



LOVE,
SEX,
RELATIONSHIPS
&
THE BIBLE

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STUDY ONE

LOVE

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT LOVE

1. List and discuss at least 3 things that TV, movies, music, magazines and the internet say it means to “be in love”.

2. List and discuss at least 2 things your friends and family tell you it means to “be in love”.

3. Do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the statements below? Select your answer and discuss your decision.

	AGREE	DISAGREE
a) Being in love is about how you feel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Love is permanent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Love is mainly about sex.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) If she really loves me, we'll have sex often.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) If he really loves me, he'll buy me gifts often.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) I can be in love with 2 people at the same time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT LOVE

Before you decide who you're going to go out with or marry, you need to know what real love is all about. This will help you make a better decision. The best person to find this out from is God, and God mainly speaks to us through the

Bible. Many of the passages below tell us how to love everybody – your parents, brother, sister, boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife etc.

4. Read 1 John 4:7-12. Where does love come from?

What's so special about God's character?

What is real love?

5. Read 1 John 3:16-18. How should we show love?

Why should we show love?

6. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Some of these love qualities are listed below. How can you practically show these to your girlfriend or boyfriend?

- *Love is patient*

- *Love is not rude*

- *Love does not insist on its own way*

- *Love rejoices with the truth*

7. Song of Solomon (Song of Songs) is a book in the Bible about the romantic relationship between a man and a woman. Read the following passages and write down what their love is like.

Song of Solomon 4:1-7

Song of Solomon 5:10-16

SUMMARY

The Bible shows us that love is more than just sex. Love comes from God and the greatest show of love is when he sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross for us, so our sins could be forgiven. This allowed our relationship with God to be restored so that we can spend eternity with him in heaven. God sacrificed Jesus Christ for us, even though we turned our backs on him – that's real love! God wants us to show the same type of sacrificial love to others.

The Bible also tells us that love is about how we treat other people. We love others by forgiving, telling the truth, being kind, not rude etc. These are the types of qualities you should look for in your boyfriend or girlfriend, and this is how you should express your love to them.

Love can also be about sex, but this expression of love can only be shown in marriage (more of that in the next chapter).

MEMORY VERSE

Ultimate Love

1 John 3:16

By this we know love,
that he laid down his life for us,
and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

STUDY TWO



SEX

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT SEX

1. Our family and friends, TV, movies, magazines, songs and the internet are all throwing messages at us about sex. What have they told you about:
- Why you should have sex?

- When you should have sex?

- Who or what you should have sex with?

2. Do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the statements below? Tick your answer and discuss your decision.

AGREE DISAGREE

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) If you really love your boyfriend or girlfriend, you can have sex. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) You can have sex before you get married, as long as it's safe sex. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) We're getting married in a few months, so it's OK to have sex now. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Sex before marriage is unforgivable. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT SEX

With so many ideas about sex, it can be hard to work out what the truth is. However, in the Bible, God shows us what sex is all about and helps clear up all the confusion. From the Bible we can see that God created sex to be a great experience when used in the special relationship it was created for.

God Is Positive About Sex

- One of God's first commands to people was to have sex - Genesis 1:27-28. God designed it!
- Married couples are encouraged to have sex – 1 Corinthians 7:3-5.
- The entire book of Song of Solomon in the Old Testament is about the love between a man and a woman, including having sex.

Why Did God Create Sex?

3. Read Genesis 1:27-28. Why did God create sex?

4. Read Genesis 2:19-25 (especially verse 24). Why did God create sex?

God's Standard For Sex

The above two passages from Genesis 1 and 2 (particularly Genesis 2:24) show us that God has given us the great gift of sex to be the ultimate expression of love between:

**A man and a woman
in a one-to-one
permanent relationship**

 **This is called marriage**

Sex outside of this standard falls short of the great plan that God has for us. Sex outside of this standard is sinful disobedience to God.

Sex Outside Of God's Standard

5. Read the following verses and write down the types of sex that fall outside of God's standard.

Hebrews 13:4

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Romans 1:26-27

1 Corinthians 5:1

1 Corinthians 6:15-20

6. Below is a list of some of the advantages of keeping sex within marriage. What are some other advantages?

- No contraception needed
- No unplanned babies
- No abortions



• _____
• _____

- Truer friendships
- Virginity isn't lost



• _____
• _____
• _____

The Pain Of Sex Outside Of Marriage

7. Read Proverbs 5:1-6,20-23; 7:21-27. What are the negative effects of sex outside of marriage?

8. Read 1 Corinthians 6:15-20. What reasons are we told for keeping sex within marriage?

9. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8. What does this passage say to the person who believes sex outside of marriage doesn't hurt anyone?

