact, He tells Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply which means...have lots of sex. (Genesis 1:27-28)
 - It's when we take sex and sexual intimacy outside of God's design that it gets us in trouble. It can lead to a lot of pain.
3. RESPECTING GOD WITH YOUR BODY ISN'T FOR GOD'S GOOD, IT'S FOR YOURS.
 - Whether you follow God's boundaries for sex or cross the line, it isn't going to hurt God – it's going to hurt you. Maybe not at first, every temptation has a "hook" that seems to lure us in saying it has something good for us, but then later we are stuck with damaging consequences.
 - Sexual boundaries aren't about restrictions, they can actually bring MORE freedom in our lives by saving us from some of the damage of crossing lines we shouldn't.

TRANSITION

- If you have crossed the line already, it's not too late for you to jump on the right side of the fence. Remember, every time you confess your sin God is faithful to forgive you (1 John 1:9) and show you a way out of it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

NOW WHAT

NOW that I know, HOW can I live this out? (2-3 min)

YOU

- Your parents may have set boundaries around your dating or use of technology and you know what – that is great! I know it doesn't feel great, but they are doing it to protect you.
- God has set boundaries for us on sexual purity because He wants to protect us. He wants what is best for us.
- That's all great – but none of that matters if you don't decide you want to follow those boundaries. The choice is yours.
- Have you already set your own boundaries around who you want to date and physical limits to showing love and intimacy?
- Have you already set your own boundaries around your use of technology or anything that leads you into sexual impurity?
- If not, are you willing to? I hope you can see the big picture, see how it benefits you, others, and your relationship with God, and that you chose to live lives that respect God and respect others.

WE

- Let's be a safe place for people to talk and share, be real, and not worry about someone gossiping about them afterwards: in other words what is said in small group, stays in small group.
- Let's talk together about these questions:
 - How do we respect each other when it comes to guys and girls?
 - And how do we respect God when it comes to our physical boundaries?

PRAY

- Close your time together in prayer.



HIM + HER DISCUSSION GUIDE — WEEK 2 —



MAIN SCRIPTURES:

1 Peter 2:15-17
1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

MAIN POINTS:

1. Guys and girls may be different, but we can still seek to understand and respect one another.
2. Respect God with your body.

JESUS CONNECTION:

We all were born slaves to sin but God sent Jesus to die on the cross to rescue us from our sins and death.

LEADER CORNER

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

For students to start, or grow, in using godly wisdom in who they pursue in dating relationships.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Let your students know: This series isn't an encouragement to date, it's an encouragement for students to use godly wisdom when they date. Some students in your group may not be dating yet, and that is ok! In fact, Paul says it's better to stay single (1 Corinthians 7:10) and our last week we are going to talk about not rushing – so if you aren't dating or don't feel ready yet – GREAT! This lesson is still good wisdom and discussion for you because chances are one day you will start dating and when you do – you'll be able to start on a great foundation of Biblical wisdom!

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here. Let the students and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation, too.

CONVERSATION GUIDE

GET THEM TALKING

1. What are some differences, in general, that you've noticed between guys and girls?
2. What are common ways you think guys and girls commonly misunderstand or manipulate each other?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

READ 1 Peter 2:15-17 and discuss the following questions:

1. God calls us to live in honor and respect for one another. What are ways guys can respect girls?
2. What are ways girls can respect guys?
3. What are ways we can respect people we are dating?
4. What are things that can make it hard to show respect to each other?
5. How can we overcome these roadblocks?

READ 1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-5 and discuss the following questions:

1. What things is this Scripture calling us to stay away from?
2. What things is it calling us to move towards?
3. Have you ever thought about setting boundaries around dating or other things that can lead you to give into temptation? If so, can you share some of those boundaries with us?
4. How can we respect God when it comes to our physical bodies?
5. What are some temptations that pop up in high school that can make it hard to live out respecting God with our bodies?
6. How can we overcome these roadblocks?
7. If someone were to admit they were struggling with sexual sin in our small group, do you think they'd feel loved or judged by us?
8. How can we be a small group that encourages each other to grow in our faith without shunning people when they sin?

