

LIFE
TOGETHER
DISCUSSION GUIDE

Love and Sex

1 Corinthians 6.9 - 7.5

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Share plans for future Community Group gatherings and the following happening in the life of the church:

- **WOMEN'S RETREAT October 20th & 21st** | Ladies, join the women of New City for a weekend of fellowship, fun, prayer, and teaching at the annual New City Women's Retreat! Guest speaker Melissa Bush will be sharing about how we are woven together in Christ. The cost for the retreat is \$65, which includes a shared room and three meals (Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and Saturday lunch). For those that need it, you also have the option of attending Saturday only. The Saturday only cost is \$30 and includes Saturday lunch. Please register online by October 7. Visit the City for more information and to register.
- **DUDES AND DONUTS October 21st** | Saturday AM while the ladies are away on their retreat.
- **MEMBERS' MEETING Monday, November 6th @ 7p** | We'll be holding officer elections, talking about the ministry year, and spending time in worship and prayer.
- **PUMPKINLAND PLAYDATE Tuesday, October 24th @9:15am** | Parents of small kids, a great outing. Cost is \$5 per person (1yr+). Check the bulletin or online for payment and registration info.

Again this week, talk briefly about your group's format and schedule for the semester.

We believe that people experience and grow in their faith when they spend time reflecting on God's Word, and also hearing from other Christians. That's what we're hoping for tonight.

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group in prayer. Pray extemporaneously, or use this prayer:

Father, your love for us surpasses our hopes and desires. Forgive our failings, keep us in your peace and lead us in your ways. Use our group tonight/today to make us more into the people you want us to be.

OPENER

Especially in these early weeks, taking time to introduce yourselves and getting to know each other is important. Open by asking folks to **introduce themselves**: *name, and other interesting tidbit if you'd like (i.e. hometown, where you live in Cincinnati, what you do during the day).*

Then ask, *Have you ever had an awkward date? If you're brave enough, describe it for us.*

STUDY/DISCUSSION

Our series this fall is called "Life Together." We'll be working our way through the first 10 chapters of 1 Corinthians.. This week we come to Paul's teaching on Love and Sex (well, mostly sex).

1. **Read 1 Corinthians 6.9 - 7.5.**
2. What "misdirections of the body" does Paul mention in verses 9-10? Which of these are most prevalent today?
3. What new identity does Paul call us to live out of in verse 11?
4. How does Paul answer the "sex is dirty" view in 7:1-5?
5. How does Paul answer the "sex is just an appetite" view in 6:12-18?
6. According to verse 16, what is sex designed to do? What kind of damage can be done if it's misused?
7. Alasdair MacIntyre says, "*I cannot answer the question, 'What ought I to do? unless I first answer the question, 'Of which story am I a part?'"* How do verses 14, 19 and 20 help us understand the story of which we are apart? What implications does this have for our sexual lives?
8. **Read the Companion Handout together.** What stands to you as significant or helpful?
9. How can our church community help each other in the work of "glorifying God with our bodies" (v.20)?

PRAYER:

Spend some time together in prayer. In the early weeks, this can be a challenge for a group just getting to know one another. You may elect to just lead the group in a closing prayer, pray together as a large group, or break into smaller groups to pray. You can share requests, or simply pray about the things you discussed tonight.

COMPANION HANDOUT

Despite all the talk of the “hookup culture,” the vast majority of sex happens within long-term, well-defined relationships. Yet Americans are having more trouble forming these relationships than ever before.... (Mark Regenerus, “The Death of Eros”)

[Paul] displays a psychological insight into human sexuality which is altogether exceptional by first century standards... He insists that is an act which... engages and expresses the whole personality in such a way as to constitute a unique mode of self-disclosure and self-commitment. (F.F. Bruce)

Sex is God’s invented way for two people to say to one another, “I belong completely, exclusively and permanently to you.” It’s a way of bringing people together physically, who have brought all the other areas of their lives together. This is why it’s appropriate expression is in the context of the marriage covenant. To put it another way: sex acts as a symbol of the pledge and commitment and permanence and closeness and exclusivity of marriage. Used rightly, the physical oneness is a sign of the emotional, legal, economic, social and emotional oneness that happens in marriage. And in that sense, sex solidifies that whole-life commitment. But if you take sex out of that context, it has the opposite affect. What is supposed to affirm and make you feel secure, tends to make you lonely and insecure. (from Sunday’s sermon)

The young women who talk to me on campuses about the effect of pornography on their intimate lives speak of feeling that they can never measure up, that they can never ask for what they want; and that if they do not offer what porn offers, they cannot expect to hold a guy. The young men talk about what it is like to grow up learning about sex from porn, and how it is not helpful to them in trying to figure out how to be with a real woman. Mostly, when I ask about loneliness, a deep, sad silence descends on audiences of young men and young women alike. They know they are lonely together, even when conjoined, and that this imagery is a big part of that loneliness. What they don’t know is how to get out, how to find each other again... (Naomi Wolf, “The Myth of Porn”)

This aspect of Christian discipleship, is going to feel like a heavy burden at times. It’s a high call - “Glorify God in your bodies.” God is saying, you need to give him your body. But this passage reminds us - he’s not asking you to do anything for him, that he hasn’t already done for you. “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.” The price was his own body and blood, which he gave you on the Cross. He’s asking for your body; but he’s already given you his. (from Sunday’s sermon)

The goal of the Christian moral life is not to just be right, but to be beautiful. (Greg Thompson)