

sex & sexuality

introduction

FACILITATOR:

Sexuality - Strong and warm and wild and free

Sexuality - Your laws do not apply to me

Sexuality - Come eat and drink and sleep with me

Sexuality - We can be what we want to be (Billy Bragg)

Billy Bragg epitomizes with these lyrics the moral relativism that is all around us and raises many questions for the Christian life. Is God a sexless being? Or is our sexuality part of what it is to be made in the image of God? How do we respond to the current culture? Over the next four cell studies we will explore and examine our own sexuality, God's intention for us as sexual beings and many other questions that will help us make sense of sex in a sex mad culture.

1: who does god say we are?

welcome

CELL: "Sex sells" or so they say. What advertisements have you seen that have had sexual connotations attached to a totally platonic object?

worship

FACILITATOR: Read Genesis 1 together noting all the places that God declared "it is good". Use this as a springboard to worship God for these things.

word

FACILITATOR: When it comes to our sexuality it is important that we understand who God says we are. If we don't know who we are then we will not know how to live a life that is pleasing to God. As we are at the start of this series on sex and sexuality it makes sense to go back to basics.

Break the cell group down into 3 smaller groups and ask each group to read the following scriptures and discuss the questions that follow in light of the fact the we are all sexual people.

Group 1: Read Genesis 1:26-31, Genesis 5:1-2.

-Do you think God is sexual and why?

-If you are created in the image of God how do you think God views you as part of His creation?

-Using these scriptures as a guide why do you think God created "male" and "female"?

-From reading these scriptures do you think God wants everybody to be married or not and why?

Group 2: Read Romans 3:23 and answer the following question in your small group.

-What implications does this have for our sexual identity?

Group 3: Read Galatians 3:26-28.

-What do you think this passage means when it says there is "...neither male nor female"?

-What do you think happens to your sexual identity when you become a Christian?

FACILITATOR: Get together as a whole cell and share the key points of your small group discussion. If you disagree take a little time to discuss the areas in which you have a difference of opinion. Once you have completed this, ask each member of the cell to say whether or not they agree with the following statement and why?

“It’s not how you describe yourself that is important but how you respond to God.”

CELL: As a group make a list of our characteristics as sexual beings and how we view ourselves in light of them. Make another list of these same things from the world’s viewpoint. Discuss where our views have been like the world’s, and how we can commit to change our thinking about sex to conform to God’s views. Pray that as a cell you would commit to encourage one another in this direction and hold each other accountable.

witness

CELL: Pray as a group for those people you know who have a confused idea of sexual identity (homosexuality, promiscuity, etc.) or the many students on campus who are in bondage to pornography.

what now?

CELL: Take time this week to read through Proverbs 5:15-23 each day. Write down your thoughts about sexuality and the marriage relationship as you meditate on this passage. Pray for your fellow cell members that they would remain pure in thought and deed when it comes to the area of sexuality.

2: so what is this sex thing?

welcome

FACILITATOR: Read Proverbs 5:15-23 from last week's "what now?" section and ask the cell members to share their thoughts as they meditated on that passage this past week.

worship

FACILITATOR: Ask different people to find a psalm or section of a psalm they particularly like. Take time to read them out as your worship to God.

word

FACILITATOR: It is clear that sex is important to God. He designed it as fundamental to His plan for a creation in harmony with Himself. There is something special about sex. But what is it and why is sex so important to God?

If as Christians we are to do the things that make God happy, it is worth knowing the things that make God happy and unhappy so far as sex is concerned. Let's look at what scripture has to say about it all.

CELL: Read Genesis 1:26-28 and read Genesis 2:18-24 together then discuss and answer the following questions:

Using these scriptures as a guide, draw a diagram or picture which describes the relationship between God, woman and man.

Scripture describes "woman" as "a suitable companion" and a "helper". It also says "It is not good for man to live alone".

