



LET'S TALK

PRACTICE MINISTRIES BIBLE STUDY CURRICULUM

LET'S TALK LESSONS & PRACTICE SESSION WORKSHEETS

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Practice Ministries Bible Study Curriculum and Exploring The Bible
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LET'S TALK

BIBLE LESSON SUMMARIES

Let's Talk Lesson Summaries

Question 1: What's Life All About?

"...we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Today we talk about your life being a mirror that brightly reflects the glory of the Lord.

Practice Session 1 encourages you to talk about praising God in everyday life.

Question 2: Which World Do You Want?

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness" (John 10:10). Today we'll talk about which world you want to live in: godless emptiness or godly fullness.

Practice Session 2 encourages you to develop godly character rather than godless passion.

Question 3: How Do I Become Successful?

"The ones who win this battle against the world are the ones who believe that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 5:5). Today we'll talk about success from God's point of view.

Practice Session 3 encourages you to look at your possessions from God's point of view.

Question 4: Why Is There Evil In This World?

"God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17). Today we'll talk about how evil came into this world by choice.

Practice Session 4 encourages you to fight evil with good.

Question 5: Why Does God Allow Evil?

"He will remove all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever" (Revelation 21:4). Today we'll talk about why God allows evil to happen.

Practice Session 5 encourages you to pray for family members using 1 Peter 2:3-5

Question 6: Who Is Truth?

"Then he showed me another vision. I saw the Lord standing beside a wall that had been built using a plumb line. He was checking it with a plumb line to see if it was straight." (Amos 7:7). Today we'll talk about how you can know what is true by knowing Who is truth.

Practice Session 6 encourages you to use the HELP test when making decisions

Question 7: What's Wrong With Me? (Appearance)

"Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless man living on earth at the time. He consistently followed God's will and enjoyed a close relationship with him" (Genesis 6:9). Today we'll talk about walking with God.

Practice Session 7 encourages you to focus on what's right with you.

Question 8: What's Eating You? (Eating Disorders)

"May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God" (Ephesians 3:19). Today we'll talk about eating disorders and how the way the world sees you and how God sees you are different as night and day.

Practice Session 8 encourages you to build yourself up through Ephesians 3:14-20.

Lessons 9-15 are a section on relationships: marriage, sex, friendships & dating. We're beginning this series with marriage in order to set the stage for talking about sex, and the issue of sex before marriage. Then we'll talk about friendships, which will set the stage for dating. If you're not dealing with some of these issues now, you will be soon. On an individual basis, I hope that you'll talk at whatever level you and your son or daughter is comfortable with. Whether it's a lot or a little, the most important thing is that you talk.

Question 9: What's The Big Deal About Marriage?

"And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her" (Ephesians 5:25). Today we're going to talk about God's original plan for marriage and what God has to say about marriage today.

Practice Session 9 encourages you to talk about marriage.

Question 10: When Can I Drive The Hummer? (Sex Part 1)

"As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one" (Mark 10:7-8). Today we're going to talk about why God created sex – the reason may not be exactly what you're thinking right now!

Practice Session 10 encourages you to talk about God's design for keeping sex inside marriage.

Question 11: What If I Drive The Hummer Now? (Sex Part 2)

"O Jerusalem, may there be peace within your walls and prosperity in your palaces" (Psalm 122:7). Today we're going to talk about how having sex now can hurt you later.

Practice Session 11 encourages a discussion about the health & emotional side of sex.

Question 12: How Do I Wait To Drive?

"A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12). Today we'll talk about making a conscious decision to remain in control and avoid sexual activity.

Practice Session 12 encourages you to write down the standards & commitments of purity you want to keep and write down a plan to stay pure.

Question 13: What Is A Good Friend?

"Dear children, let us stop just saying we love each other; let us really show it by our actions" (1 John 3:18). Today we're going to talk about "Good-For-You-Friends"

Practice Session 13 encourages you to practice being a good friend.

Question 14: Should I Go Out With Him? (Dating Part 1)

"the greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for their friends" (John 15:13). Today we'll talk about reasons why you should date and some reasons why you shouldn't date.

Practice Session 14 encourages you to get to know yourself.

Question 15: Should I Go Out With Her? (Part 2)

"Anyone who listens to my teaching and obeys me is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. 25 Though the rain comes and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse, because it is built on rock" (Matthew 7:24-25). Most professional baseball players start off in Little league, play high school, college, & minor

league ball, then get called up to the big leagues. A few make the All-Star team. Whether All-Star or not, every pro starts off learning the fundamentals. Today we'll talk about learning the dating fundamentals.

Practice Session 15 encourages you to practice spiritual, moral ethical and sexual purity.

Question 16: Where Do I Fit In? (Acceptance)

"Many people, including some of the Jewish leaders, believed in him. But they wouldn't admit it to anyone because of their fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. 43 For they loved human praise more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43). Today we'll talk about being accepted and choosing a crowd to run with.

Practice Session 16 encourages you to take a stand for Jesus and be accepted for who you are.

Question 17: How Do I Handle Peer Pressure?

"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it useful again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless" (Matthew 5:13). Depending on which direction peer pressure comes from, it can be a good thing. But some peer pressure can push you toward a direction that's not good for you or a direction you may not even want to go. Today we'll talk about what to do when peers press to hard.

Practice Session 17 encourages you to let Scripture guide you when peers press hard.

Question 18: It's My Money Isn't It?

"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." (Psalm 24:1). Today we're going to talk about honoring God by how you handle His money.

Practice Session 18 encourages you to follow a plan for handling the money He gives you.

Question 19: When Does Life Begin?

"Listen to me, all of you in far-off lands! The LORD called me before my birth; from within the womb he called me by name" (Isaiah 49:1). Today we're going to talk about what science says about when life begins.

Practice Session 19 encourages you consider how God's plan for you began before conception.

Question 20: What Does God Say About Life?

"what are mortals that you should think of us, mere humans that you should care for us?" (Psalm 8:4). Today we're going to talk about how God sees human life.

Practice Session 20 encourages you value human life as God does.

Question 21: What Is Abortion About?

"For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son - both alike belong to me." (Ezekiel 18:4). Today we'll talk about what abortion is and the contrast between the world's values and God's values when it comes to human life.

Practice Session 21 encourages you dad to guide your son or daughter through a discussion about the costs of abortion.

Question 22: How Do I Become Successful?

"Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he said. "Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good sense, and have the poise needed to serve in the royal palace. Teach these young men the language and literature of the Babylonians" (Daniel 1:4). Today we'll look at Daniel 1:4 and its outline for godly success.

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Practice Session 22 encourages you to follow Daniel 1:4 & Ephesians 6:6-7 in achieving success.

Question 23: Which Way Do I Go?

“In the beginning God...” (Genesis 1:1). Today we'll talk about taking a stand for what God says is right even in the face of being unpopular.

Practice Session 23 helps you deal practically with today's “do what you want to do” attitude.”

Practice Makes Perfect!

Over the past 18 years we've helped organize hundreds of bible studies. And we've come up with a pretty good recipe that will help your families get the most out of your bible study.

Here's a suggested outline for how to make your first bible study go smoothly:

- Invite Jesus to attend your bible study. Ask for His power and presence to work in and through each person gathered.
- If it's a morning study, have some donuts (donuts are key) and juice on hand. If it's an evening study, have some light snacks for the boys and dads before study begins.
- Start fairly promptly as some may have time constraints.
- We find that your study works best when the kids sit with their dads.
- Introduce yourself and then have the kids introduce themselves especially if there are some who do not know each other.
- Begin the bible study with an opening prayer. Ask if one of the kids or dads will pray - but don't push too hard, since it may be uncomfortable or intimidating at first - even among the dads. One idea is to assign the opening and closing prayer to one of the dads and their child, so that they have time to get ready.
- As the group gets more comfortable with each other, we find that rotating the prayer around from week to week is a good way to get the kids and dads involved.
- Give a short description about the day's lesson
- Lead-off with the discussion question & discuss it for a bit. Encourage your dads to participate in the discussion. We find that often dads will not say anything because it's "a study for the kids." But their participation is important.
- Go through the lesson at a comfortable pace for the group. If you don't finish - it's ok.
- End the study lesson promptly at the time mentioned. Twenty minutes of study is plenty. You may find that at times, less is better.
- Encourage the dads and kids to do the corresponding **Exploring the Bible Worksheet** each week, and leave time in your study for each child to give their answers.
- Encourage the kids to practice the quality or character trait emphasized in the day's lesson during the week. Challenge them to share with the group at the next study about any situations where they had an opportunity to put into practice what they learned.
- Here's a wonderful way to end each lesson: have each dad get with his child (or boy or girl he brings with him whose father is not there) and ask them to pray with each other. We have found that this is a wonderful way for a dad and child to learn to pray for each other. You may suggest that they ask each other what they would like prayer for that day.

Try the above recipe the first few times, and then if you need to, adjust it to meet your group's needs.

Sample Bible Study Agenda

7:10 - 7:20 a.m.	Fellowship over donuts and juice
7:20 - 7:40 a.m.	Bible study lesson
7:40 - 7:50 a.m.	Exploring the Bible review
7:50 - 7:55 a.m.	Prayer between each dad and his child
7:55 -	Practice what you've learned!

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BIBLE LESSONS

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1) What's Life All About?	2 Corinthians 3:18	10
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3) How Do I Become Successful?	1 John 5:5	14
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5) Why Does God Allow Evil?	Revelation 21:4	18
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7) What's Wrong With Me?	Genesis 6:9	22
8) What's Eating you?	Ephesians 3:19	24
9) What's The Big Deal About Marriage?	Ephesians 5:25	26
10) When Can I Drive The Hummer? (Sex Part 1)	Mark 10:7-8	28
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13) What Is A Good Friend?	1 John 3:18	34
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16) Where Do I Fit In?	John 12:42-43	40
17) How Do I Handle Peer Pressure?	Matthew 5:13	42
18) How Should I Handle My Money?	Psalms 24:1	44
19) When Does Life Begin?	Isaiah 49:1	46
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22) How Do I Become Successful?	Daniel 1:4	52
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Question 1: What's Life All About?

“...we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The word “glory” can be defined by magnificence or praise. It refers to something or someone's worth. A person may accomplish brilliance as an artist, a teacher or an athlete, and his glory is the praise he draws for his accomplishment.

The Bible talks about God's glory 275 times. So what is God's glory and what does it have to do with you?

Moses spent a lot of time with God but wanted to know Him even better. So he asked God to reveal more of Himself. Moses asked God to show him His glory. Here's what God said: **“I am the LORD, I am the LORD, the merciful and gracious God. I am slow to anger and rich in unfailing love and faithfulness. 7 I show this unfailing love to many thousands by forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion. Even so I do not leave sin unpunished, but I punish the children for the sins of their parents to the third and fourth generations” (Exodus 34:6-7).**

God's glory goes beyond His accomplishments. God's glory is all of Who He is - infinite abundance, wealth, splendor, majesty & perfection. God's glory is 1) His worthiness to be praised and 2) the praise He draws from you.

The purpose of your life – today and tomorrow – right now and in 2 ½ hours – is to praise God. “God does not exist to make a big deal out of you – we exist to make a big deal out of him”¹. Life is not about you. The Bible says, **“...there is only one God, the Father, who created everything, and we exist for him” (1 Corinthians 8:6).**

Your life is not about how good you are; but how good the God who made you is. It's not about what you don't have; it's about what you do have. It's not about what you get; it's about what you give to God.

Your life is all about allowing God to work within you, to make you more and more like Him so that you will be a mirror that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord.

Question: How do you allow God to work within you? [Less you and more Him]. It means asking God to make lasting changes in you on the inside for His glory – not yours.

David Robinson is a 2x Olympic Gold Medalist in Men's Basketball; 10x NBA All-Star; NBA MVP. Here's what David has to say about playing basketball: “Every time I step on the court, I think about glorifying God...I just want to make sure people don't think I'm great, but that they think about how great God is.”

Good Words To Remember

“He [Jesus] must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less” (John 3:30).