NEXT STEPS

We've talked about two types of respect today. Respecting those of the opposite gender and respecting God with our bodies. Be honest with yourself, **which of these do you think is your biggest struggle right now?** **What is something you can do this week to show respect in that area?**

PRAYER GUIDE

Ask your students to share their prayer requests and close your time together in prayer.

MAIN SCRIPTURES

1 Peter 2:15-17 NIV

¹⁵For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. ¹⁶Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. ¹⁷Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor."

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 NIV

³It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God."

BONUS LEADER RESOURCE

We all need accountability. Your students may reach out to ask you to help keep them accountable on different aspects of their faith – this is awesome! That means they want to grow in their faith. On top of supporting your students, here are some steps you can encourage them to take:

5 Steps to Hold Yourself Accountable

1. Be Honest with yourself and God. We all have sinned, God knows this (Hebrews 4:13). We are honest and ask God for His forgiveness, God is always faithful to give it to us. And don't you just feel freer, lighter, happier when you are forgiven and not weighed down by secret sins?
2. Commit to God's ways. John 14:15 says, "If you love me, keep my commands." But I want to tell you something – this is a choice YOU are going to have to make and keep making. Your parents can't do it for you, even if they drive you to church or make you login online.
3. Invite others to keep you accountable. This may be the scariest step because who wants to share about their secrets and sins with others – and you took it! James 5:16 says, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." Are there other mature believers you can ask to be on your team? Not everyone is going to understand the choices and changes you are making, get some people on your team who you can support you.
4. Make a Plan. Set goals and boundaries to overcome temptation in place. Have a plan for how you will leave tempting situations – maybe even look into accountability software or asking others, like your parents, to help you keep certain boundaries.
5. Rinse and Repeat. We will all mess up and sin again, but remember God is a loving, forgiving Father cheering you on every step you take towards following Him.



HIM + HER STUDY GUIDE WEEK 3



MAIN SCRIPTURES:

Romans 1:18-2:4

SECONDARY:

Matthew 19:4-5

MAIN POINTS:

As Christians we are called to balance living in God's grace and truth.

JESUS CONNECTION:

We have all sinned and all need forgiveness that only Jesus can give to us.

@HopeHSM

1. READ

The Bible

Yessss! We are glad you are here because taking time on your own to study God's word is an amazing way to grow in your relationship with Him. Life with Jesus is the best life! Take a moment to pray and ask God to lead you as you study this Scripture; then read the Scripture (*from your Bible or it's on the back*).

2. OBSERVE

The Straight Facts

Who: _____

What: _____

Where: _____

Why: _____

How: _____

What is Repetitive?

Highlight it

What is Contrast?

Underline it

3. INTERPRET

What Does the Text Mean?

Research answers using trusted sources like a Study Bible, BibleProject.com, BlueLetterBible.org, and/or Bible.org

What is the historical and/or cultural context of this Scripture?

Romans is a book in the New Testament written by Paul. It was originally written as a letter, without chapter divisions and today we are looking at a passage that spans over two chapters to get a full picture of the truth and grace contained in the Scripture. Paul states same-sex sexual lust and behavior are sins, but he isn't just singling out this sin and mentions many other sins. Paul follows this list of sins with a reminder to not judge each other but that it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance.

What else do I know about the author, audience, or context of this passage?

What other Scripture might help me interpret this text?

What is this text's clearest meaning?

