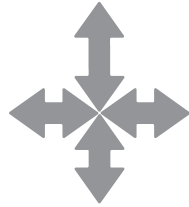




GUIDE FOR GROUP STUDY: the week of September 30th

This study is designed to help your community group grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. There are three dimensions to following Jesus.



UP: growing in relationship with God

IN: growing in relationship with other followers of Jesus

OUT: growing in relationship with the world around us as we join God in God's mission

If you are part of a co-ed group, consider splitting your group into two smaller groups this week: one with men, one with women.

This isn't necessary, but it could be helpful in fostering more honest conversations about sex, desire, etc.



Out: : Connect with the World Around Us (Join God in His Mission)

This weekend is CityServe. Over 50 churches will mobilize to represent Christ to Colorado Springs in a number of very tangible ways. Spend time praying for this event. Pray for those serving, for those being served, for the logistics, for the worship gathering on Friday and pray that our city would be blessed by Christ's Church.

Get Started:

When you were a teenager, who was your biggest celebrity crush?



UP: Connect with God through Spending Time in His Word

Read aloud the passages for the week: Exodus 20:14 and Matthew 5:27–30. Allow a few moments to silently reflect on what you heard. Underline or note words or phrases that seem meaningful.

1. We live in a highly sexualized culture. Billboards, TV ads, music, movies, magazines and more all regularly feature explicit sexual content and images. How have advertisers and Hollywood managed to divorce sex from marriage and replace it with consumerism? What are some of the consequences our society is experiencing because of its view of sex?
2. A very strong cultural belief right now is that love and desire are the ultimate guideposts in life. That our desires are part of our identity and must be respected and honored by all. To what extent should love or desire determine our morality? What other factors should influence our decisions? In a world where we have sex without consequences, do the "old rules" still apply?

3. What, or who, was the primary source of sex ed for you and your friends growing up? (parents, school, TV, movies, friends, magazines, experience, internet, etc.)
4. One of the most devastating effects of pornography is the way it trains a person's mind to view others as objects for their consumption. In some ways it teaches people to divorce a human body from personhood. Read Psalm 139:13–18. What does David think about his body? What is God's view of the body?*
5. Re-read Matthew 5:27–30. What do you think about Jesus's instruction to gouge out our eyes or cut off our hands to avoid sin? In your own words, what is Jesus is saying? Would this effectively restrict sin? Or is there something more going on?
6. The command in Exodus, and Jesus's teaching in Matthew 5, is designed to reorient God's people. They are meant to point to a more human way of being and a life of freedom. How does a call to faithfulness in marriage and a warning against lust point us towards a freer, fuller way of living?
7. This command reminds us that God claims authority over all aspects of our being, even our desires. It challenges us to submit our desires to Jesus and to trust Him to be the Lord of our deepest wants and needs. What would it look like for you to truly submit your desires to the Lord? What does it mean to trust Jesus with our deepest wants and needs?



IN: Connect with Each Other

Spend a few moments brainstorming ways your group members could model, encourage and pass on healthy views of sex and sexuality to the next generation so they aren't left to make the same mistakes people close to you have made, or to try to figure everything out on their own.

Close by sharing general prayer requests around your circle and then pray for each other as well as whatever ideas came up in your brainstorming.

*Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 128.