¹ (Max Lucado – It's Not About Me, pg 6)

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Practice Session 1: What's Life All About?

Psalm 145

I will praise you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. 2 I will bless you every day, and I will praise you forever. 3 Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise! His greatness is beyond discovery! 4 Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts. 5 They will speak of your majestic, glorious splendor and your wonderful miracles. 6 Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue; I will proclaim your greatness. 7 Everyone will share the story of your wonderful goodness; they will sing with joy of your righteousness. 8 The LORD is kind and merciful, slow to get angry, full of unfailing love. 9 The LORD is good to everyone. He shows compassion on all his creation. 10 All of your works will thank you, LORD, and your faithful followers will bless you. 11 They will talk together about the glory of your kingdom; they will celebrate examples of your power. 12 They will tell about your mighty deeds and about the majesty and glory of your reign. 13 For your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. You rule generation after generation. The LORD is faithful in all he says; he is gracious in all he does. 14 The LORD helps the fallen and lifts up those bent beneath their loads. 15 All eyes look to you for help; you give them their food as they need it. 16 When you open your hand, you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing. 17 The LORD is righteous in everything he does; he is filled with kindness. 18 The LORD is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him sincerely. 19 He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cries for help and rescues them. 20 The LORD protects all those who love him, but he destroys the wicked. 21 I will praise the LORD, and everyone on earth will bless his holy name forever and forever.”

1) Write down a responsibility, activity or relationship. Beside each one, say how you will praise God today & tomorrow through that responsibility, activity or relationship.

Dad: _____

Lad or Lass: _____

2) Dad: Write down and tell your children one thing what God has done for you (v 4).

3) Lad or Lass: Write down one way how God has picked you up or helped you (v 14-15).

4) Both: What verse from Psalm 145 do you want each other to pray for you this week?
Dad _____
Lad or Lass _____

Show & Tell

“He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less” (John 3:30).

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Question 2: Why In The World?

“Hurry, return to my father and tell him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me master over all the land of Egypt. Come down to me right away! 10 You will live in the land of Goshen so you can be near me with all your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all that you have. 11 I will take care of you there, for there are still five years of famine ahead of us. Otherwise you and your household will come to utter poverty.’ ” (Genesis 45:9-11).

Joseph was sold by his brothers to slave-traders who took him to Egypt and sold him as a slave. Seventeen years later Joseph winds up 2nd in command only to Pharaoh. Having prepared Egypt for the famine that would occur, Joseph tells his brothers to leave Canaan and bring their father Jacob (Israel) and their families to Egypt. This is what Joseph said, “Leave your land of death and decay and come to where you can live abundantly and richly.”

“Life is all about me.” That’s the way a thief thinks. A thief says, “I’ll do what I want to get what I want and I don’t care what happens to anyone else.” The Bible says the world is a thief: **“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy...” (John 10:10a).** This is the world – godless passion.

Here’s what godless passion offers you: emptiness (1 Peter 1:18); deceitfulness (1 Peter 3:10); filth (Colossians 3:7); slavery (Galatians 4:7); thirst with nothing to quench it (Revelation 21:5).

Question: What is the world trying to rob you of? This world is trying to steal what God offers to you: **“...life in all its fullness” (John 10:10b).**

Here’s life in all its fullness: truth (John 14:26); peace (John 14:27); freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17); blessings (Revelation 21:5).

The Olympic Women’s Heptathlon is 7 track & field events of running, jumping & throwing that crowns the winner the title of “world’s greatest woman athlete.” Sheila Burrell has been U.S. Outdoor Champion; World Championships Medalist; & 4th place finish in the Athens, Greece Olympics in 2004. She’s achieved what the world adores: fame, fortune & adoration. She’s been successful. But here’s what Sheila Burrell has to say about her success:

“It isn’t winning a gold medal or being number 1. It’s not how much money you make or how many awards you win. The things we’re trying to get while we’re in this world - they will go away. One minute people will be hollering your name, and the next minute they won’t know who you are. Success is when your character and your integrity precede your accomplishments, because godly success and godly character are eternal.”

The Bible says this world where godless passion reigns **“...is fading away, along with everything it craves...” (1 John 2:17).** This world of godless passion is dying and decaying and will take those who love it with it. The world will pass away, but God’s word endures forever. The Bible says, **“Let heaven fill your thoughts. Do not think only about things down here on earth” (Colossians 3:2).**

So, do you want to live in the world of godless passion where people holler your name one minute and then forget you the next; or in the world where godly character will lead to life in all its fullness? It’s your choice.

Good Words To Remember

The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness” (John 10:10).

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Practice Session 2: Why In The World?

Titus 2:11-14

“For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. 12 And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with self-control, right conduct, and devotion to God, 13 while we look forward to that wonderful event when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. 14 He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing what is right.”

1) Dad: Where do you recognize that godless passion is creeping into your life?

2) Lad or Lass: Where could the world’s values creep or have crept into your life?

3) Dad: What ways can you protect your family from godless passion starting today?

4) Lad or Lass: What steps can you put into action today to protect yourself from godless passion in your life?

5) Dad: What character trait do you want to be remembered for?

6) Lad or Lass: What character trait do you want to be remembered for?

7) Dad: What character trait do you want most to be instilled into your child’s life?

8) Dad: What area of your life do you want specific prayer for this week?

Self-Control _____
Right Conduct _____
Devotion to God _____

Lad or Lass: What area of your life do you want specific prayer for this week?

Self-Control _____
Right Conduct _____
Devotion to God _____

Show & Tell

“We should live in this evil world with self-control, right conduct, and devotion to God (Titus 2:12).

Question 3: How Do I Become Successful?

“The ones who win this battle against the world are the ones who believe that Jesus is the Son of God” (1 John 5:5).

Question: How do I become successful? The answer to this question depends upon which world you want to be successful in.

Jim Ryun is the 1968 Olympic Silver Medalist in the men’s 1500 Meter Race in Mexico City, Mexico. A three time Olympian; World Record holder in the Mile, 1500, and 880, he was one of the most successful and recognized athletes in the world.

Here’s what Jim Ryun has to say about his success: “For 10 years, running had been my god... I became the world’s first high-schooler to run the mile in under 4 minutes and qualified to compete in the Tokyo Olympics. I owed it all (I thought) to my god – running. I gave my god the best of everything: my time, my energy, my love...Yet in the midst of the glory, I became aware of a gnawing emptiness in my heart. “If I’m so successful,” I reasoned, “Why am I so dissatisfied?”

The world referred to in 1 John isn’t talking about the planet or the people on it. It’s talking about the character of the culture around you. It’s talking about people’s values being more important than God’s values. It’s talking about godless passion. And this reign of godless passion hates God and those committed to Him because it is controlled by Satan: **“the world around us is under the power and control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19).**

Question: What is success according to the world? It is achieving what the culture prizes: “physical pleasure, lust for everything we see, pride in our possessions” (1 John 2:16).

Question: What is success according to God? Not worldly power, honor, or riches, but victory over the world - victory in the sense that the world doesn’t conquer you or forces you into its own lifestyle and way of thinking. Rather, those who want success according to God live within this world as Jesus would – sorting out what the world offers according to the principles and priorities that Jesus has.

Question: So how do you achieve victory over this world? The ones who win this battle against the world are the ones who believe that Jesus is the Son of God and trust in Jesus Christ to give them the victory (1 John 5:4-5).

Three months before the 1972 Olympics in Munich, Germany, Jim Ryun and his wife Anne prayed with friends and received Jesus into their lives. Jim recalls “...As we prayed, the empty place in my heart, never filled by the successes of running, was filled with an overwhelming peace.”

Jim Ryun found the success he was looking for. Jesus says, **“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn’t like the peace the world gives” (John 14:27).**

Good Words To Remember

“Whoever has God’s Son has life; whoever does not have his Son does not have life” (1 John 5:12).

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Practice Session 3: How Do I Become Successful?

John 17:15-18

“I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. 16 They are not part of this world any more than I am. 17 Make them pure and holy by teaching them your words of truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.”

Godly success in this world is first & foremost believing that Jesus is God's Son (1 John 5:5) and having Jesus in your life (1 John 5:12).

1) Dad: If you have invited Jesus into your life, briefly tell your son/daughter how that decision came about in whatever way it has.

Lad or Lass: If you have invited Jesus into your life, briefly tell your dad (or mom) the when/where/how you made that decision.

2) Write down some of the things you enjoy most having or doing.

Dad:

Lad or Lass:

1 John 2:16 says the world places undue importance on pleasure and possessions. We need to sort out what the world offers according to the value Jesus places on them.

3) Dad: How can you keep the pursuit of worldly pleasures from taking precedence in your life?

Lad or Lass: In what ways can you keep the “pursuit of stuff” from being too important to you?

4) Dad: Which of the world's lifestyles or way of thinking concerns you most in its influence on your son/daughter?

5) Lad or Lass: Which of the world's lifestyles or way of thinking concerns you most in its influence upon you and your family?

6) Pray John 17:15-18 over your family this week.

Show & Tell

“Keep away from anything that might take God’s place in your hearts” (1 John 5:21).

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Question 4: Why Is There Evil In This World?

“God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17).

It's not too hard to see that evil exists in the world around us. Just pick up this morning's newspaper - you probably don't have to go much farther than the front page to find it.

The meaning of the word 'evil' means 'to spoil', 'to break in pieces.' Evil comes when sinful created beings, both angelic and human make choices that go against God's ways and result in hurtful effects. It's anything that goes against God's original intent or design of His creation. In other words, evil is the abuse of God's gift of choice.

Upon finishing His creation, **“God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was excellent in every way” (Genesis 1:31).** When Adam & Eve disobeyed God in the Garden, all of God's good creation was spoiled. **“Against its will, everything on earth was subjected to God's curse. 21 All creation anticipates the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay” (Romans 8:20-21).**

Question: So, did God create evil? God did not create evil, rather, the possibility of evil is built into the risky gift of choice. God is holy, separate from all evil and is in no way responsible for it. Look at Genesis 2:16-17. God's command:

1. Says what His desire for us is: Obedience to Him
2. Implies that we have the ability to obey
3. Implies that He gives permission for us to choose obedience or disobedience
4. Says that we are responsible for our choices
5. Gives the consequence of our disobedience: a spoiled, broken relationship with Him

Question: Why didn't God make us so we wouldn't choose to do evil? God gave to us the gift of choice. God could have made us in a way so that we would not choose to do evil. But God loves us and because He does He will not make us obey Him. Apparently God thought it was worth the risk of creating us the way He did.

Good Words To Remember

“Loving God means keeping his commandments, and really, that isn't difficult” (1 John 5:3).

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Practice Session 4: Why Is There Evil In This World?

1 Timothy 6:11-14

But you, Timothy, belong to God; so run from all these evil things, and follow what is right and good. Pursue a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight for what we believe. Hold tightly to the eternal life that God has given you, which you have confessed so well before many witnesses. 13 And I command you before God, who gives life to all, and before Christ Jesus, who gave a good testimony before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you obey his commands with all purity. Then no one can find fault with you from now until our Lord Jesus Christ returns.

1) What evils in this world/your community particularly concern you?

Dad: _____
Lad or Lass: _____

2) What evils in your community do you come into contact with daily?

Dad: _____
Lad or Lass: _____

3) How can you avoid these evils day to day?

Dad: _____
Lad or Lass: _____

4) What particular evils do you want each other protected from?

Dad: _____
Lad or Lass: _____

5) From your answers in questions 1-4, what will you pray for each other this week?

Dad: _____

Lad or Lass: _____

Show & Tell

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

Question 5: Why Does God Allow Evil?

“He will remove all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever” (Revelation 21:4).

In September of 1999, a man walked into a youth rally in the sanctuary of Wedgwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX, and randomly killed 7 innocent people, most of them teenagers, and injured many others.

Question: Why does God allow evil to happen? That God allows evil to happen is hard for us to understand because God is infinite in His thoughts and ways and we're not. The Bible says, **“My thoughts are completely different from yours,” says the LORD. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine” (Isaiah 55:8).** But there are some answers as to why God allows evil to happen.