4. APPLY

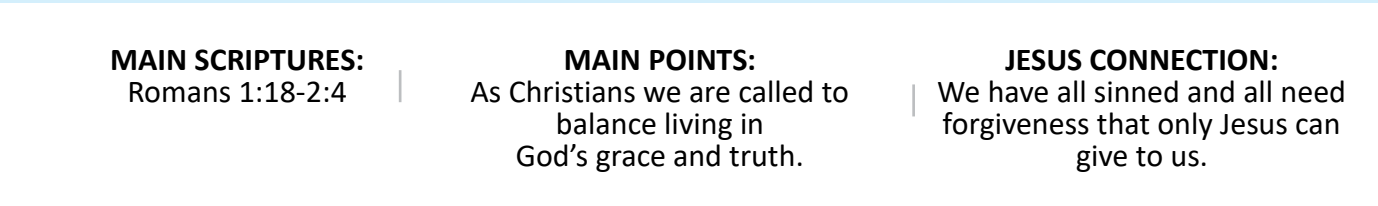
Getting Personal

How do you relate to any of the characters, events, or words in this Scripture?

What truth(s) from this Scripture can you apply to your life right now?

What is God saying to you through this Scripture?

DOODLES



NOTES

- We are in Week 3 of our Him + Her series where we've been talking about godly advice for dating relationships and sexual integrity.
- OPEN COMMUNICATION - Yup I said it, SEX. We know it can feel awkward sometimes to talk about; we want to open those lines of communication up and let you know this is a safe place to talk about things like attraction, dating, and yes sex because we care about you and we believe that is important for you to live your best life.
- Last week we talked about how guys and girls may be different, but we can still seek to understand and respect one another. We also talked about how we can respect God with our body.
- Today's topic goes in a different direction that you may have been wondering: so if God designed sex to be between man and woman in a marriage, what about those who are attracted to the same sex?

- We are going to watch a video clip where some people share their stories and we start learning what the Bible has to say, then we'll talk together about it.
- SHOW HSM SAME-SEX SEXUALITY VIDEO CLIP.

- **MAIN SCRIPTURES:** Zacchaeus story overview, Romans 2:4, Matthew 19:4-5, Romans 1:26-30
- **TEACHING POINTS (GRACE):**
 - Zacchaeus example: Zacchaeus was a tax-collector in an anti-tax collector culture. Zacchaeus encountered God's kindness in Jesus before he began following Jesus.
 - What is Sin? Attractions and temptations are not sin, but acting on lust or engaging in sexual behavior outside of God's design of marriage is sin.
- **TEACHING POINTS (TRUTH):**
 - Jesus and the Bible define marriage as a union between a man and a woman.
 - The Bible defines same-sex relationships as sin.
 - God loves all people but hates all sin. We all need Jesus. We have all sinned and all need forgiveness that only Jesus can give to us.

[illegible]

CLOSING:

- That was a LOT and I'm sure we have a lot of thoughts going through our minds right now. First, I want to remind **everyone this is a safe space for us to talk to each other.** Some of us might feel differently than others or really be wrestling with what the Bible says about same-sex sexuality. Let's respect and honor each other as we talk in small groups.
- **The Bible does say that same-sex sexuality is a sin, but it also says we are ALL sinners who need Jesus.** I'm a sinner. You're a sinner. The person sitting next to you and leading your small group – we are all sinners that need Jesus.
- **As Christians we are called to balance living in God's grace and truth.** This means learning what the Bible has to say about both what is a sin and how we are all sinners who need grace. Let me pray for us and then let's head to small groups.

NOTES

[illegible]



HIM + HER DISCUSSION GUIDE — WEEK 3 —



MAIN SCRIPTURES:

Romans 1:18-2:4

SECONDARY:

Matthew 19:4-5

MAIN POINT:

As Christians we are called to balance living in God's grace and truth.

JESUS CONNECTION:

We have all sinned and all need forgiveness that only Jesus can give to us.

LEADER CORNER

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To give students a safe environment to read and discuss different Scriptures about same-sex sexuality.

THINK ABOUT THIS

We are called to share God's truth in love. **Just a reminder that we are not here to teach our opinion but God's word.** It can be tempting to want to pick and choose which Bible verses we believe. If some of your students start sharing thoughts like, "I don't believe THAT scripture," remind them of these verses: **"All Scripture is God-breathed** and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." – 2 Timothy 3:16-17

"Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you." – Deuteronomy 4:2

Also, **go into your conversation with the mindset that one of your students might have this sin struggle.** This will help you speak with compassion and grace as you discuss God's truth.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here. Let the students and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation, too.