10. Read Ephesians 5:1-5 and Colossians 3:5-8. How is the Christian to be different from everyone else?

SUMMARY

God made sex for us to enjoy and have children. Since God created sex and he created us, he knows the best way for us to fully enjoy sex – one man and one woman who are married to each other. Sex in any other relationship will hurt you and others, and anger God. If you have messed up sexually, there is a solution for you – but more of that later.

MEMORY VERSE

God's Plan For Sex

Genesis 2:24

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother
and hold fast to his wife,
and they shall become one flesh.

STUDY THREE

CH♥♥SING A PARTNER

So far we have discovered several important things:

- Love comes from God. He showed this by sacrificing Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. God wants us to show this type of sacrificial love to others.
- Love is also about how you care for others through patience, kindness, respect, truth etc. - this is the type of love you should show your boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Love can be expressed through sex only between one man and one woman who are married to each other. This is God's standard for sex.
- God made sex for us to enjoy and get close to our husband/wife. He also created it so we could have children.

1. How would the information above help you in choosing a boyfriend or girlfriend who will be your future husband or wife?

2. There are many other things to look for in a boyfriend or girlfriend. List the other things that you would like in your future husband or wife (be honest).

CHRISTIANS DATING AND MARRYING CHRISTIANS

3. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 and 1 Corinthians 7:39. What advice do you get from here for who you should marry? (A yoke is a wooden bar placed across the necks of 2 animals, and connects them to a plow or cart so they can pull together.)



4. In the Old Law God forbid the people of Israel to marry anybody who wasn't a follower of God (Exod 34:11-16; Deut 7:1-4). Read 1 Kings 11:1-8; what was King Solomon's big mistake? What did his mistake make him do?

5. What are some other advantages in a Christian choosing a partner who is also a Christian?

As a Christian, the most important thing for you to remember when choosing a partner is that they must also be a Christian. A Christian is a person who has **repented** and **believes in Jesus Christ**.

Repentance is the decision to turn away from sin and to turn to God and obey him. When we turn to God we obey his command to **believe** in Jesus Christ. To **believe** (or have faith) in Jesus Christ means to believe in who he is and in what he did for us (i.e. he is the God-man who died on the cross and rose from the dead to forgive our sins). **Repentance** and **faith** occur together (Mark 1:14-15; John 3:16-18,36; 5:24; Acts 2:38-41; 3:19; 17:30-31; 20:21; 1 John 1:8-2:3).

A person becomes a Christian not by any good works that they do, but by **repenting** and having **faith** in Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-6).

A person can confess they are a Christian, but you can also determine this by observing their behaviour. The Bible tells us that good works, deeds or fruits are the **result** of personal salvation, proving that they are a Christian (John 15:8) and showing their love for God (John 14:15,21; 15:10; 1 John 5:3).

- Jesus said that if you really are a Christian you'll obey him (John 14:15,21; 15:1-14).
- John said that if you constantly disobey God it shows that you're not a Christian (1 John 2:3-6,15-17; 3:4-10; 3 John 11).
- James said that if you don't show good works then it shows you're not a Christian (Jam 2:14-26).

So the behaviour of the person shows you whether or not they have truly repented and expressed faith in Jesus Christ. What type of things would you expect a person to be doing if they claimed to be a Christian? In a nutshell, you'd expect them to obey whatever God says in the Bible (or at least have a desire to obey God in all things and work towards achieving that goal). Below are just a few things you'd expect them to be doing:

- Read the Bible regularly (2 Tim 3:16-17).
- Pray regularly (Phil 4:6-7; 1 Thes 5:17).
- Attend church regularly (1 Cor 12; Heb 10:24-25).
- Tell others about Christ (Mat 28:18-20).
- Love others (Mat 5:43-48; John 13:31-35).

A person who doesn't show much, if any, obedience to God could be a Christian who is falling away from a close relationship with God, or they may not be a Christian at all. **You should avoid dating such people**, until they truly repent and have faith in Jesus Christ, showing it by their obedience to God.

ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN MARRIAGE

God has set clear roles for men and women in marriage. One of the major reasons why so many marriages end in divorce is that men and women are not fulfilling their God-given roles in marriage. There are several key passages in the Bible that describe these roles. Once you understand the roles that God has assigned for husbands and wives, you should look for these qualities when choosing a partner.