God tolerates evil, and uses it for His purpose - As God said to Pharaoh, **“I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you, and so that my fame might spread throughout the earth” (Romans 9:17).**

God uses evil in His administration of His world to punish individual & national wickedness. God allows evil in order to get your attention about sin in your life; or as a nation to create sympathy and kindness thereby uniting us in a common purpose to overcome evil. If we don't seek God's perspective on why a certain event happens, we leave ourselves open to the possibility of speaking wrongly about why certain things happen (see Job 42:7).

Question: Why doesn't God just stop evil from happening? First of all, God could stop evil if He chose to do so. The Bible says, **“Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Genesis 18:14).** Sometimes, God does overrule evil through healing or by preventing further evil. But remember that all evil is a consequence of choices God's created beings - angelic & human make. If God continually steps in and interrupts all physical evil, He would have to interfere with our exercise of free choice. God will not force us to love Him or obey him - In effect, God says, “Thy will be done.”

One day, though, all evil, both physical and moral, will be eliminated forever, and God's creation will share in the destiny that God has prepared for those who love Him:

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a beautiful bride prepared for her husband. 3 I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. 4 He will remove all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever.” 5 And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making all things new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true” (Revelation 21:1-6).

Good Words To Remember

“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord” (Psalm 27:14).

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 5: Why Does God Allow Evil?

2 Peter 1:3-5

“As we know Jesus better, his divine power gives us everything we need for living a godly life. He has called us to receive his own glory and goodness! 4 And by that same mighty power, he has given us all of his rich and wonderful promises. He has promised that you will escape the decadence all around you caused by evil desires and that you will share in his divine nature. 5 So make every effort to apply the benefits of these promises to your life. Then your faith will produce a life of moral excellence.”

1) Match the verse with possible reasons God allows evil

- _____ Glorify God
- _____ Test the genuineness of your faith
- _____ Encourage and comfort others
- _____ Strengthen your faith
- _____ Make you dependent on God
- _____ Teach you God's Word
- _____ Give you hope
- _____ Reassure you of His presence in your life

- a) Job 1:21
- b) Job 23:10
- c) Psalm 119:71
- d) Isaiah 43:1-2
- e) 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- f) 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
- g) 1 Peter 1:6-7
- h) 1 Peter 5:10

2) What is one situation you've experienced that was or appeared bad but good came out of it?
Dad: _____

Lad or Lass: _____

3) What particular evil in the world or your community concerns you right now?

Dad: _____

Lad or Lass: _____

4) According to the answers in question 3, what will you pray for each other this week?

Dad: _____

Lad or Lass: _____

5) Dads: Pray 2 Peter 1:3-5 over each member of your family this week.

Show & Tell

“Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good” (Romans 12:21).

Question 6: Who Is Truth?

“I am the truth and the way...” (John 14:6).

Question: What is truth? Webster’s dictionary defines truth as holding faithful to an original or standard. The Bible says that God is The Original: **“Christ is the one through whom God created everything in heaven and earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see... (Colossians 1:16).** So if we want to know what is right or wrong, good or evil, we should ask the source: God. God then, might ask the question another way, “*Who is truth?*”

The Bible says, **“Then he showed me another vision. I saw the Lord standing beside a wall that had been built using a plumb line. He was checking it with a plumb line to see if it was straight.” (Amos 7:7).**

Bricklayers use a plumb line as a standard when they build a wall so it measures straight and true. The standard for all absolute truth is The Plumb Line. His name is Jesus. The Bible says, **“I [Jesus] came to bring truth to the world” (John 18:37).** Jesus Christ is the standard by which we can absolutely know what is right and what is wrong.

Now the truth we’re talking about isn’t something like an 11:00 p.m. curfew. That’s a temporary guideline for one person that will someday change. We’re talking about absolute truth - truth that is the same for all people at all times in all places. Because truth is something God is, it means:

- Truth is not something you decide for yourself. The Bible says, **“...grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).**
- Truth cannot change from person to person or community to community because Jesus is God in person. The Bible says, **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).**
- Others who claim truth cannot be equal to God’s truth. Jesus did not say, “I am a truth. He says, **“I am the truth” (John 14:6).**

The world, however says, “Figure out what’s right on your own.” But inventing your own truth is dangerous. Those who listen to the world and live by their own standards of rightness and wrongness are more likely to lie, cheat, physically hurt people, steal, use illegal drugs, view pornography, commit suicide than people who follow the Plumb Line.

If you choose not to live your life by God’s standard of truth when making moral decisions, you run the risk of being like little children, **“forever changing their minds about what they believe because someone has told them something different or because someone has cleverly lied to them and made the lie sound like the truth” (Ephesians 4:14).**

Cat Reddick is a member of the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team that won the Olympic Gold Medal in Women’s Soccer in the 2004 Games in Athens, Greece. While Cat was preparing to fly to Athens for Olympic competition, she also prepared to make good decisions in the midst of all the excitement and available choices to her by choosing to spend time with Jesus Christ, who is the source of truth. Cat says, “It gets kinda hard because I’m around people with different philosophies. My teammates say I’m closed-minded and that I need to be open to the views of the world...I’m pretty open-minded for other things, but I’m closed-minded about my faith because I know its right.”

The world says, “Invent your own truth.” Jesus is saying, “I’ve already set up what’s best for you. I am the way and truth (John 14:6). Follow me (John 1:43).

Good Words To Remember

“I came to bring truth to the world” (John 18:37).

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 6: Truth – Making Good Decisions

Matthew 7:24-25

Anyone who listens to my teaching and obeys me is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. 25 Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse, because it is built on rock" (Matthew 7:24-25).

If you have a question about whether some activity is right or wrong, run it through the HELP test.

Honor God: "Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth" (Psalm 86:11). Do your decisions agree with what God and His Word says is right?

1) Dad: What's one decision that you need to check God's Word to help you choose correctly?

2) Lad or Lass: What decision you're making right now do you need to check God's Word to help you choose correctly?

Enslave: "...even though "I am allowed to do anything, I must not become a slave to anything" (1 Corinthians 6:12). Is something enslaving you and taking control of your life?

3) Dad: Is there an area of your life that is enslaving you?

4) Lad or Lass: Is there an area of your life that is enslaving you?

Lead Others: "Stand your ground, putting on the sturdy belt of truth..." (Ephesians 6:14). Will what you're doing lead others to make a good decision or bad decision?

5) Dad: What decision are you making this week that others will follow your lead?

6) Lad or Lass: What decision you make this week will influence others to do the same?

Please God: "We ask God to give you a complete understanding of what he wants to do in your lives, and we ask him to make you wise with spiritual wisdom. 10 Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and you will continually do good, kind things for others. All the while, you will learn to know God better and better" (Colossians 1:9-10). Will your decision please God?

7) Dad: What decision will you make this week to please God?

8) Lad or Lass: What decision will you make this week to please God?

Show & Tell

I'll listen to God's voice and make a good choice (Matthew 7:24).

Question 7: What's Wrong With Me?

“Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless man living on earth at the time. He consistently followed God’s will and enjoyed a close relationship with him” (Genesis 6:9).

- I'm so much taller than all my friends. It makes me feel kind of self-conscious.
- I worry about my weight. I feel like everyone looks better than me.
- I hate my weight and what I look like.
- Everybody is bigger than me.
- Why am I so ugly?
-

Ever had those thoughts? If so, you're not alone. A study of nearly 50,000 teens ¹ revealed that the majority list appearance as their biggest concern.

In our world physical attractiveness is highly valued. You are constantly bombarded in magazine ads, billboards, t.v shows, commercials, videos, and movies with false pictures of the perfect body. The world is waging war against you. It wants you to believe that you should look like a Barbie or a Ken doll, and if you don't measure up, you're worth less than someone who has a better face or a better body.

Let's face it – some people are more attractive than others when it comes to a body or a face. Someone will be bigger, stronger and faster. But our world puts way too much emphasis on the body. God doesn't do that. Here's what God says: **“People judge by outward appearance, but I look at a person's thoughts and intentions” (1 Samuel 16:7).**

If being good-looking is important to God, then Jesus Christ would have been a really good looking guy. But He wasn't: **“There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him” (Isaiah 53:2).** Jesus wasn't good looking, yet He rocked the world because he walked with God.²

Concentrate on walking with God. He has a plan for you and your body is part of that plan: **“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).** Give him a chance to do what He's going to do.

Instead of asking: “Why am I not better looking on the outside?” Ask this question: “How can I cooperate with God to help me become better looking on the inside?”

Good Words To Remember

“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful” (Psalm 139:14).

¹ Exeter University, U.K., 1998.

² Dawson McAllister, Dawson McAllister Live, 1997

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 7: What's Wrong With Me?

Psalm 139:13-16

“You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. 14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it. 15 You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. 16 You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.”

1) Dad: In what ways do you feel you walk with God?

2) Lad or Lass: What do you see in your dad that lets you know he walks with God?

3) Dads: What qualities/characteristics do you admire in your son or daughter?

4) Lad or Lass: What area in your life do you feel God did a really good job with you?

5) Dads: Write short note telling your son or daughter what characteristics / qualities you value in him / her.

6) Lad or Lass: What plans or interests do you have for your future? What’s one characteristic or quality you want to develop to help you in those plans?

7) Lad or Lass: God’s plans for you include your appearance. What one thing about your appearance will you praise God for this week?

Show & Tell

“You should be known for the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God” (1 Peter 3:4).

Question 8: What's Eating You?

“May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God” (Ephesians 3:19).

Two girls who finished their first semester at different colleges were asked about the biggest challenge they'd faced on campus. Their response was seeing the number of girls struggling with eating disorders.

The world today puts an incredible amount of pressure – especially upon girls - to be perfect looking. Everywhere you look - TV commercials, magazine articles & ads, movies – you're being told that having the perfect figure and the perfect look will make you happy. So for millions, the thought of having a more ideal appearance and a more ideal weight becomes an overwhelming obsession.

At the heart of eating disorders such as anorexia (self-starvation) or bulimia (over-eating followed by purging) is a poor self-image. There's a feeling that, "I'm not really worth very much the way I am; I have to do something to make myself more worthwhile."

But don't mistake feelings for truth. You're worthwhile to God, and He's the one who really knows you. God is your heavenly Father and He thought of you long before you ever showed up: **“You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed” (Psalm 139:16).** In fact, God couldn't wait for you to get here: **“For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago” (Ephesians 2:10).**

You're a big deal to God, but the biggest deal about you is that you belong to Him: **“...You do not belong to yourself, 20 for God bought you with a high price...” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).** You are more precious to God than how pretty or handsome you are, how well you do at sports or school, or how popular you become.

Question: Just how precious are you to God? The Bible says that He was willing to send His Son to die for you: **“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners” (Romans 5:8).** You don't have to earn God's love. He loves you because of who you are, not for what you do. Your value as a person comes from the fact that God made you, and that God continues to love you. ¹

Despite what the world says, you don't have to be perfect. What He wants is for you to keep getting better as a person. The Bible says, **“I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the wonderful future he has promised to those he called” (Ephesians 1:18).**

You only have one body to work with while on Earth. You can spend all your time thinking about it, or use that time to develop other parts of yourself. What's most important is to **“be known for the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God” (1 Peter 3:4).**

Good Words To Remember

“By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope” (Ephesians 3:20).

¹ www.lifeway.com; The 24 Hour Counselor

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 8: What's Eating You?

Ephesians 3:14-20

“When I think of the wisdom and scope of God’s plan, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, 15 the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. 16 I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will give you mighty inner strength through his Holy Spirit. 17 And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God’s marvelous love. 18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is. 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God. 20 Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.”

1) Dads: The word “blessing” means to send down the right road. Write a short blessing for your son/daughter, expressing your heart’s desire for him/her.

2) Lad or Lass: What’s one thing you’d say your friends like about you?

3) Lad or Lass: What’s one thing about yourself that you like a lot?

4) Dads: What are 3 things you’d like to know more about your son/daughter?

5) Lad or Lass: What are 3 things you’d like to talk with your dad about?