CONVERSATION GUIDE

GET THEM TALKING

What are different opinions you've heard about same-sex sexuality?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did you think about what was shared in the video?

SHARE: Today's passage is long, but it gives us a complete, balanced picture of both God's wrath at sin and His kindness towards the sinner.

READ ROMANS 1:18-2:4 and discuss:

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. What questions do you have about it?
3. This verse is showing us that by God's definition same-sex lust and relations are sin. During the message, they shared that attraction and temptations aren't sin, but lust and sexual behaviors outside of God's design for marriage are sin. In your own words, what are the differences between attraction, temptations, lust, and behaviors?
4. How can we turn to God when we face temptations?
5. Does anyone know what repentance means? (Repentance is when you are genuinely sorry and want to change and move in a direction closer to God.)
6. This verse, just a few after the first one we read, says that God is rich in kindness. What are different ways we can see God's kindness?
7. We all need Jesus. How can remembering that help us reflect God's kindness to others?

NEXT STEPS

Some of the people in the video shared how it was hard for them to talk about their experiences with others.

- 1) If a friend shares they have this struggle, how can you show them love and kindness?
- 2) If you find yourself struggling with these feelings or thoughts, reach out to a parent or godly adult in your life to walk alongside you.

PRAYER GUIDE

Ask your students to share their prayer requests and close your time together in prayer.

MAIN SCRIPTURES

Romans 1:18-2:4 NIV

¹⁸“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. ²¹For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. ²⁶Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

²⁸Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³²Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

2 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. ² Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. ³ So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? ⁴ Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?”

Matthew 19:4-5 NIV

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’?”

BONUS LEADER RESOURCE

Due to the nature of this topic, we want you to be extra prepared in spirit, heart, and mind. Please be sure to take extra time on your own before leading lessons to:

- Read over all the material in leader packet,
- Attend huddles on time,
- And pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare you and lead you as you lead your students in discussion.



HIM + HER STUDY GUIDE WEEK 4



MAIN SCRIPTURES:

Song of Solomon 2:7
Hebrews 12:1-2

MAIN POINTS:

1. Be willing to slow down and look for God's leading.
2. Honor God with your dating life.

JESUS CONNECTION:

It was Jesus' joy to suffer on the cross – because He loves you and wants a relationship with you.

@HopeHSM

1. READ

The Bible

Yessss! We are glad you are here because taking time on your own to study God's word is an amazing way to grow in your relationship with Him. Life with Jesus is the best life! Take a moment to pray and ask God to lead you as you study this Scripture; then read the Scripture (*from your Bible or it's on the back*).

2. OBSERVE

The Straight Facts

Who: _____

What: _____

Where: _____

Why: _____

How: _____

What is Repetitive?

Highlight it

What is Contrast?

Underline it

3. INTERPRET

What Does the Text Mean?

Research answers using trusted sources like a Study Bible, BibleProject.com, BlueLetterBible.org, and/or Bible.org

What is the historical and/or cultural context of this Scripture?

Song of Solomon (aka Song of Songs) is different from most Old Testament books because it's not a historical record of God and His people, it is a poem about love and desire. This verse is speaking to women, but guys this doesn't count you out! As God's people, we all can benefit from living out this Biblical wisdom. To hear more about context, check out The Bible Project's "[Read Scripture: Song of Songs.](#)" on YouTube.

What else do I know about the author, audience, or context of this passage?

What other Scripture might help me interpret this text?

What is this text's clearest meaning?

4. APPLY

Getting Personal

How do you relate to any of the characters, events, or words in this Scripture?

What truth(s) from this Scripture can you apply to your life right now?

What is God saying to you through this Scripture?

MAIN SCRIPTURES

Song of Solomon 2:7 NIV

“Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.”

Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

NOTES

[illegible]

DOODLES



Song of Solomon 2:7
Hebrews 12:1-2

1. Be willing to slow down and look for God's leading.
2. Honor God with your dating life.

It was Jesus' joy to suffer on the cross – because He loves you and wants a relationship with you.

