

CHAPTER 8 SEX



This study guide offers a suite of resources for teachers, small group leaders, or parents to generate discussion and reflection. This guide is not intended to be a structured 'lesson plan', but aims to provide questions, discussion starters, Bible passages, videos, and challenge questions that can be shaped into a structured experience.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

You might use one or more of these to foster engagement in a discussion about sex:

- > What's the purpose of sex?
- > What makes sex most fulfilling?
- > How important for you is sex in the pursuit of a full and flourishing life?
- > What happens when sex becomes a lens through which you look at the world and your life?
- > What can you do if you have misused the good gift of sex in your life?

BIBLE PASSAGES

This resource is not intended to be a Bible study. However, discussion and reflection on one or more of these passages, and how they might inform a view of the topic of the chapter, is encouraged. It would be good to direct questioning towards, "What was the original context?", "What was the author's purpose?", and "How does the passage add to a big picture view of sex?":

"Drink water from your own cistern,
running water from your own well.

Should your springs overflow in the streets,
your streams of water in the public squares?

Let them be yours alone,
never to be shared with strangers.

May your fountain be blessed,
and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.

A loving doe, a graceful deer—
may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you ever be intoxicated with her love.

Why, my son, be intoxicated with another man's wife?
Why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman?"

Proverbs 5:15-20

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ 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’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” *Matthew 19:4-6*

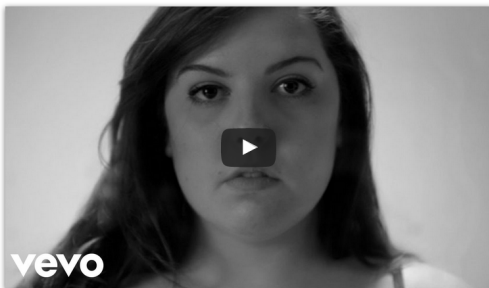
But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. *1 Corinthians 7:2-5*

It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.” *1 Thessalonians 4:3-8*

Do not make any idols. *Exodus 34:17*

STIMULUS VIDEOS

You might use one or more of these videos to generate engagement. Or you might use one at the end of the discussion with the focus being to critique the assumptions within the video. You might follow the viewing with questions like “What feelings did that video give you?”, or “Would this video be helpful to show young children? Why or why not?”, or “What do we learn about our culture in this video?”:



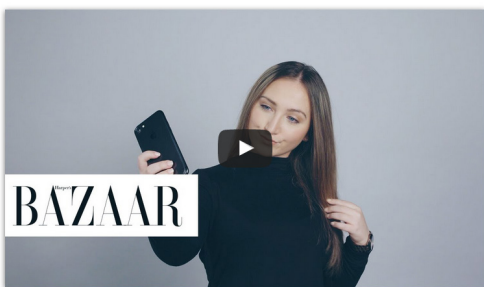
Body love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3f1zii5skA>



Objectification of women

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1tbUpm7tes>



Stories of teenage plastic surgery

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9f3Ri36gzU>



Porn and technology

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKqAd9TBPeo>

All videos can be found at www.thefrogandthefish.com/videos



EXTRACTS FROM THE BOOK

It might be that reading one, or both, of these extracts from *The Frog and the Fish* could be a helpful addition to your discussion time:

“How do we know what is right—moral—when it comes to sex? The answer in the West had previously been shaped by a view of sex and sexuality unfolded in the biblical story of the world, but it is now measured largely by individual feelings. If it feels good (and no one is harmed) then it is my right to be able to do it—and I will be fulfilled as a human when I do (and unfulfilled if I am prevented). This intense focus on individual rights, combined with a growing suspicion towards a ‘Christian’ view of morals, resulted in sex being separated from marriage, family, and childbearing and linked to individual identity, freedom, and fulfilment. Not only is a person now free to explore sexual expression in whatever way suits them best, but it has come to seem normal to think that our sexuality, and even the amount of sex we are having, is crucial to our fulfilment as human beings. Sex had previously been valued as a beautiful gift from God: one of many. However, it is now seen as beyond good and rather and ultimate individual right.”

The Frog and the Fish, Chapter 8, pg. 81

“How much do you think about the physical part of who you are—your body? If fulfilment is linked to sexuality in a sexualised world, then your body becomes a focus. We begin to obsess about our bodies because if I am not ‘sexy’ then I risk not being fulfilled and I will be less valuable in a society where sex and sexiness are the ultimate. Do you recognise this storyline? Have you ever felt its pressure? Here is a little activity you can do right now. Search for #selfie within Instagram and see how many headless, body-revealing, self-taken images are being posted. Consider also the growing focus on tattooing, piercing, bodybuilding, and body sculpting of one form or another. I am not suggesting that these are necessarily wrong in and of themselves (those of you with arm sleeve tats and a pierced belly button don’t need to send cranky emails), but they do suggest an increased focus of attention on our bodies that flows from a hyper-sexualised view of life. When we view ourselves through this sexualised lens, we may experience the feeling that we nearly always don’t live up to the ideals of ‘sexy’—and therefore value—that are bombarding us constantly.”

The Frog and the Fish, Chapter 8, pg. 84



CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

Perhaps the aim of your discussion/reflection with your group is to present a biblical perspective on the topic of the chapter. It might be that challenging the culturally shaped assumptions currently held needs to compliment this. You might use one or more of these questions to help achieve this:

1. How much emphasis do you place on sex and ‘sexiness’ in your life?

Sex is part of God’s good design but it’s not ultimate and does not define us as humans. God has created us to be sexual beings. However, this part of who we are is only one part of many. Our sexuality is far from our primary identity.

2. What are your feelings towards celibacy? Where did you get those feelings from?

Not having sex for parts, or all, of your life is fine. Celibacy is OK. Celibacy has never reduced anyone’s potential to live a richly fulfilling life—despite what your culture might say! Sex is not ultimate.

3. Should consent by both parties be the only thing to consider before having sex? What else?

Our culture shouts that consent is the only boundary. However, the Bible describes God’s good design for sex as being within a life-long committed relationship between one man and one woman.

4. How much is sex just about satisfying desire?

By its design, it is intimately and profoundly relational. Sex is far more about self-sacrifice than it is about the relief of biological or psychological urges.

5. What is the link between sex and family?

Sex between a male and a female always carries the potential to produce a family and two parents! It is God's design that sex should be expressed in the context where this can, if necessary, be embraced: marriage.

6. In what ways does pornography demean, divert, and damage?

Pornography is shockingly common. Its prevalence doesn't make it any less demeaning for the viewer or the 'actor'. It is highly addictive, while at the same time damaging to relationships (even for years to come). It diverts us away from the richness of relationships and sexuality that God has designed.

7. What about if I have already misused sex.

No matter what we have done with our bodies, expressed with our sexuality, thought in our minds, felt in our hearts, or done with our hands, God's transformative grace and mercy through Jesus is boundlessly offered to all who seek him.