6) Dads: Our world constantly pushes physical perfection upon our kids. How can you help protect them from the world’s thinking?

7) Both: Does having a “perfect body” mean happiness or success? Why or why not?

8) Both: Pray Ephesians 3:14-21 for each other this week.

Show & Tell

“For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need” (Philippians 4:13).

Resources; Links for articles, assistance:

- www.lifeway.com - click on “tools” then click on 24 hour counselor
- christiananswers.net - under children, click on “teenagers,” then on eating disorders
-

Question 9: What's The Big Deal About Marriage?

“And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her” (Ephesians 5:25).

Marriage is God's idea. He invented it and performed the first wedding ceremony in the Garden of Eden. Yet a lot of people say that marriage is old and outdated and must be redefined so it reflects our current culture. So what does God have to say about marriage today?

The Bible says, **“God raised him [Christ] from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for time being but forever. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this Christ rules the church” (Ephesians 1:20-22). The Message).** God says He is in charge of marriage.

The Bible says God patterned people after Himself: **“God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).** God is 3 Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They love each other and are completely committed to each other. Their relationship is permanent & exclusive. And God wanted people to experience that kind of relationship on a human level.¹ **“This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one” (Genesis 2:24).** God designed males and females for marriage, and designed marriage as a picture about the closeness of our relationship with Him in heaven. Marriage is not about you – it's about God.

Marriage is a covenant - an exclusive contract between a man and a woman before God and He intends for it to be permanent. The Bible says, **“Since they are no longer two but one, let no one separate them, for God has joined them together” (Matthew 19:6).** God set up marriage as the bedrock of a stable culture. Changing God's definition of marriage is the quickest way to destroy families and a nation.

Marriage exists to multiply a godly legacy. The Bible says, **“He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children, so the next generation might know them—even the children not yet born—that they in turn might teach their children. 7 So each generation can set its hope anew on God, remembering his glorious miracles and obeying his commands (Psalm 78:5-7).** God designed men and women to join physically and produce children. Children were made by God to be nurtured by loving moms and dads from birth, and God has set up the family as the primary institution to tell each succeeding generation about Him.

God set marriage up a long time ago but that doesn't mean it's obsolete or outdated. Marriage was thousands of years old when Jesus taught people to honor it. Neither should marriage be abandoned just because people say it isn't working so well. The Bible says, **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. 9 So do not be attracted by strange, new ideas...” (Hebrews 13:8-9).** Truth is never determined by majority vote, but by examining God's Word.² What we should be doing is working on making marriage stronger so our families and country are healthier.

Good Words To Remember

“Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage” (Hebrews 13:4).

¹ Family Life's The Family Room, March 2004, www.FamilyLife.com/familyroom, by Dennis Rainey & Bob Lepine

² Henry Morris and Martin Clark, The Bible Has the Answer, Master Books

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 9: What's The Big Deal About Marriage?

Psalm 78:1-7

“O my people, listen to my teaching. Open your ears to what I am saying, 2 for I will speak to you in a parable. I will teach you hidden lessons from our past 3 stories we have heard and know, stories our ancestors handed down to us. 4 We will not hide these truths from our children but will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD. We will tell of his power and the mighty miracles he did. 5 For he issued his decree to Jacob; he gave his law to Israel. He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children, 6 so the next generation might know them—even the children not yet born—that they in turn might teach their children. 7 So each generation can set its hope anew on God, remembering his glorious miracles and obeying his commands.”

1) Dad: How did you learn God's truths growing up? How have you passed down God's truths to your child(ren)?

2) Lad or Lass: To you, what's been the best way your dad has helped you understand God's truths?

3) Lad or Lass: What are a couple of God's truths that you've learned through your family?

4) Dad: What does it mean to have Jesus Christ at the center of a marriage?

5) Lad or Lass: What questions do you have about marriage?

6) Dad: What's important to you about commitment in any relationship?

7) Lad or Lass: What's important to you about commitment in any relationship?

Show & Tell

“Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage” (Hebrews 13:4).

Question 10: When Can I Drive The Hummer? (Sex Part 1)

“As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one” (Mark 10:7-8).

Sex is God’s idea. He invented it. There’s one very obvious reason why: you wouldn’t be reading this if He hadn’t. But that’s not the primary reason God invented and designed sex. God means for sex to be a very special gift to be opened at a special time in a special place.

Question: When it comes to sex, what exactly are we talking about? Sex is more than just intercourse. Sex is any sexual activity or “play” – with the intent to “turn on” or sexually arouse. Sex includes intentional kissing or any touching of private parts with any part of your body. This may be an expanded definition from what you’ve heard, but you need to start thinking this way because of how God made you.

The Bible says, “...**may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until that day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again**” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). You are spirit, soul and body. You can’t separate your spirit and your soul - your emotions, feelings, personality - what makes you, you - from your physical body. What you do physically affects you mentally & emotionally. And when it comes to sex, it affects the other person physically, mentally & emotionally. When a male and female engage in sex, physical chemicals in the body are released that glue the couple together emotionally. God made sex this way because He knows that the emotional side of love isn’t strong enough to glue a couple together. Feelings come and go. So, God came up with a pretty good wedding present to help the couple stay together when their marriage is tested.

God is a Dad and like most dads He likes to give gifts to His kids. Really good ones. When parents give gifts to their kids, they give them what’s appropriate. They wouldn’t hand their 3 year-old the keys to a Hummer. Sex is a gift from God. But like any gift, it’s only appropriate when opened at the right time, at the right place by those for whom it is intended.

Think of a 100-year-old family Bible passed down from generation to generation. Within it are irreplaceable family photos, notes and family trees. When you need a stepstool, you don’t reach for that Bible. That family Bible – that heirloom – is reserved for special times and kept in a special place. When it comes to sex, God means for it to be reserved for a special place at a special time. The special place is marriage and the time is with your husband or wife.¹

The answer to the question, “Why do I have to wait to have sex until marriage?” is this: God’s wedding present is to be opened after the ceremony to unite the couple in order to make their marriage secure. Sex outside of marriage wounds your soul and damages you physically & emotionally because this gift is designed for a man and a woman inside a committed marriage relationship, not for a casual relationship that will end. Because of the emotional and physical effect sex has upon a man and a woman, it was never intended or designed for someone to open whenever and wherever they wanted. What is glued together is not intended to be separated.

Kids – you need move away from thinking, “Why do I have to wait?” and move toward, “I’ll gladly wait.” Put the keys to the Hummer away until it’s ok to drive it!

Good Words To Remember

“may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless...” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

¹ (It’s Not About Me, Max Lucado, pg. 113).

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 10: When Can I Drive? (Sex Part 1)

Mark 10:6-9

“But God’s plan was seen from the beginning of creation, for ‘He made them male and female. 7 ‘This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, 8 and the two are united into one. Since they are no longer two but one, 9 let no one separate them, for God has joined them together.”

1) Lad or Lass: According to God’s plan (Mark 10:6-9) who is marriage between?

2) Lad or Lass: Who does God give the gift of sex to?

3) Dad: What part does sex play in a marriage?

4) Dad: In marriage, what do you see is the difference between being joined and united?

5) Lad or Lass: Get 2 pieces of notebook paper. On one piece, write the word: teenage boy. On the other write the word: teenage girl. Now glue the 2 pieces of paper together and let them dry. Let’s say that gluing the pieces of paper together represents sex. If those 2 pieces of paper were a teenage boy and a teenage girl, what would happen to their lives when they were glued together?

6) Now, pull the two pieces of paper apart. Describe the 2 pieces of paper:

7) Dad: What is the wisdom of keeping sex inside the marriage relationship?

8) Dad: Pray Philippians 1:9-10 over your son or daughter this week.

Show & Tell

“For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until Christ returns. 11 May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation - those good things that are produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God” (Philippians 1:9-10).

Question 11: What If I Drive The Hummer Now? (Sex Part 2)

“O Jerusalem, may there be peace within your walls and prosperity in your palaces” (Psalm 122:7).

God intended & created sex for marriage only: **“Drink water from your own well—share your love only with your wife. 16 Why spill the water of your springs in public, having sex with just anyone? 17 You should reserve it for yourselves. Don’t share it with strangers” (Proverbs 5:15-17).** God says this for your peace and protection.

God is your heavenly Father and He loves you. As a dad loves his child, God wants what is best for you. **“In his goodness he chose to make us his own children by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his choice possession” (James 1:18).** Because you are valuable to God He places boundaries around you to protect you. When it comes to sex outside of marriage, God says to run away. **“Run away from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does” (1 Corinthians 6:18).** God wants you to be safe.

Have you heard someone say, “What does God care with what I do with my body? It’s mine isn’t it?” God’s response is: “No, it’s not. It’s mine.” ¹ The Bible says, **“...our bodies were not made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies” (1 Corinthians 6:13).** God does care about your body. Your body belongs to Him and He has plans for you, but those plans do not include sex right now. Remember, sex means any intentional activity or “play” that leads to intercourse. And the world is sending you every message possible that it’s ok to have it now. But while those messages are running around in your mind, they’re not telling you how having sex now will hurt you later.

Sex outside of marriage causes emotional pain: **“The lips of an immoral woman are as sweet as honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil. 4 But the result is as bitter as poison, sharp as a double-edged sword” (Proverbs 5:3-4).** Sex may seem fun, even good at the moment, but what are you exchanging for some short term excitement? Sex outside a committed marriage relationship leaves behind more disgust than delight. Remember, when you have sex, you unite with that person. Think Velcro ®. When that relationship ends, think of that sound Velcro ® makes when it’s ripped apart. That’s the sound of you leaving a part of yourself behind, and carrying a part of the other with you. The guilt and pain from that memory carries over to the next relationship, and the next one and the one after that. But there’s something else you may carry with you: STDs.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Over 20 of them available. They can cause pain, sterility, or sometimes even death. Some are incurable. Some people develop symptoms immediately; for some months or years; for others, never - they become carriers of the disease. Over 80% of people who have STDs have no signs or symptoms of a disease even though they’re highly contagious. ²

The Bible says, **“Don’t you realize that whatever you choose to obey becomes your master? You can choose sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God and receive his approval” (Romans 6:16).** Is sex outside or before marriage ok? If you want peace within your walls; if you want prosperity in your palace; the answer is no.

Good Words To Remember

“God owns the whole works. So let people see God in and through your body” (1 Corinthians 6:20, The Message).

¹ (It’s Not About Me, Max Lucado, pg. 112)

² www.mylifemyfreedom.org

LET'S TALK

Practice session 11: What If I Drive Now? (Sex Part 2)

Proverbs 5:1-8

“My son, pay attention to my wisdom; listen carefully to my wise counsel. 2 Then you will learn to be discreet and will store up knowledge. 3 The lips of an immoral woman are as sweet as honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil. 4 But the result is as bitter as poison, sharp as a double-edged sword. 5 Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. 6 For she does not care about the path to life. She staggers down a crooked trail and doesn’t even realize where it leads. 7 So now, my sons, listen to me. Never stray from what I am about to say: 8 Run from her! Don’t go near the door of her house.”

God created sex to be fulfilling, exciting & fun between a man and a woman totally committed to each other within marriage. But people have taken it outside the marriage covenant and soiled it. When God tells you not to have sex now, He’s not doing it to keep you from having fun. He wants to:

- Shield you from the fear of STDs and give you peace of mind when you enter into marriage.
- Shelter you from temporary relationships focused on sexual activity that often lead to broken marriages.
- Protect your virginity, one of the greatest gifts you can give to your husband or wife on your wedding night.

God’s not trying to spoil your fun. He’s trying to show you the way to real fun. ¹

1) Lad or Lass: The idea here is not to embarrass you but for you to have the information you need to make good decisions. Go over this list with your dad and talk about questions you have:

- Is having sex in agreement with my own moral values?
- How will my decision affect my parents, my friends, myself? ²
- If the relationship breaks up, will I be glad I had sex with this person?
- Am I willing to risk STD’s, including AIDS, pregnancy, and/or sterility?
- Can I handle being a single parent or placing my child for adoption?
- Can I handle the guilt and conflict I may feel?