When God made "woman" what sort of "suitable companion" and "helper" do you think He intended her to be? (Incidentally, the same word that is used for "helper" is also used to describe the Holy Spirit.)

Do you think He also intended "man" to be a suitable companion for "woman" and, if so, how?

FACILITATOR: On another sheet of paper write the word "sex". Using your diagram and the answers from your previous discussion, list words or phrases which describe how God feels about sex. (ex. It is a demonstration of overwhelming love, it represents complete commitment.)

CELL: Read Exodus 20:14,17 and answer the following question.

In the light of the things you have looked at and talked about during this session why shouldn't we do the things listed in these commandments?

FACILITATOR: Finish by discussing how what you have looked at today applies to your college life. Pray for one another in the challenges you face.

witness

CELL: Continue to pray as a group for those people you know who have a confused idea of sexual identity (homosexuality, promiscuity, etc.) or the many students on campus who are in bondage to pornography.

what now?

CELL: This week, read Ephesians 5:21-33. How does God use the marriage relationship to help us understand our relationship with him? Write your thoughts as you meditate on this passage.

3: judgement or mercy – you decide

introduction

FACILITATOR: *We deserve God's judgment but God responds with mercy. That sentence certainly describes what God was doing when He sent His son Jesus into the world. His purpose then, as it is now, is to see the relationship between Himself and people re-established. But what does this mean for sex? What sexual things cause a break in this relationship and how does God respond when they happen?*

welcome

FACILITATOR: *Read Ephesians 5:21-33 from last week's "what now?" section and ask the cell members to share their thoughts as they meditated on that passage this past week.*

worship

FACILITATOR: *College life is often a great opportunity for people to discover God more closely. Ask people to share specifically how God has worked in their lives since coming to college and worship God together for those things.*

word

FACILITATOR: *Choose a person to begin and then read the following passage of scripture with each person reading a verse in turn. After you have finished, answer the questions as a group.*

CELL: Read Leviticus 20:7-21.

Questions:

- Why do you think God is so specific with this list of "sexual sins"?
- Do you think there is any priority order in this list and why?
- Why are the punishments so severe?

CELL: Ask one person in the group to read John 8:1–11 and read it out with the rest of the group listening in silence.

FACILITATOR: *Ask everybody to reflect for a few minutes on what was actually happening during this piece of scripture, in particular the time of day, who was doing the accusing and who was the accused.*

This is a very dramatic and powerful piece of scripture. Choose five people from the cell to act out this passage of scripture. Choose one to be Jesus, one to be the woman caught in adultery and the other 3 to be teachers of the Law and Pharisees. The rest of the group can be people who were at the Mount of Olives listening to Jesus.

Once people have finished acting out this scene, ask the following questions of the characters and allow the other characters and those watching to help out with the answers:

CELL:

Questions to the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law:

- How does it feel to be made aware of your sins by Jesus?
- Why did you bring the woman and not the man involved in adultery before Jesus?

Questions to the woman caught in adultery:

- How did you feel when the Pharisees said you must be stoned to death?
- How did you feel when Jesus said, "Woman, where are they? Has no-one condemned you? Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin."

Questions to Jesus:

- Why did you say to the Pharisees, "He who has never sinned throw the first stone"?
- As the Son of God and someone who has never sinned why did you not throw the first stone?

FACILITATOR: *Discuss that it is clear from this passage of scripture that Jesus wanted to expose the double standards of the religious and to go against a culture that saw women as second class citizens with little value. In the eyes of society any worth that this woman had was taken away when she committed adultery. Jesus turned this around and gave her back her dignity.*

witness:

CELL: As Christians it is easy for us to be religious and see people as worthless because of how they describe themselves and what they do. This is particularly true when sex and sexual identity are concerned. As a group list groups of people who you have a less than Christ-like response to because of their expressed sexual identity or because sexual practices they are perceived to be involved with.

Spend time praying for each other asking God to give us a Christ-like attitude towards those whose sexuality or sexual activity is different to ours. It may be that you know particular people in your college who you could pray for specifically.

what now?