6. Read the Bible passages in the table on the next page and take note of the roles in marriage.

	HUSBAND'S ROLE	WIFE'S ROLE
Genesis 2:15-25		v.18,20-23
Proverbs 31:10-31		v.13-15
		v.16-18,24
Ephesians 5:22-33	v.23	v.22,24
	v.25-30,33	v.33
Colossians 3:18-19	v.19	v.18
Titus 2:3-5		v.4
		v.5
1 Peter 3:1-7	v.7	v.1-6

So we can see that even though God created man and woman in his image, equal before him as persons (Gen 1:26-31; 5:1-2; 9:6; Gal 3:28) he designed them to have different roles in marriage. He designed man to carry the responsibility of headship (or leadership) in marriage and he designed woman to be a helper to the man and to submit to him in marriage. However, because of sin, our nature has become corrupted and these roles have been abused or neglected. Husbands should avoid harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives, and wives should avoid resistance to their husband's authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husband's leadership.

GOD WANTS TO HELP YOU

When you're looking for your future husband or wife, you're not on your own. You have your Father in heaven who is deeply interested in your life and wants to guide and help you.

7. Read Matthew 7:7-11. What is Jesus saying we should do?

What will God the Father do for us (his children)?

8. Read the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. What should we remember to tell God in prayer when we ask him for things? (v.10)

SUMMARY

When choosing a partner who will be your future husband or wife, God wants you to consider the following:

- Choose a growing Christian.
- They must be the opposite sex to you.
- They should love you in the way described in the Bible.
- The man should show qualities of leadership, since he carries the responsibility of leadership in marriage and the woman should show qualities of submission, since she is to be a helper to the man and is to submit to him in marriage.

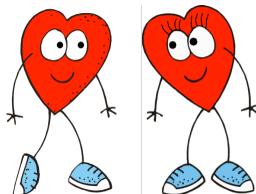
God is more interested in how the person looks on the inside, not on how they look on the outside (1 Sam 16:7). There's nothing wrong with choosing a "good looking" person, but if that's your main reason for choosing a partner then you'll end up with disaster! You need to think about other things such as their spirituality and character.

MEMORY VERSE

Out Of Balance
2 Corinthians 6:14

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness?
Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

STUDY FOUR



DATING

1. List and discuss at least 2 good reasons for dating.

2. List and discuss at least 2 bad reasons for dating.

Now that we know from the Bible the type of person we should be looking for (and most likely you've got some things you're looking for also), what do you think is the best age to start going out with someone? The Bible doesn't actually give us an age. Choose an age group below and then discuss the positives and negatives of going out with someone at that age.

Up to age 11 12-14 15-16 17 18-20 21 and above

Now here's a tough question - think about the **youngest** age you'll get married. Let's say it's 21. If you start dating someone when you're 15, you're going to have to wait 6 years before you get married. Now remember that God's plan for sex is within marriage only, which means you're going to put yourself through at least 6 years of sexual temptation. It won't be easy! This is something you should keep in mind when deciding at what age you should start dating. The later you date, the better.

HOW FAR CAN I GO WHEN I'M DATING?

3. It's obvious that having sex before marriage is a sin. But what about heavy kissing, hugging, touching and other things couples do without actually having sex? Can I do those things when I'm dating? The Bible gives us some guidelines. Read the following verses and write down what you believe God is saying about "how far you can go".

Matthew 5:27-28

Ephesians 5:3

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6

1 Timothy 5:1-2

THE VERY SLIPPERY SLOPE

Unfortunately many couples dating are too physically intimate with each other. This causes them to sin. Below is a chart showing how some dating couples move from one stage of physical intimacy to the next. It's a very slippery slope – one thing very easily leads to the next!

-
1. Holding hands
 2. Hugging
 3. Casual kissing
 4. Prolonged kissing
 5. Heavy and widespread kissing
 6. Touching covered breasts
 7. Touching uncovered breasts
 8. Touching covered genitals
 9. Touching uncovered genitals
 10. Oral sex
 11. Genitals touching each other
 12. Sexual intercourse

Looking at the chart on the previous page, the wisest place for dating couples to draw the line would be no further than stage 3. The majority of dating couples, whatever their age, cannot go much beyond stage 3 without sinning physically or in their minds. The young man or woman of God who wants to set good standards will do well to take note of this.

4. There are many practical things you can do to help stop yourself from falling too far down the slippery slope. Write down and discuss what you could do in the following situations in order to avoid going too far when dating:

- Who you go out with (e.g. by yourselves or with a group of other people).

- Where you meet (e.g. public places, secret places, dark places, in cars).

- What you talk about.

- The type of clothes you wear (Rom 14:21; 1 Cor 10:31; 1 Tim 2:8-10 and 1 Pet 3:3-6 will help you set some guidelines).

- The time you get back home.

5. Do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the statements below? Tick your answer and discuss your decision.