2) Dad: Guide your son or daughter through the following discussion points. Sex outside marriage:

- Makes the rest of the relationship disappear. When you focus on the physical you miss out on the rest of the relationship.
- Decreases self-esteem. At first, a sexual relationship can give you a false sense of feeling accepted. But when you realize that lie, you’re let down.
- Leads to comparisons in marriage. It’s impossible not to draw comparisons to previous sexual experiences which can lead to difficulty in marriage.
- Tears down trust – Marriage partners who know their spouse didn’t save sex for marriage often wonder if their partner is or will be faithful. ²

Show & Tell

“God wants you to be holy, so you should keep clear of all sexual sin. 4 Then each of you will control your body and live in holiness and honor” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4).

¹ Youth Devotions, by Josh McDowell, pg 255

² www.hopepregnancy.org

³ Youth Devotions, by Josh McDowell, pg 213

Question 12: How Do I Wait To Drive? (Sex Part 3)

“A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

Be popular. Be part of the in-crowd. Be a man. Be a woman. Everybody's doing it. It's fun. From the time that you've been born, this is what you've been hearing about having sex. From TV, advertising, magazines, movies, songs, books, maybe even from friends.

Question: Lots of my friends are having sex. What can I do? First, it is possible to resist having sex outside of marriage. God has not given us something impossible to do: **“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).** It's called abstinence.

Question: What is abstinence? Abstinence is voluntarily doing without something. If you abstain from alcohol or drugs, you voluntarily choose to avoid drugs and alcohol. Sexual abstinence simply means choosing to avoid sexual activity. This doesn't mean you mess around and then put on the breaks just before going all the way. Sexual abstinence means you make a conscious decision to avoid sexual activity.

The human sex drive is extremely powerful! It will take a lot of discipline to make a conscious decision to remain in control and avoid sexual activity. The Bible says, **“each of you should learn to control his own body” (1 Thessalonians 4:4).** Here are some ways to do this:

- 1) Avoid situations or events that can lead to sexual activity.
- 2) When you feel yourself getting sexually excited stop what you're doing and go do something else!
- 3) Hang out with friends who share your values. The Bible says, **“bad company corrupts good character” (1 Corinthians 15:33).** If most of your friends are having sex, it's going to be really hard to hold out and wait. When you have friends who share your beliefs and you can talk honestly, you gain strength. You can support each other when you're feeling weak.
- 4) Remember what you're missing. Girls – you're missing out on being ignored by the guy you had sex with Friday night at school on Monday morning. Guys – you're missing out on learning how to treat girls as nothing more than objects. You're both missing out on guilt, possible disease and possible unwanted pregnancy.
- 5) Remember what you'll gain. Will having sex really make you more popular, more mature, or more desirable? No. By not focusing on the physical, and focusing on who that special person is, you'll gain respect for each other & you'll gain a caring friendship.
- 6) Remember whose you are: **“...use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God” (Romans 6:13).** The truth is anyone can have sex. It certainly doesn't make you special that you are capable of having sex. After all dogs and cats do it all the time. What makes you special is controlling your desires and honoring God with your body for His glory.

Good Words To Remember

“Learn to be wise, and develop good judgment” (Proverbs 4:5).

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 12: How Do I Wait To Drive? (Sex Part 3)

Titus 2:11-2

“For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. 12 And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with self-control, right conduct, and devotion to God” (Titus 2:11-12).

Lad or Lass: Your life is all about honoring God (Ephesians 1:20-22) but the world today makes that hard to do (John 7:14). Every day, you're told that sex outside of marriage is ok (1 Corinthians 6:12). You'll be tempted to go along with the world, but God has provided a way out (1 Corinthians 10:13). You don't have to let sin control the way you live (Romans 6:13). You can learn to control your body, but it will take some practice (1 Thessalonians 4:4). Below is a plan to help you begin to do that.

1) Lad or Lass: In the space below, on the left side, write down the standards & commitments of purity you want to keep and why. On the right side write down the best plan you can think of for escaping when you are tempted to sin sexually. There's no one right plan. What will make it right is that it's yours and that it comes from the desires of your heart.

You may want to use some scriptures to help you sort out some thoughts. A few are listed below. If you know of a verse you want to use but can't remember where it is, you can go to www.crosswalk.com and click on the "faith" tab and then click on "concordances." You can then enter a word or phrase in the verse and the concordance will direct you to it. Here's an example:

My Standards & Commitments: I will not look lustfully at a girl – Job 31:1
My Plan To Avoid Sexual Activity: I will put down the magazines

2) Dads: Read John Chapter 17 with your son or daughter. Then pray John 17 over your son or daughter, then pray over the plan he or she has written this week.

My Standards & Commitments

My Plan To Avoid Sexual Activity

More help: Job 31:1; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 6:6; Ephesians 1:20-22; Ephesians 5:3-4; 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 3:2

Show & Tell

“Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to its lustful desires. 13 Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God” (Romans 6:12-13).

Question 13: What Makes A Good Friend?

“Dear children, let us stop just saying we love each other; let us really show it by our actions” (1 John 3:18).

Ever notice how you begin to talk like or pick up mannerisms from your friends? Soon, you become friends with the friends of your friends. Besides your parents, your friends are the people you will have the biggest influence on, and who will have the biggest influence upon you. Choosing who you hang around with are among the most important decisions you'll ever make.

Friends fall into 2 categories: good-for-you-friends or not-good-for-you-friends. The best kind of friend to be and to choose are the kind that Jesus is: good-for-you. Here are some characteristics of being a good-for-you-friend:

Loving: **“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).** God may never ask you to physically lay down your life for another; but laying down your life means giving up those parts of you that are not encouraging and not helpful to others.

Accepting: **“Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex...” (Psalm 139:14).** God chose you just the way you are. He didn't choose you because of how good looking you are or because you have a smart phone. Choose your friends for who they are.

Available: **“Stepping into one of the boats...” (Luke 5:3).** Jesus got into people's boats. He got involved in their lives. He could go deep or just hang out. Be available.

Self-Less: **“For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others...” (Matthew 20:28).** Jesus came not to be served but to serve. Our attitude should be the same as Jesus' – looking to the needs of others as well as our own. Follow His example. Be Self-less.

Watchful: **“I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare (Philippians 2:20).** This is a hard one sometimes. If you have a friend who is heading down the wrong path, you need to let him or her know. **“Wounds from a friend are better than many kisses from an enemy” (Proverbs 27:6).**

Good Judgment: **“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers...” (2 Corinthians 6:14)** rather be **“...the salt of the earth [and] the light of the world” (Matthew 5:13-14).** You should not let your values be heavily influenced by non-believers. Rather, “season” the lives of your unbelieving friends. Let Jesus' light shine so they may “catch” your beliefs and lifestyle.

Kindness: **“She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy” (Proverbs 31:20).** Kindness ranks right up there with the biggies on God's All-Star Attitude List. Being kind is about as important a thing to God as anything we can do.

Godly Morals & Ethics: **“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him” (Romans 15:13).** By knowing and living according to what God says is right, you'll be trusted by others. And that's the best foundation for a good friendship.

Be a “good-for-you-friend.” And when you choose a friend - make sure he or she will be one for you.

Good Words To Remember

Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ. 3 If you think you are too important to help someone in need, you are only fooling yourself. You are really a nobody” (Galatians 6:2-3).

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 13: What Makes A Good Friend?

John 13:12-15

“After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, “Do you understand what I was doing? 13 You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and you are right, because it is true. 14 And since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet. 15 I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.”

1) Dad: Who is the friend you’ve had the longest? What makes him/her special to you?

2) Dad: What do you think is important in being a friend?

3) Lad or Lass: How can you “lay down” your life for another?

4) Lad or Lass: Read Psalm 139:13-15. What does that tell you about looking at others?

5) Lad or Lass: How have others been available to you? How can you be available for others?

6) Lad or Lass: Who are people who have served you? How can you serve others?

7) Dad: Who are people who have served you? How have you served others?

8) Dad: Can you tell about a time when you had to provide watch-care for a friend?

9) Lad or Lass: What are ways that others can see Jesus in you?

10) Dad: What are ways to exercise good judgment in choosing friends?

11) Dad: Has there been a time when you couldn’t trust someone? What did that do to your relationship?

12) Dad: How has your son or daughter earned your trust?

Here’s a fun way to “wash each other’s feet.” You’ll need bananas, ice cream, whipped cream, and any other toppings you want. You’ll also need enough wash – cloths for everyone. Get some plates and have everyone create their own banana split. Then, make those bananas split - right into your tummies! There’s just one thing - you can’t use spoons!! After you have as much on you face as they do in their tummies, take a damp wash – cloth & wash each other’s face.

Show & Tell

“And since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet. 5 I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you” (John 13:14-15).

Question 14: Should I Go Out With Him? (Dating Part 1)

“I assure you, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! 2 For a shepherd enters through the gate. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they recognize his voice. 5 They won’t follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don’t recognize his voice” (John 10:1-5).

The shepherd knows his sheep and cares for & protects them. He knows them intimately; devoted to the point of laying down his life for them. This passage is a beautiful picture of how Jesus knows each of us and cares for us. It’s also got some dynamite dating tips.

About 90 percent of Americans marry at some point in their lives. Just like most pro-ball players start off playing little league, most marriages don’t take place without a little practice first. Dating or courting is practice for getting to know and learning how to care for that special someone you’re interested in for a long-term commitment. It’s also about getting to know your-self. When it comes to dating in general, there are some reasons why you should date and some reasons why you shouldn’t date.

Here are some reasons why you should date:

Getting to know the other person: **“For whatever is in your heart determines what you say” (Matthew 12:34).** What a person says and does will tell you a lot about them.

Learning to consider others’ interests: **“Don’t think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing” (Philippians 2:3).** Remember the kid who only did what he wanted? No, ‘cause you got tired of playing with him. Things haven’t changed.

Learning to grow in your relationship with God: **“Meanwhile, as young Samuel grew taller, he also continued to gain favor with the LORD and with the people” (1 Samuel 2:26).** People that you spend a lot of time with have an enormous influence on you. So go out with those who will help you grow in favor with God and all who know you.

Getting to know yourself: **“Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be” (Matthew 6:21).** Getting to know yourself often comes from finding out what you enjoy doing with others.

Here are some reasons why should you not date:

To be popular: **“Obviously, I’m not trying to be a people pleaser! No, I am trying to please God. If I were still trying to please people, I would not be Christ’s servant” (Galatians 1:10).** Live to please God, and the right people for you to date will be attracted to you.

For your worth as a person: **“You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit that will last” (John 15:16).** How you feel about yourself should come from what God thinks about you, not from a boyfriend or girlfriend.

Sex: **“Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God’s people” (Ephesians 5:3).** Dating that is purely physical at the very best it will be unfulfilling. You miss out on getting to know who God created each of you to be.

Good Words To Remember

“the greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for their friends” (John 15:13).

LET'S TALK

Practice session 14: Should I Go Out? (Dating Part 1)

John 10:1-5

“I assure you, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! 2 For a shepherd enters through the gate. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they recognize his voice. 5 They won’t follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don’t recognize his voice.”

Dating is practice for getting to know and learning how to care for that special someone you’re interested in for a long-term commitment. It’s also about getting to know your-self. Kids – this is about you, but dad, chime in.

1) If you’re going to date someone, what qualities are important for him/her to have?

2) What qualities do you value in yourself?

3) Are there qualities that you’d like to develop more fully in yourself?

4) Why is it important to consider others’ interests?

5) Think of the most popular boy or girl in your class at school. What makes him or her popular? Will what makes him/her popular today, be important 10 years from now?

6) What would you like for people to remember you for 10 years from now?

7) Who are people that have invested their time in you? What makes them important to you?

8) Who or what makes you feel good about yourself. If that person/thing goes away tomorrow, how would you feel about yourself?

9) What do you miss out on with a purely physical relationship?

10) Dad: Pray 1 Samuel 2:26 over your son or daughter this week.