CELL: Take time this week to write out verses about the forgiveness and restoration of God such as 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. Carry these verses with you and work on committing them to memory. Start the habit of reciting them when you are tempted or feel guilty about already confessed sin. Pray for and encourage your accountability partner in their quest to remain pure.

4: living as children of the light

introduction

FACILITATOR: *The issues that we have looked at over the last three sessions demand a response. We need to embrace the freedom that comes from Christ's death and resurrection and learn how to live in that freedom. We also need to understand the responsibility that comes from being a disciple of Christ and making a difference for the Kingdom of God. If ever there was a time for taking seriously what God feels about sex then it is now. Teenage pregnancy and abortion continue to be of great concern. We live daily with the reality of the global HIV and AIDS tragedy. As Christians we have the opportunity to be part of the problem or part of the solution!*

welcome

CELL: What has the teaching on sex and sexuality been like in your home church?

worship

FACILITATOR: *Ask anyone who memorized 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 from last week's "what now?" section to recite it from memory. (If no one memorized it, simply have someone read it aloud.) Use this passage as a basis for your praise and worship to God.*

word

FACILITATOR: *Split the group into three smaller groups and have each group take one of the following passages of scripture, read it through together and answer the questions associated with it. Remind the groups that sexual purity involves purity in our thought life, our emotions, as well as our body. Keep this in mind as you answer the questions.*

CELL ACTIVITY:

Group 1: Read Romans 13:13-14.

- a) What will show us that we are behaving decently as far as sexual immorality is concerned?
- b) What practical things can we do to "clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ..."?

Group 2: Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

- a) What do you think verse 12 means as far as sexual activity is concerned?
- b) What practical things can you do to ensure that you "... honor God with your body"?

Group 3: Read Ephesians 5:1-10.

- a) What things in your life will show you that you are not an "...imitator of God...who is living...a life of love..."
- b) If you are "living as children of light" what things will demonstrate that this is the case as far as sex is concerned?

FACILITATOR: *Get back together as a whole group and share the key things that have resulted from your discussion. If during this section God's convicts you, act on it quickly and confess to someone you trust, don't keep sin hidden.*

CELL: Read Matthew 5:13-16 together.

FACILITATOR: *This passage of scripture is all about taking responsibility for our role in society as disciples of Christ. We are called to make a difference. Salt brings a positive flavor and preserves quality. Light brings clarity and makes people aware of what is dark and what isn't. We are to bring these things to society as a result of our relationship with Christ. There is a sense in which this will happen naturally but there is also an urgency about these words that should stimulate us to be proactive.*

To be proactive we need to know the extent of the problem. Read the following statistics in the knowledge that behind every statistics is a person like you.

- Over 50 million people to date have been infected with HIV around the world.
- In 1999, 2.6 million people around the world died of an AIDS related illness.
- Around half the people who become infected with HIV do so before they are 25 years old and die before they are 35 years old.
- A new person becomes infected with HIV somewhere in the world every 15 seconds.
- 800,000 to 900,000 girls 19 and under become pregnant each year.
- One third of those pregnancies end in abortion.
- Every year, 3 million teens acquire a sexually transmitted disease.

witness

- CELL:** Take time to pray for the sexual health of our nation and university campuses.
- Pray for those affected by HIV and AIDS in your community, your nation and your world.
 - Pray for the Christian organizations involved in responding to these challenges.
 - Ask God how you can make a positive difference with the people in your university.
 - Ask God how you could be part of the solution.
 - Also pray for any people you know personally who are involved in lifestyles that put them at risk for sexual unhealthiness.

what now?

- CELL:** Meet this week with an accountability partner or someone close to you to discuss and pray about your struggles and victories in living a sexually pure life in mind, body, and emotions. Pray for each other. Also pray everyday for anyone in your sphere of influence with HIV/AIDS or lifestyles that put them at risk.