AGREE DISAGREE

a) It's OK to sleep at my boyfriend/girlfriend's house once in a while.

b) It's OK to go on a holiday with just my boyfriend/girlfriend.

SUMMARY

The main purpose of dating is to help you decide whether or not you should marry that person. Generally speaking it shouldn't take more than a few months to determine this. Once you've confirmed who your future spouse will be, you should get married soon after (not several years later) in order to minimise sexual temptation.

When dating you should:

- Limit your 1-on-1 time with each other and not break relationships you have with other people.
- Limit what you say to one another (inappropriate talk can put unnecessary pressure on the relationship). Let your speech be Godly and Biblical.
- Limit your touch. Spend your time doing other things together.

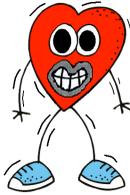
The more you play around with your boyfriend/girlfriend before you get married, the more likely you will sin physically or in your thoughts. You'll also create a lot of pain if you have to break up. Even if you don't break up, playing sexual games with your partner before you get married is not God's idea of showing love to your neighbour. You will hurt yourself, your partner and the future spouse of yourself and your partner.

MEMORY VERSE

Sexual Immorality Ephesians 5:3

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

STUDY FIVE



PORNOGRAPHY & MASTURBATION

WHAT IS PORNOGRAPHY?

Pornography is the depiction or showing of sexual activity or the sexual organs in magazines, books, movies, bars, shows, internet and even over the phone. Pornography is designed to create erotic feelings in us – to encourage us to have sexual thoughts and to have sex.

1. What examples of pornography have you seen, heard of or been involved in?

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY

2. How many people do you know are involved in pornography? What type of pornography do they get into?

3. List and discuss at least 2 things people or the media say about pornography.

WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY

4. It's important to look at the effects of pornography. Remember that it's designed to create erotic feelings in us. Below is a list of some of the effects pornography creates in us. From the Biblical information you have learnt in the past 4 chapters of this study, write down and discuss what God thinks about pornography based on the effects it creates in us. Pornography can encourage you to:

- Lust after the person shown in the pornography.
-

- Lust after other girls or boys you know – or don't know!
-

- Have sex with somebody you're not married to.
-

- Masturbate (more of this later).
-

- Have homosexual feelings.
-

- Have a false expectation of what to look for in a girl or guy.
-

- Have disrespect for women.
-

SUMMARY

You'll see many books or films of naked men and women when you study subjects at school like biology. But these pictures are not pornographic because they're designed to educate you.

Pornography is designed to create erotic feelings in you – this brings you down. God created sex to be the best expression of love between one man and one woman in a permanent relationship – that's called marriage. Sex outside of this standard is sin. Since pornography encourages sexual behaviour outside of God's standard, then all serious Christians should avoid it.

WHAT IS MASTURBATION?

Masturbation occurs when you stimulate your own genitals to produce sexual orgasm. You get an orgasm without actually having sexual intercourse.

People masturbate for many reasons. Pornography, loneliness, lust and curiosity can lead to masturbation. Some statistics show that most people have tried masturbation.

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT MASTURBATION

There are a lot of myths and jokes about masturbation. Some people once believed that masturbation caused blindness or acne – but these are myths!

5. It's common to hear about masturbation at school, on the radio and on television. What are some things you've heard people say about masturbation? Is it encouraged? Is it considered to be healthy?
-
-

WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT MASTURBATION

The Bible doesn't say anything specifically about masturbation. That's why there can be some confusion amongst Christians about whether it's OK or not.

Masturbation is sinful in the following situations:

- If you masturbate while lusting after somebody you're not married to. Sometimes these lustful thoughts come from pornography you've been exposed to. These sexual thoughts are a sin – it's adultery of the heart (Mat 5:27-28).
- If the masturbation controls you. It can become a habit – an addiction. Some people masturbate to relieve their sexual tension, relieve stress, escape from loneliness etc., but in the long run it causes more problems. You see, the more you masturbate the more you want to masturbate – that's addiction. Rather than seek comfort and answers from God, the addiction becomes the "answer" to their problems (Psa 23; Phil 4:6-9).
- If the masturbation continues after marriage. Instead of focusing your sexual energy on your wife or husband, you focus on yourself and your private fantasies. Your spouse misses out on sex because you've satisfied yourself! God commands us to satisfy our marriage partner (Gen 2:24; 1 Cor 7:3-5).

SUMMARY

It's important to understand that one purpose of sex in marriage is to end loneliness. In the marriage relationship, sex is a beautiful demonstration of the love two people have for each other. Masturbation is not love directed towards other people, but is usually lust directed towards ourselves. Masturbation won't satisfy your deep need for love; it never really satisfies.