Show & Tell

“Meanwhile, as young Samuel grew taller, he also continued to gain favor with the LORD and with the people” (1 Samuel 2:26).

Question 15: Should I Go Out With Her? (Dating Part 2)

“Anyone who listens to my teaching and obeys me is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. 25 Though the rain comes and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse, because it is built on rock” (Matthew 7:24-25).

Most professional baseball players start off in Little league, play high school, college, & minor league ball, then get called up to the big leagues. A few make the All-Star team. Whether All-Star or not, every pro starts off learning the fundamentals. If you want your dating relationships to be All-Star, it makes sense to learn the fundamentals early and practice them.

Guard your heart: **“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (Proverbs 4:23).** Your heart - it’s where your beliefs, attitudes, actions and words originate. As you continue to spend time with someone, you open up a little bit more of yourself to that person. You begin to pattern yourself after each other. Watch the pattern developing - it will give you some good insight about whether you should give that person access to your heart. Decide now what standards are appropriate for conversation, manners and treatment while dating. Make sure the pattern of your relationship follows those standards and honors God.

Surround yourself with friends who have godly values and convictions: **“So Jesus grew both in height and in wisdom, and he was loved by God and by all who knew him” (Luke 2:52).** Your reputation is built largely by those people you spend your time with, especially by those you date. Decide now to date those who will help you grow in favor with God and all who know you.

Believers should date believers: **“Don’t team up with those who are unbelievers. How can goodness be a partner with wickedness” (2 Corinthians 6:14).** The person who becomes close to your heart should be a believer seeking to follow Jesus Christ with their lives. If you date someone whose moral convictions and choices are significantly different from your own, you may be headed for situations where you’ll face pressure to compromise your standards. Don’t give up your values just for a date.

Know your limits: **“Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.” (1 John 2:10).** How far can you go physically on a date? In short, if any action is causing you to become sexually aroused and lose self-control, stop right then and there. God created physical attraction between guys and girls. But you do have a choice about how to handle these feelings. **Guys** – Girls are more easily excited by touch. You need to be careful the way you touch a girl. If you’re holding your girlfriend’s hand or putting your arm around her and this seems to be “turning her on” you need to back off. **Girls** –Guys are more easily excited by sight. You need to think long and hard about the way you dress and the way you come on to guys. They don’t need your help to get turned on.

Know what’s going on around you: **“So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:6).** Are you going to the right kind of place for your date? Here’s where you exercise a lot of common sense and good judgment. If the answer to that question is no, then simply say no to the date or get out of the date. You have the choice to not put yourself in that position in the first place.

Say “No” To Alcohol & Drugs: Alcohol and other drugs cause a change in your judgment. Your self-control system loosens or stops working all together. You may come to the point where you are incapable of making proper choices.

Good Words To Remember

“So Jesus grew both in height and in wisdom, and he was loved by God and by all who knew him” (Luke 2:52).

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 15: Should I Go Out? (Dating part 2)

Proverbs 4:23-26

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do. 24 Avoid all perverse talk; stay far from corrupt speech. 25 Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. 26 Mark out a straight path for your feet; then stick to the path and stay safe.”

1) Lad or Lass: What standards will you set and hold to in advance for what is appropriate conversation, manners and treatment in a dating relationship? *

2) Dad: How does setting appropriate standards in advance make dating more fun?

3) Dad: What values are important for your son or daughter to have for successful dating relationships? What values are important for a successful marriage?

4) Lad or Lass: What do you enjoy doing on your own with free-time? With others?

5) Dad: How can alcohol and drugs affect you, especially in a dating situation?

6) Dad: How can going out with a person who does not share your moral convictions affect you?

* Special Note To The Guys (but girls listen in): Guys, you have a special responsibility toward the girl you date. You are responsible for her well-being. The Bible says, **“And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her 26 to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God’s word. 27 He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. 28 In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man is actually loving himself when he loves his wife. 29 No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it, just as Christ cares for his body, which is the church”** (Ephesians 5:25-29).

Let’s put this verse into dating language: **Guys, care enough about your girlfriend to protect her and look out for her best interests. Encourage her and help her develop into the person that God created her to be.** How do you do that? Set a godly example by practicing spiritual, moral, ethical & sexual purity.

Special Note To The Girls: Just as the verses of Scripture we looked at today gives a special responsibility to the guys, you have a special responsibility as well: Accept nothing less from a guy that you date.

Show & Tell

“So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:6).

Question 16: Where Do I Fit In?

“Many people, including some of the Jewish leaders, believed in him. But they wouldn’t admit it to anyone because of their fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. 43 For they loved human praise more than the praise of God” (John 12:42-43).

There’s a popular song from 1964 called The In Crowd. In part, the words are:

I'm in with the in crowd, I go where the in crowd goes
I'm in with the in crowd and I know what the in crowd knows...
I don't care where you've been, you ain't been nowhere 'til you've been in with the in crowd.

Everyone wants to be in the “in crowd.” There’s no one who doesn’t want to be liked. You want to be liked for who you are. At times you may wonder whether you are going to be accepted by anyone at all. That can be a pretty insecure feeling. So you choose a crowd. Depending on where your crowd is coming from or going toward, they can either help you or hurt you.

The question is, “Who do you want to be accepted by and at what price?” When you live your life trying to please people you end up compromising. You either compromise your integrity – perhaps drawn into gossiping that ends up hurting a friend’s feelings; or you compromise your morality – you’re “double-dog-dared” to try something you don’t want to do, but it’s your crowd and you don’t want to be left out. So you compromise to please them.

But the thing with people pleasing is that it’s always short term. What you did to please someone Friday night may not matter Monday morning. People change and what the crowd accepts changes. But you need to know that God never changes. **“God is not a man, that he should lie. He is not a human, that he should change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?” (Numbers 23:19).**

You also need to know that Jesus accepts you just the way you are: **“Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5 His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure” (Ephesians 1:4-5).**

Jesus wants you to be secure knowing you are loved and accepted by Him. And He wants you to stop compromising to please people and start living to please Him: **“For I live in eager expectation and hope that I will never do anything that causes me shame, but that I will always be bold for Christ, as I have been in the past, and that my life will always honor Christ, whether I live or I die” (Philippians 1:21).** When you live for Jesus, you never have to worry about compromising your integrity or morals. You won’t have to keep track of who to please next. People will always know who you are because you’ll be rock-solid – secure in God’s love and who you are because your life is wrapped up in honoring Jesus.

When you decide to live your life for Jesus and not for others, you’re free to be the person God created you to be. He’ll even help you understand who you are and how to get where you want to go: **“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is” (Romans 12:2).**

There’s an “in crowd” waiting for you, so be in with the “in crowd.” Be in God’s crowd.

Good Words To Remember

“So accept each other just as Christ has accepted you; then God will be glorified” (Romans 15:5-7).”

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 16: Where Do I Fit In?

Hebrews 12:1-3

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. 2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterward. Now he is seated in the place of highest honor beside God’s throne in heaven. 3 Think about all he endured when sinful people did such terrible things to him, so that you don’t become weary and give up” (Hebrews 12:1-3).

1) Dad: What crowds were around when you were growing up? Can you tell about a time when you felt like you didn’t fit into one you wanted to be in? How did you handle it?

2) Lad or Lass: How would you describe your group of friends?

3) Lad or Lass: Have there been times when you’ve been asked by a group to do things that go against your values or integrity? How did you handle it?

4) Both: The Bible says: “**So accept each other just as Christ has accepted you; then God will be glorified**” (Romans 15:5-7).” What does this verse tell you about yourself and what does it tell you about others?

5) Lad or Lass: Read Matthew 5:10. What does Jesus tell you might happen if you take a stand and live for Him? Is it worth it?

6) Lad or Lass: Read Hebrews 12:1-3 (above). What encouragement do these verses give you in living for Jesus?

Read Ephesians 1:13-14, Romans 5:5, 1 Corinthians 12:27. God has proven His love for you. The fact that God loves you unconditionally in spite of your flaws and failures is a huge reason to accept yourself. ¹ Take yourself the way you are – strengths and weaknesses, abilities and shortcomings, and realize that you are loved and accepted, and can be by others – just the way you are.

Show & Tell

“**Obviously, I’m not trying to be a people pleaser! No, I am trying to please God. If I were still trying to please people, I would not be Christ’s servant**” (Galatians 1:10).

¹ Youth Devotions, by Josh McDowell, pg 161

Question 17: How Do I Handle Peer Pressure?

“You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it useful again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless” (Matthew 5:13).

Put a frog into a pot of boiling water and it would immediately jump out. But suppose you put the frog into cool water and then turned the burner on a low setting. As the frog swims around, he slowly becomes accustomed to the rising water temperature and is unaware that the water is gradually getting hotter and hotter. Before too long, the frog is boiled and ready to be served at fine restaurants everywhere.

Peer pressure is a steady influence, sometimes subtle, sometimes in your face; pressing upon you, molding you to its image. Peer pressure dictates words you use, people you associate with, places you go, attitudes you hold. Not all peer pressure is bad. Depending on which direction the pressure comes from, it can be a good thing. But some peer pressure can push you toward a direction that's not good for you or a direction you may not even want to go. If you are not alert to what's going on around you, like the frog, you become accustomed to the change and go along with it.

When peers press hard to get you to go along with them, even if you don't want to, what do you do? Here are some things to remember:

Whose you are: **“For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago” (Ephesians 2:10).** You belong to God, not the world.

Who you are: **“But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are a kingdom of priests, God's holy nation, his very own possession. This is so you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).** You are God's very own, loved and chosen to show other God's goodness. Remember, God has more to offer you than the world has to offer you: **“And so God can always point to us as examples of the incredible wealth of his favor and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us through Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:7).**

His purposes for you: **“Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable” (Romans 12:17).** Others need you to stand up for Jesus. Some need your encouragement to help them stand firm against the pull. Some need your strength to pull them out of the current.

Preserve a Godly heritage: **“But we refused to listen to them for a single moment. We wanted to preserve the truth of the Good News for you” (Galatians 2:5).** Live by the standards that God sets forth to preserve the godly heritage that God originally instituted.

Influence, not influenced: **“You must have the qualities of salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other” (Mark 9:50).** Salt is of no use in the salt shaker. But when salt mixes with food it immediately influences. Rather than being permeated and seasoned in a way you don't want to be by peer pressure, you be the one to permeate, the one to season. You be the one to be God's flavor – living a distinct lifestyle that will make people sit up and take notice of who Jesus is and what He has to offer.

Good Words To Remember

“You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor?” (Matthew 5:13).

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 17: Peer Pressure

Psalm 119:105-112

“Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path. 106 I’ve promised it once, and I’ll promise again: I will obey your wonderful laws. 107 I have suffered much, O LORD; restore my life again, just as you promised. 108 LORD , accept my grateful thanks and teach me your laws. 109 My life constantly hangs in the balance, but I will not stop obeying your law. 110 The wicked have set their traps for me along your path, but I will not turn from your commandments. 111 Your decrees are my treasure; they are truly my heart’s delight. 112 I am determined to keep your principles, even forever, to the very end.”

Dad: What kinds of peer pressure did you encounter or still do encounter?

Dad: How did / do you handle it?

Lad or Lass: Are you feeling pressure by a certain group to go along with them in the wrong direction? What direction is the group going toward?

Lad or Lass: What’s your biggest fear of not going along with the crowd?

Read Psalm 119:105-112.

Lad or Lass: How can you live a godly life in the face of peer pressure?

Lad or Lass: What are ways you can avoid or stand up to ungodly peer pressure?

“In everything you do, stay away from complaining and arguing, 15 so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of crooked and perverse people. Let your lives shine brightly before them. 16 Hold tightly to the word of life, so that when Christ returns, I will be proud that I did not lose the race and that my work was not useless” (Philippians 2:14-16).

Read Philippians 2:14-16.

Lad or Lass: What benefits do you &/or others receive when you live a godly life?

Show & Tell

“Let your conversation be gracious and effective so that you will have the right answer for everyone” Colossians 4:6).

Question 18: It's My Money Isn't It?

“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” (Psalm 24:1).

