

Marriage & Sexuality

God's Design, the Bigger Story, and How We Live It Out
Weekly Discipleship Resources - Week of 3.22.26

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Thought

Few topics generate more confusion, more emotion, or more polarized responses than marriage and sexuality. And for good reason — this isn't just a political or cultural flashpoint. It touches real people, real families, and real stories. Before we get to specific verses or debates, the message this week asked us to zoom out and see the bigger picture: What is the Bible actually about?

From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture frames God's relationship with his people using the language of marriage — a loving groom, a set-apart bride, a union built for eternity. Human marriage isn't just a social institution. It's a picture of something sacred and cosmic. That foundation changes the conversation entirely.

Big Ideas

1. The Bible begins and ends with a picture of marriage — a groom and a bride, a union built for a perfect relationship. Human marriage is designed to reflect God's relationship with his people.
2. Jesus himself affirmed the Genesis design for marriage in Matthew 19, quoting the creation account directly and underscoring its permanence and spiritual depth.
3. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments — across vastly different cultures and centuries — Scripture speaks with a consistent tone about sexual activity outside of God's design: it is defined as brokenness, not simply a cultural preference.
4. Consistency across Scripture matters: this is not a cultural artifact we've grown past. God's design was the same in the garden, in ancient Jewish law, in first-century Roman culture, and it remains the same today.
5. For those living something different, the response is not condemnation — it begins with God's unconditional love, an invitation to surrender, and the promise that his grace meets us in the middle of our deepest struggles.
6. The Gospel must be the primary focus, love must precede every other response, and we are not allowed to be a stumbling block to those whose first impression of Jesus might come through us.

Ice Breaker

(Light, accessible, and a good on-ramp for any group)

Think of a topic that felt very black-and-white to you growing up that became more complicated as you got older. What changed — and what stayed the same?

Scripture Discussion & Life Application

This topic is personal for many people in many different ways. Lead with care, create space for honesty, and let grace set the tone.

Understanding Scripture

1. Read Genesis 2:22-25 and Revelation 21:1-5, 9-10. What do you notice about the way Scripture opens and closes with the image of marriage? What does that bookend tell us about how important this picture is to God?
2. Read Matthew 19:4-6. Jesus is being questioned about divorce, but his answer goes straight back to creation. What does he affirm about the nature of marriage — and what does it mean that he quotes Genesis directly?
3. The message pointed out that Scripture speaks consistently on this topic across multiple books, authors, cultures, and centuries. Why does consistency across that kind of span matter — and how does it shape the way you approach other areas where people argue the Bible is simply a product of its time?

Personal Reflection

4. Where has your understanding of this topic been shaped more by culture, politics, or personal experience than by Scripture? Be honest — most of us have a mix.
5. The message said that any sexual activity outside of marriage produces "at best a lesser version, and at worst a wholly broken version of the life God designed for us." How does framing it as God's design — rather than a list of rules — change the way you think about it?

Life Application

6. How do you personally navigate loving someone deeply while also holding convictions that may differ from how they're living?
7. Francis Schaeffer asked, "How should we then live?" Given everything in this message, what is one specific, practical way you want to live this truth differently — either in how you hold your own convictions or how you treat others who are wrestling with theirs?
8. Every person around you — regardless of how they're living — is made in the image of God and deeply loved by him. How does that truth change the way you engage with people who are living out something different than what Scripture defines as God's design?

Prayer Prompt

Father, this is a topic that touches real lives and real pain — including people in this room. Give us the humility to hold your truth without wielding it as a weapon. Give us the courage to love the way Jesus loved — toward people others walked past. For anyone here who is wrestling personally with this, remind them that your love is unconditional and your grace is sufficient. And for all of us — help us to live the truth, not just believe it.

Amen.