

Sex and Marriage Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Do you know any married couples over the age of 70 who are still happily married?
2. What is one habit or personality trait that you have that might make it a little more challenging for someone to live with you?

Read the following passage: Matthew 5:27-32.

Behind Jesus's application of the command prohibiting adultery is the important biblical topic of covenant. Biblical covenants include the key concepts of selection, blessing, commitments, and attachment. We see these same themes appear in the context of the marriage covenant in Genesis 2. In fact, as Paul articulates in Ephesians 5, God intends the marriage covenant to be a picture of God's covenant commitment to his people. Jesus understood adultery, sexual immorality, and lust to be an assault on the marriage covenant and, by extension, our covenant with God himself.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Explain how the covenantal themes of selection, blessing, commitments, and attachment emerge in our relationship with God. How are these themes significant in the context of marriage? How can we glorify God in marriage, regardless of how our spouse is acting?
2. Both Jesus and Paul indicate that there are situations in which divorce is permissible (Matthew 5:32; 1 Corinthians 7:15). But, generally speaking, Jesus speaks strongly against divorce (see also Matthew 19:3-12). Explain how Jesus's teaching makes sense in light of the biblical idea of covenant.
3. Do you think Jesus's comments concerning lust extend to viewing pornography? Explain. Why is viewing pornography harmful? Is this something you struggle with?
4. Read Psalm 73. Explain the connection between attention and desire that emerges in this psalm.
5. What should we do if we have strong desires for sexual or emotional intimacy that we cannot presently fulfill in a righteous manner?
6. How can those who are single and those who are married mutually encourage each other in their respective circumstances?

Pray