Whether you receive an allowance, get paid a few dollars for doing chores around the house, or earn money from a job; God knows that money is an important and necessary part of your life. In fact, God has outlined a plan on how to handle His money well in the Bible. It all starts with the proper attitude toward money and the proper handling of your resources.

Everything you have or are is on loan from God for a period of time. God has loaned you to your parents and entrusted them with your care. Even your very life is on loan from God: **“...You do not belong to yourself, 20 for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).** This truth puts life in the proper perspective.

The proper perspective on money is this: Your money is not your money: **“Riches and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and it is at your discretion that people are made great and given strength” (1 Chronicles 29:12).** It's all God's, and He gives you the privilege to use any or all that He makes available to you.

Goals: **“Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed.” (Proverbs 16:3).** Establish a plan about how you're going to use His money in your care. God promises guidance if you're willing to listen. As you plan, keep this in mind: Honor God by how you handle His money.

Planning: **“But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first getting estimates and then checking to see if there is enough money to pay the bills?” (Luke 14:28).** 1) Begin with a budget - a road map to keep you on course. 2) Follow your budget: stick to it. 3) Prioritize: start with the necessities. Then list the "should haves." Finally, list the "like to haves.”

First Fruits: **“Bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God” (Exodus 23:19).** First fruits should be your first budget entry. God makes it clear He is to receive the first fruits of your income, not the leftovers. Remember, the money is not yours, so don't act like it is.

Giving: Doing Good: **“Tell those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which will soon be gone. But their trust should be in the living God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. 18 Tell them to use their money to do good...” (1 Timothy 6:17-18).** Your willingness to give is an outward measure of your inside commitment to God. The “returns” you receive from giving on this earth are the good things that come about as a result from investing into God's Kingdom.

Obligations: **“Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and import duties, and give respect and honor to all to whom it is due” (Romans 13:7).** Debt brings heavy responsibilities. Take on debt only when you have a clear plan for repaying it. Establish a budget that allows you to pay all your bills in full and on time each month. Do not owe more than is necessary.

Practice these guidelines now, so when you have to make decisions on your own about the money you have, you'll have the right attitude and the know how to do a good job with the resources God has allowed you to manage for Him.

Good Words To Remember

“Riches and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything...” (1 Chronicles 29:12).

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 18: How It's My Money Isn't It?

1 Timothy 6:17-19

“Tell those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which will soon be gone. But their trust should be in the living God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. 18 Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and should give generously to those in need, always being ready to share with others whatever God has given them. 19 By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of real life.”

Below is an outline for handling money well:

1. Remember that everything is God's, including the money that He allows you to manage.
2. Make a plan: Set short term goals and long term goals. Plan for emergencies.
3. Make a budget. Plan on using 80% of what you earn for obligations.
4. Commit to sticking to and follow your budget.
5. Prioritize your expenditures: necessities, “should haves,” & “like to haves.”
6. Pay God first: start with 10%, do more if possible (see 1 Timothy 6:17-19 above).
7. Save for short term, long term goals: start with 10%, adjust for your needs or goals.
8. Pay your obligations on time. Do not take on more than you can pay in full each month.
9. After you have managed your money wisely and given generously, have fun!

1) Dad: What short-term goals do you have for money you earn? Long-term?

2) Lad or Lass: What short-term goals do you have for money you earn? Long term goals?

3) Lad or Lass If you earn or receive money on a regular basis, write down a budget to help you meet those goals? Simply record the amount of money coming in, then follow steps 5-10 above. Use another sheet of paper if you need more room.

4) Lad or Lass: What should be your first entry in your budget? (See Exodus 23:19).

5) Dad: What should your son or daughter know about debt?

6) Both: Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19. What do you understand from this passage?

7) Dad: Read Philippians 4:11-13. Have you experienced times of “much & little” financially? What did you learn from them?

8) Dad: What do you give financially to? What fruits have you seen from your giving?

Show & Tell

“Bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God” (Exodus 23:19).

Question 19: When Does Life Begin?

“This is what the Lord says - Your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself.” (Isaiah 44:24).

When Life Begins: **“Listen to me, all of you in far-off lands! The LORD called me before my birth; from within the womb he called me by name” (Isaiah 49:1).**

Pregnancy begins at conception. Conception is the moment when the male sperm and the female egg unite to become a zygote - a one-celled human being. Being a zygote was a stage in your human development you passed through just as you passed through infancy and childhood.

From the moment of conception, you fulfilled the four criteria needed to establish biological life:

- 1) Metabolism: All biochemical processes including taking in raw materials, building cell components & releasing by-products.
- 2) Growth: From one cell the size of a pin-point at conception to the size of a raisin at 5 weeks.
- 3) Reaction to stimuli: Biochemical reactions within cells resulting from i.e.: temperature change.
- 4) Reproduction: Cells divide on average every 12 hours. An adult human has 100 billion cells.

From conception you are fully human.

- You are the product of *human* parents. So, as far as having human causes you are 100% human.
- You are a new - although tiny – individual with your own unique genetic code, which is neither your father’s or your mother’s. From the moment you were conceived, no new genetic information was or will be needed to make you any more human.
- The only thing necessary for your growth and development was oxygen, food, and water. You developed according to the schedule programmed into your genetic makeup. It is clear from scientific evidence that the developing baby is fully human from conception.

Therefore it is important that you understand:

- You did not come from a zygote, you once were a zygote
- You did not come from an embryo, you once were an embryo
- You did not come from a fetus, you once were a fetus
- You did not come from an infant, you once were an infant

At no stage of your development - even at conception - were you any less or more fully human than at any other stage.

The Bible clearly says God planned and oversaw every moment of your development before during and after conception: **“You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. 14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it. 15 You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. 16 You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed” (Psalm 139:13-16).**

Good Words To Remember

“For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him” (Colossians 1:16).

Practice Session 19: When Does Life Begin?

Psalm 139:13-16

“You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. 14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous - and how well I know it. 15 You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. 16 You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed” (Psalm 139:13-16). “You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together...”

At conception, you were the size of a pin-point. At about three weeks, your heart muscle began to pulsate. Other organs began to develop such as your liver, kidneys and digestive tract. Your developing body had a head and a face with the beginnings of ears, mouth, and eyes, despite the fact that you were no larger than half the size of a pea. Between 26 and 28 days your arms and legs began to appear as tiny buds.

1) Dad: What were your thoughts, prayers & dreams about for your child as he/she was developing?

2) Lad or Lass: Does an earlier stage of development mean you are any less human than at a later stage of your development?

Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous...”

During the second month, your eyes, ears, nose, toes, and fingers made their appearance; your skeleton developed; your heart was beating; and your blood - with its own type - flowed. By the sixth week, your nervous system will have developed so well that it controlled the movements of your muscles, even though your mom may not have been aware she was pregnant with you. By this time you had reflexes and at eight weeks your own unique fingerprints started to form. You were about the size of a kidney bean.

3) Lad or Lass: In what ways are you like your parents? In what ways are you unique?

“You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together...” At the beginning of the third month, you weighed only one ounce. You could swallow, swim about, grasp with your hands and suck your thumb. You were already starting to look a bit like your mom and dad in your facial expressions even though you were only about 2” long.

“Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.” In the fifth month of pregnancy you became *viable*. You now had the ability, under current technological knowledge, to live outside your mother’s womb. In the remaining four months of pregnancy you continued to develop. The chances that you could survive outside mom’s womb increased as you drew closer to your expected birthday. Some studies have shown that you could actually learn before you were born.

4) Lad or Lass: Thank God for your life and ask Him what plans He has in mind for you.

Show & Tell

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago” (Ephesians 2:10).

Question 20: What Does God Say About Life?

“what are mortals that you should think of us, mere humans that you should care for us?” (Psalm 8:4).

The Bible says, **“So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).** That human beings are the nearest resemblance of any of God’s creatures to His image is a God-given honor: **“For you made us only a little lower than God, and you crowned us with glory and honor. 6 You put us in charge of everything you made, giving us authority over all things” (Psalm 8:4-6).** It is such an honor that: **“the Word [Jesus] became human and lived here on earth among us” (John 14:1).** But even though we were patterned after and made a little lower than God there is still between God and people an infinite distance.

While God formed the human body according to the platform he designed for Himself, it is our soul that especially bears God’s image – that which is our understanding of right and wrong, holiness & truth: **“You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God’s likeness—righteous, holy, and true” (Ephesians 4:24).**

Each person belongs to God: **“For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son - both alike belong to me” (Ezekiel 18:4).** He is our first cause, formed by Him and for Him.

Each person is of tremendous value to God: **“All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:16).** God made you for His purposes. You have a role to play in this world and it is exceedingly important because you are important to God.

What God says about your life: **“He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn’t live in man-made temples, 25 and human hands can’t serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need there is. 26 From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand which should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. 27 “His purpose in all of this was that the nations should seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. 28 For in him we live and move and exist” (Acts 17:24-28).** The Bible clearly says that it is God who is in control of life. He has appointed our time to be born, our time to die and all that lies between. God not only gave us life and first breath when He brought us into being but He graciously gives it the next moment. From the least to the greatest, no one can live without His permission.

God values life at any stage: **“This is what the LORD says: Be fair-minded and just. Do what is right! Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors. Quit your evil deeds! Do not mistreat foreigners, orphans, and widows. Stop murdering the innocent” (Jeremiah 22:3).** God’s Word makes it clear He values each and every life, no matter what stage of or position in life. And God says we should value and protect human life: **“Yes, you must execute anyone who murders another person, for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God’s image” (Genesis 9:6).** We should not speak ill of each other or do ill to each other. Even though we are sinful, God’s image remains upon each person and one who unjustly treats or murders a man defaces the image of God and dishonors Him.

Good Words To Remember

“This is what the Lord says: Be fair-minded and just. Do what is right!” (Jeremiah 22:3).

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 20: What Does God Say About Life?

Psalm 8

“LORD , our Lord, the majesty of your name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens. 2 You have taught children and nursing infants to give you praise. They silence your enemies who were seeking revenge. 3 When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers - the moon and the stars you have set in place - 4 what are mortals that you should think of us, mere humans that you should care for us? 5 For you made us only a little lower than God, and you crowned us with glory and honor. 6 You put us in charge of everything you made, giving us authority over all things - 7 the sheep and the cattle and all the wild animals, 8 the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents. 9 O LORD , our Lord, the majesty of your name fills the earth!”

1) Dad: Growing up, did the way people thought of you influence how you felt about yourself? How did you handle it?

2) Dad: Do the way people think about you now influence how you feel about yourself? How is it different from when you were growing up?

3) Lad or Lass: Read Psalm 8. How should the way God feels about you influence how you see yourself?

4) Both: Read Ephesians 4:24. How should you respond to this verse in daily living?

5) Both: Read Acts 17:27. What purpose, in part, does this verse give you in life?

6) Both: What are ways you can help accomplish this purpose?

Read Jeremiah 22:3.

7) Dad: What examples of things going on this verse do you see on a day to day basis? Where do you see them occur?

8) Lad or Lass: What examples of things going on this verse do you see on a day to day basis? Where do you see them occur?

9) Both: How can you help those mentioned in Jeremiah 22:3?

Show & Tell

“You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God’s likeness—righteous, holy, and true” (Ephesians 4:24).

Question 21: What Is Abortion About?

**“For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son - both alike belong to me.”
(Ezekiel 18:4).**

In July, 2005, NASA Shuttle Discovery take-off was aborted minutes before take-off because of safety concerns that needed to be addressed and made right. After thousands of hours of preparation and millions of dollars spent, the mission was aborted. However, the abortion issue we'll discuss today is very much different than a canceled rocket launch and much more costly.

Sometimes a mother's body will naturally abort - end a pregnancy - before the developing baby is born. It's called a miscarriage. But when the decision is made to intentionally end a pregnancy by chemically or surgically destroying and removing the developing baby from the mother before he or she is born, this is what is known as abortion.