MEMORY VERSE

Keep Pure Thoughts

Matthew 5:27-28

You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

STUDY SIX



I'VE STUFFED UP - WHAT DO I DO?

Unfortunately, we sometimes sin. Even though we know what God does and doesn't want us to do, we sometimes get enticed by our desires and convince ourselves that it's okay to sin (Jam 1:13-15). Before you know it, you've done something you shouldn't have done and all the "happy" moments turn to guilt, anger and disappointment. You might be thinking, "Will God ever forgive me? Will the rest of my life be a complete mess? Is God going to strike me dead? Will I be stuck in this sin for a long time or even the rest of my life?"

If God didn't love you, then your life would end up being a complete mess and there would be no hope for you. The good news is that God does love you (John 3:16; 1 John 4:7-11) and so there is hope for you.

Don't forget that God's forgiveness is big enough to cover any sin, including sexual sin.

The Bible tells us about King David committing adultery with a beautiful woman called Bathsheba (2 Sam 11; 12). David was a married man. Bathsheba was also married – but to somebody else. To cut a long story short, David lusted after Bathsheba when he saw her bathing and decided to sleep with her. When she became pregnant because of him, he arranged for her husband to get killed!

1. Read Psalm 51:1-12. When King David was confronted with his own sexual sin, what did he ask God to do for him?

2. King David knew he could cry out to God for forgiveness because he knew how loving and forgiving God really is. What are the amazing and wonderful characteristics of God that David mentions in Psalm 103:8-13?

3. Read 1 John 1:9. If we sin what should we do?

What 2 things will God then do for us?

4. God doesn't want us to sin, so he helps us. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What has God promised he will do for us when we're tempted to sin?

What should our response be each time we're tempted?

5. Another way God helps us to obey him is by the Holy Spirit who lives in every Christian (John 7:37-39; Rom 8:9-11). According to the following verses, how could God's Spirit help you have victory over temptation?

John 14:25-26

Galatians 5:22-23

6. The Bible tells us that obedience to God will satisfy our lives more than anything else. Since God made us, he knows what's best for us. What do the following passages tell us about the benefits of obedience to God?

Matthew 7:24-27

John 10:7-10

Below is a list of things you should do if you have sinned or want to avoid sinning. It applies to any of the areas that have been covered in this entire study such as sex before marriage, lustful thoughts, homosexuality, pornography etc.

1. **Repent** – make the decision to turn away from your sin and turn to God and obey him (Acts 8:22; Rev 2:19-22). **Believe** that Jesus Christ's death and resurrection was enough to forgive your sins (John 3:16-18,36; 5:24). Ask God to forgive you (1 John 1:9).
2. **Apologise** to who you sinned against (Jam 5:16).
3. If you're involved in pre-marital sex both of you should agree to stop the sexual involvement and set good standards. If it doesn't work, you should break off the relationship (Mat 5:29-30; Heb 12:1-2).
If the relationship is forbidden by God (e.g. an unequally yoked, homosexual or adulterous relationship) you should immediately break it off.
If it's a pornography problem, all pornographic material should be destroyed, all links to pornographic websites should be deleted etc.
4. Make sure that **God** is number one in your life (Mat 6:33).
5. Read the **Bible** regularly and fill your mind with the word of God (Mat 4:1-11; Phil 4:8-9; 2 Tim 3:16-17).
6. **Memorise** the memory verses in this study (another good verse to memorise is 1 Corinthians 10:13). They will alert you when the going gets tough and remind you what to do.
7. **Pray** regularly and specifically for the problem you're facing. Ask God to help you (Mat 6:13; Phil 4:6-7; 1 Thes 5:17).
8. Don't lose your **Christian friends!** Keep going to church (Heb 10:24-25). At church you'll be disciplined, encouraged and make friends.
9. If you're looking for a partner, **date a Christian with good moral standards** (1 Cor 5:6-7; 15:33). Plan your dates – set a time to get home that's not too late; go out in groups; go out in public places, not in dark streets or under trees in parks!
10. Be **accountable** to a mature Christian friend who is the same sex as you (your home group leader is willing to help you).

If you have sexually sinned, what is Jesus saying to you to do now?

SUMMARY

God is our Creator and Father. He cares for us and knows what's best for us. When we obey him we experience full joy. God loves us so much that he helps us overcome temptation. But if we do sin, he forgives us if we confess our sin.

MEMORY VERSE

God Forgives Us
1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

A great book to read on this topic of sex and relationships is:
Sex: It's worth waiting for, by Greg Speck.