WHAT are we talking about and WHY does it matter to me? (2-3 min)

- Share a personal story where you really enjoyed going fast (maybe riding a rollercoaster or outrunning someone) or were really annoyed by how slow something was (waiting in a line, slow internet).
- Our culture loves to go fast: microwaves, airplanes, data speeds – we love to go fast. I mean, how annoying is it when your internet is SLOW.
- Sometimes going fast can be a good thing, some times it's not the best thing. Sometimes going fast can make us miss things that are really important.

- Sometimes we can pursue relationships or always being in a relationship really fast. Too fast.
- We don't want to be alone so we rush to be in a relationship.
- It's fun. You always have someone to hang with or talk to. Feeling like someone cares, pursuing someone or being pursued by them: it's nice.
- We have to be careful because in the rush of it all we can become distracted and miss other things that really matter.
- Maybe you or someone you know has become distracted from school, family life, other friends in pursuit of a relationship?

- The biggest thing they can distract us from is our own personal, spiritual growth.

So WHAT does this mean for my faith and life with God? (5-6 min)

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR YOU.

- God has a plan for each and every one of you. Whether you know it or not, He has a bigger picture and purpose for your life.
- Jeremiah 29:11 – For I know the plans I have for you...
- Ephesians 2:10 – For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
- God has a plan for who He wants you to be and what He wants you to do, and based on my personal experience and the promise of Scripture, it's so much better than anything we could come with on our own.

[illegible]

SO WHAT CONTINUED

NOTES

GOD CONTINUED

SOMETIMES SLOWING DOWN IS A GOOD THING.

- If we are running so hard and so fast after relationships – or even other things like other's approval – we can miss part of the goodness God has for our lives.
- This leads us to one of our main verses that talks about how the desires of rushing into passion are classic, been around for centuries, but not always the best things: Song of Solomon 2:4.
- Song of Solomon (aka Song of Songs) is different from most Old Testament books because it's not a historical record of God and His people, it is a poem about love and desire. This verse is speaking to women, but guys this doesn't count you out! As God's people, we all can benefit from living out this Biblical wisdom.
- READ SONG OF SOLOMON 2:4.
- I don't know what to say about the reference to gazelles and deer – maybe was their version of a country song today that always references trucks and old town roads?
- But if you get past that the message is super clear – we don't have to rush.
- Our world puts so much pressure on you, on us, to date and to be a certain way – but slowing down, taking your time, waiting a while, can be a good thing.

BE WILLING TO SLOW DOWN AND LOOK FOR GOD'S LEADING.

- God has a plan for your life and it's worth pursuing.
- READ HEBREWS 4:1-2.
- This verse mentions for us to "throw off everything that hinders AND the sin that entangles" – meaning that things that aren't sin, they aren't bad, they can still weigh us down and distract us from the thing that matters most in our life: PURSUING JESUS.
- Be honest with yourself, are you pursuing relationships, or anything else for that matter, so much that it's coming before your pursuit of Jesus?
- PURSUING JESUS SHOULD BE FIRST IN OUR LIVES. If other things are distracting you from that, it's time to slow down and take a step back.

JESUS CONNECTION

- JESUS PURSUED YOU FIRST, before you were ever born. Look back at Hebrews – it was Jesus' JOY to suffer on the cross – because He loves you and wants a relationship with you.
- There are some really sweet love stories out there. Some couples have faithfully loved each other practically their whole lives. But there is a still a greater love story out there for you.
- The love story is about someone who moved heaven and earth to be in a relationship with you. A real Prince of Peace who became a King of Kings after He stormed the gates of hell to rescue you.

JESUS HAS A RACE FOR YOU TO RUN.