In 1973 the Supreme Court handed down its Roe v Wade and Doe v Bolton decisions legalizing abortion in all 50 states during all 9 months of pregnancy for virtually any reason: medical, social or otherwise. This is abortion on demand. The abortion issue is one of the most explosive spiritual, moral, political & social issues in the world today. It affects presidential elections & Supreme Court nominations. On a more personal level you may know someone who is considering having or has had an abortion due to an unwanted pregnancy.

There are two issues fueling the debate over abortion: legal & moral. The debate over these issues rages between two opposing camps: “Pro-Choice” & “Pro-Life.”

The Pro-Choice view says that although human life does begin at the moment of conception, it is at some later stage in the unborn baby's development that he/she becomes “a person” and is worthy of protection. The unborn baby gradually gains more rights as he/she develops, i.e.: a fetus (8 weeks to birth) has fewer rights than an adult woman. A woman has the right to control her own body & therefore has a right to undergo an abortion for any reason she may see fit. Therefore, abortion should be legal.

The Pro-Life view contends that life begins at conception and that life which begins at conception is fully human. Since the developing baby is fully human from the moment of conception, therefore the baby has rights that any person should enjoy, including the right to be born. Therefore, every abortion performed is equal to murder. Therefore, abortion should be illegal.

The legal issue of abortion comes down to this: Does a woman have the right to control over her own body when it comes to abortion? Science says that from conception, the baby developing in her mother's womb is genetically distinct with his or her own unique and individual gender, blood type, bone-structure, and genetic code (see lesson 19). Certainly a woman has a right to control her own body, but scientific evidence makes it clear that, though the unborn baby for a time is living inside her body, the baby is not part of her body.

And what does God say? God says: **“...Your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself.” (Isaiah 44:24).** Every person belongs to God (Ezekiel 18:4); each person is of tremendous value to God (Psalm 139:16) and that God values life at any stage or position in life (Jeremiah 22:3). There is perhaps no clearer contrast between the world's values and God's values than the battle of abortion.

Good Words To Remember:

“...from within the womb he called me by name” (Isaiah 49:1).

Practice Session 21: What Is Abortion About?

Matthew 25:44-45

“Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?’ 45 And he will answer, ‘I assure you, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me” (Matthew 25:44-45).

God’s word is clear that life is important at any stage and that we are to help those in need. Someday you may have to help someone who is considering or has gone through abortion. It’s important that you know some facts so you can help.

The Bible says: **“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any two edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).** We are made up of body, soul & spirit. Decisions people make affect not just physically or just not emotionally, they affect the whole of a person.

Dad: Guide your son or daughter through these following discussion points:

Physical costs to abortion: An abortion is a willful, violent penetration of the reproductive system. The violation of the integrity of that system can lead to serious health complications. For girls under 18 with no previous pregnancies, having an abortion after the 8th week increases the risk of breast cancer by 800%.

Mental costs to abortion: Abortion can lead to depression and extreme psychological pain. Nightmares and guilt are common occurrences sometimes surfacing as long as 5-10 years after the abortion.

Social costs to abortion: Over 93% of abortions are done for social, not medical reasons: convenience, the girl doesn’t feel ready for a baby at the time, the girl’s family or the baby’s father wants her to have an abortion. In a survey of 252 girls who had abortions, 83% stated they would have kept the pregnancy if they had been encouraged to do so by one or more people

Here’s how you can help if someone you know is considering or has had an abortion:

- Be compassionate and understanding (Colossians 3:12).
- Listen (James 1:19).
- Encourage her (or him) to express her or his feelings (Job 7:11).
- Urge them to seek counseling from someone with training and experience (Proverbs 15:22).

Show & Tell

“Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? 39 When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?’ 40 And the King will tell them, ‘I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me! (Matthew 25:37-40).

Some of the information presented in this lesson comes from:

- Do You Really Want An Abortion, David Reardon, Ph.D, Easton Publishing Company, Inc. ,1999
- Medical and Social Details of Abortion: NRL Educational Trust Fund, 419 7th Street, N.W., Suite 500 Washington, D.C. 20004, copyright 1996.
- Abortion: Some Medical Facts, NRL Educational Trust Fund, Washington, D.C. 1996

LET'S TALK

Question 22: How Do I Become Successful?

“Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men,” he said. “Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good sense, and have the poise needed to serve in the royal palace. Teach these young men the language and literature of the Babylonians” (Daniel 1:4).

In the 1980s a series of Smith-Barney TV commercials ended with their trademark phrase: “We make money the old fashioned way – we earn it!” Working hard to earn success - it was good advice then and it’s still good advice. The world today, though, tells you that you can have what you want now. But is what the world says today really that new? Consider what King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon did 2,600 years ago (Read Daniel 1:1-4). Instant satisfaction. Instant enjoyment. That was King Neb’s mindset. “I’ll get what I want now and how I get it are minor details. Why not? It works for me!”

Daniel was an Israelite, living in the Southern Kingdom of Israel in the capital city of Jerusalem, swept up in an invasion and plopped smack-dab in the middle of a hostile and foreign world, forced to learn the ways and language of the culture so he could serve the king as an advisor. That’s how he spent his high-school years.

You haven’t been dragged off into some foreign country, but there is a world around you trying to drag you into its way of thinking and doing things: “Look out for # 1. There is no right or wrong except what’s right for you. Serve yourself and you’ll get ahead.” This is the world you live in. But remember – you don’t belong to the world. You belong to Jesus: **“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word” (John 17:6).** You don’t have to give in to the world’s mind-set to succeed. Daniel 1:4 shows how you can survive and succeed in a world that hates God and still be faithful to God:

Be healthy: **“...honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:20).** Take care of yourself physically. Be rested, put good food into your body and godly truths into your mind.

Be knowledgeable: **“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7).** Learn God’s definition of what’s right and apply it in making every-day decisions.

Be well versed in learning: **“Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people...” (2 Chronicles 1:10).** Be ready to take on whatever God places before you.

Learn common sense: **“Teach me knowledge and good judgment...” (Psalm 119:66).** Make decisions that will help you and not harm you.

If you want to succeed and gain the respect of others, it’s no different today than it was in Daniel’s day 2,600 years ago. The Bible says: **“Work hard, but not just to please your masters when they are watching. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. 7 Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people” (Ephesians 6:6-7).** Work hard. Work with enthusiasm. It doesn’t mean work more. It means giving your best effort whether in the classroom, on the field or at studying in your room.

Wherever God places you, work as though you are working for the Lord. Thank Him by reflecting His love and kindness to those around you. It will reflect well upon you, will lead to favor with others, and lead to success - the old fashioned way.

Good Words To Remember:

“Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people” (Ephesians 6:7).

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 22: How Do I Become Successful?

Daniel 1:1-4

“During the third year of King Jehoiakim’s reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it with his armies. 2 The Lord gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah. When Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon, he took with him some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God and placed them in the treasurehouse of his god in the land of Babylonia. 3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, who was in charge of the palace officials, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah’s royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives. 4 “Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men,” he said. “Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good sense, and have the poise needed to serve in the royal palace. Teach these young men the language and literature of the Babylonians.”

1) After Daniel was taken to Babylon he was given a new name. What does your name mean to you? When people hear your name, what do you want to be known for?

2) What steps does Daniel 1:4 outline for being successful?

3) Which one of these steps do you feel you’re doing a good job with? What steps do you feel you need to work on?

4) Write down some steps you can take to shore up the area you need to work on.

5) What is one way God helps you accomplish the purpose He has for you? (Daniel 1:17).

6) Who allows you to gain favor with others? (Daniel 1:9).

7) What practical advice does Ephesians 6:6-7 give you for success?

8) What are some challenges you face as a Christian living in today’s culture?

9) How can you make an impact on today’s culture for Jesus Christ?

Show & Tell:

“And as long as the king sought the LORD , God gave him success” (2 Chronicles 26:5).

Question 23: Which Way Do I Go?

“In the beginning God...” (Genesis 1:1).

James Naismith was a P.E. teacher at Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts from 1890 to 1895. In 1892, he wrote down the first formal rules to an indoor game he invented for his P.E. classes. He called the game “basketball.” Rule # 11 says, “The referee shall be the judge of the ball and shall decide when the ball is in play.”

During P.E. class, your coach sets the rules of the game. But would happen if coach wasn't in the gym and someone decided to change the rules? Suppose you walked into your gym class one morning and there was no coach or teacher to be found. All you find is a yellow post-it note on the bleachers that reads: “Do what you want to do.”

Question: What kind of gym class would you have? A basketball game might be in the middle of a volleyball game or some people might sit down in the middle of a hockey game. It would be nuts! It might even get dangerous.

What could happen in an imaginary gym class is really happening today. People are deciding what's right or wrong for them as they go along. What the world has forgotten, or doesn't want to acknowledge, is that the rules of what is right and wrong were set in place a long time ago. In the beginning, God set down some rules of what's right and what's wrong. He invented and set down what's known as truth: **“In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn't make” (John 1:1-3).**

But people changed the rules in the middle of the game. People started listening to what they said was right rather than what God says is right. This way of thinking has developed into something called “Today's Tolerance.” The traditional definition of tolerance meant recognizing and respecting a person's beliefs and practices without necessarily agreeing with them. Today's Tolerance goes beyond respecting a person's rights. It says that any person's beliefs, values or lifestyle demands your praise and acceptance – whether it's right according to God or not.

When it comes to what the Bible says is right, appropriate, or acceptable behavior, Today's Tolerance often ignores it and labels it “intolerant.” People's opinions - not God's - now become the standard of right and wrong. So if the truth about what is morally right (Galatians 5:19-24), gets labeled intolerant and is shut-up, then we will live in a society that bases truth on whatever it wants to whenever it wants to.¹ And it's happening. And it's nuts! And it is dangerous! When God is taken out of the picture, anything is possible.

The Bible says, **“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).** Jesus is full of the truth. There is no room for anything false in Him. You can base decisions you make on something more than just personal opinions. God has not left you to find your own way. You have knowledge set in place from the beginning of time to guide you: **“In the beginning God...”** God is, as Mr. Naismith would say, “the referee of this ball” – this world – and He has set down the rules. Listen to God and not the world – you won't go wrong.

Good Words To Remember

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of the world rather than on Christ.” (Colossians 2:8-10).

¹ Truth and Tolerance by Josh McDowell, Focus on the Family, pg. 6-7, August 1999

LET'S TALK

Practice Session 23: Which Way Do I Go?

John 8:31-32

“And my message and my preaching were very plain. I did not use wise and persuasive speeches, but the Holy Spirit was powerful among you. 5 I did this so that you might trust the power of God rather than human wisdom” (1 Corinthians 2:4-5).

How do you practically deal with today’s “do what you want to do” attitude? How can you respond when someone says, “You must approve of what I do or you must agree with me?” The Bible says, **“If you hold to my teaching, you really are my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32).**

1) Both: How did the apostle Paul teach the truth? (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

2) Lad or Lass: A friend says to you, “It’s not cheating if you don’t get caught.” How can you respond? (Leviticus 19:11, Proverbs 16:8).

3) Lad or Lass: A friend says to you, “I have a right to do what I want with my body. I like getting high and getting drunk.” How can you respond? (1 Corinthians 6:12, 19-20).

4) Dad: A co-worker says to you, “I believe that all religions are the same. Who are you to tell me that Christianity alone is right among all religions?” How can you respond? (John 14:6, Colossians 2:8-10).

“God blesses you when you are mocked and persecuted and lied about because you are my followers. 12 Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted, too” (Matthew 5:11-12).

Christians are facing increasing pressure to be silent about their convictions - in school, at work, in government - because speaking God’s truths is seen as an intolerant judgment of other’s beliefs or lifestyles. It may not be easy to take a stand for Jesus Christ. You may become unpopular with some. You might experience being made fun of.

5) Both: How can you handle unpopularity or persecution for the stand you take? (Jude 20).

Jesus Christ embraced and loved all people but not all beliefs. We need to listen and learn without necessarily agreeing (true tolerance). Have faith that what God says in the Bible is right. Take your stand on God’s Word and be bold in what you believe, yet be gentle in what you say.

Show & Tell

“But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.” (Jude 20).