- THIS RACE WILL TAKE PERSEVERANCE. Perseverance is continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition. I mean I think that is the definition of 2020 – overcoming and persevering through hard things. Guard your spiritual growth from distractions.
- THIS RACE WILL PUT FOCUS ON JESUS. It will mean putting Jesus first and that might mean slowing down or stepping back from other things. It takes sacrifice. We aren't saying that dating is wrong, but if it causes you to put your relationship with Jesus on the back burner – that's not good.
- THIS RACE HONORS GOD. None of us are going to run our races perfectly, but that doesn't mean we can't strive to run our races for God better and better every day. Pursuing God honors God. It actively says that nothing in your life is worth pursuing more than pursuing God.

HONOR GOD WITH YOUR DATING LIFE.

- We've been talking about seeking Godly wisdom for dating all month, let me review a few main points we've learned:
- (1) Know what you're pursuing and don't make excuses or settle for less.
- We looked at character traits that should really be standards for us in who we date and who we become from Proverbs 31. Traits like being trustworthy, responsible, and kind.
- (2) Guys and girls may be different, but we can still seek to understand and respect one another. And we can respect God with our bodies.

TRANSITION

- Through this study I hope we will gain a greater perspective on dating that will help you truly live your best life – because Jesus has your true best life in mind for you.

NOW WHAT

NOW that I know, HOW can I live this out? (2-3 min)

YOU

- Think back through all you've learned today and through this series:
 - Are you settling for less?
 - Are you respecting God and others?
 - Are you pursuing Jesus before other things?
 - How have you grown in honoring God with your dating life?
- And here is a question I'd love us to discuss: What has stood out or impacted you the most? *(You can give space for students to answer now or wait to re-ask during discussion time. PRO TIP: Prep someone in the group to be ready to be the first to answer this question by giving it to them ahead of time and having time to think of their answer.)*

WE

- Not everyone is going to understand choices we make in dating when we follow God's boundaries.
- Let's support each other, have each other's backs. Encourage each other as we run our races after God.
- It's better when we don't have to do it alone.

PRAY

- Close your time together in prayer.

NOTES

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HIM + HER DISCUSSION GUIDE — WEEK 4 —



MAIN SCRIPTURES:

Song of Solomon 2:7
Hebrews 12:1-2

MAIN POINT:

1. Be willing to slow down and look for God's leading.
2. Honor God with your dating life.

JESUS CONNECTION:

It was Jesus' joy to suffer on the cross – because He loves you and wants a relationship with you.

LEADER CORNER

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

For students to center their lives around Jesus (and not dating)

BACKGROUND TO SONG OF SOLOMON

Today we are going to read from Song of Solomon, which is also known as the Song of Songs. This book is different from most in the Old Testament in that it's not keeping a historical record of God and His people. Instead, it's a poem about love & desire. If you read the whole book, you will see how love is described as a powerful and driving force. There are a lot of themes that repeat in this poem and we are going to talk in depth about one specific one today. Today's verses are short, but super powerful. *To understand even more about the context, check out the 7 minute YouTube video from [The Bible Project: "Read Scripture: Song of Songs."](#)*

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here. Let the students and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation, too.

CONVERSATION GUIDE

GET THEM TALKING

1. What kind of things do people miss when they are too consumed with a relationship?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

READ SONG OF SOLOMON 2:7 and discuss:

1. Why can it be so easy to "rush into love?"
2. Why do you think this verse cautions us to not awaken love early?
3. How can rushing too fast in a relationship cause us to lose sight on Jesus?
4. What are ways Christians can keep their focus on Jesus while dating?

READ HEBREWS 12:1-2 and discuss:

1. In your own words, what is this verse saying?
2. What are ways Christians can keep their focus on Jesus while dating?
3. As a group, let's come up with a list of 6 Ways to Honor God While Crushing/Dating (*Leaders, write down the list and text it to your group for them to save and look back on*).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

NEXT STEPS

Your next step challenge is to pick one of these 6 ways that you think you could grow more in your own life. Let's take a minute to brainstorm and think, what is one thing you can do this week to grow in honoring God in your crushing/dating life?

PRAYER GUIDE

Ask your students to share their prayer requests and close your time together in prayer.

MAIN SCRIPTURES

Song of Solomon 2:7 NIV

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