**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:** Sex. Partying. Drugs. We all know these three topics in some fashion. Some of us have never touched these three things. Others have a loved one who has had struggled with one or more of these things and harmed us in some way because of it. Still, some of us have a deep-rooted struggle with one or more of sex, partying, and drugs. Even if we don’t, we all will be confronted by these three things at some point in our lives, and we will have decisions to make. Do we partake? What is and is not okay? What does scripture say about these things, and what’s God’s will for us? This series is designed to take us through three incredibly relevant topics that all of our students will have a decision to make about and teach what the Bible says about them and why, when abused or used wrongly, they are not helpful in our walks with Christ.

**Week Overview:**

Sex was designed by God to be a gifted to creation in the context of marriage. And yet, it is one of the most taken advantage of gifts in human history. We have taken this wonderful gift and distorted it greatly. Culturally, we view sex as something for our own pleasure, not requiring any kind of commitment, and to be done at our own will. That’s not what God designed it for! Sex was intended to be selfless, vulnerable, committed, an act symbolizing becoming one with your spouse, and beautiful. Abusing the gift of sex is not helpful to our walk with Christ, but what is helpful is understanding what sex is, what is was designed for, and how we can strengthen our walk with Christ through practicing His teachings on sex.

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

(Embrace the awkward) Start by saying the word “sex”. Let students giggle a bit, but say “sex” a few times, let the students say it together too.

**Tension (what’s the struggle):** Sex is an incredible gift from God, and yet we take it for granted, twist its meaning and significance, and frankly, abuse it. This is the cultural norm: to view sex as a sign of maturity, can happen when we decide to do it, and it not matter how much we do it because we think there’s no consequences. How can the church respond to this? We investigate what sex is, the original intent of sex as created by God and gifted to us, acknowledge what has happened to it, and speak truth not only to those who have not had sex, but to those who have.

**Text:** Genesis 1:28, 1 Corinthians 6:13-7:4

**Truth:**God is for sex. He’s all about it. He created it, He gifted it to us to enjoy its power, and He made clear the parameters that it is meant to be enjoyed in. We’ve twisted it as a culture, but we still have hope. There is a way to live a holy, set apart life sexually that is pleasing to God, the most pleasurable for us, and the best way for us to live because it follows what God intended. Hope is not just for those who haven’t had sex though: there’s so much hope to be had for those who have already had sex and/or struggle with any other kind of sexual sin. Our God is a God of Hope. Through Him we have hope to fight for purity and enjoy sex as it was designed.

**THP**: Sex is a gift from God

**Supporting Points:**

* There’s no such thing as casual sex
* Oxytocin

**Application (call to action)**: Still mulling this...would love your thoughts. I have a few ideas at the bottom

Practice: Scripture Engagement

Begin a “Read the Bible in a Year” Plan

As a life group, do the “Your Journey” devotionals

Start a Bible Study with some friends

Come and get a Bible!

*Red – Scripture*

*Blue – Personal Story*

*Green – Prop*

***THP/Main Points – Bold***

Sex. Yup, you heard me right. I just said sex. On the count of 3, say it with me: 1, 2, 3, sex. It’s ok to giggle about sex a bit. You probably walked into service tonight thinking we’d cover something like friendship, maybe cover Easter more, or talk about a biblical character. Nope, when we have a series on those things, we won’t talk about sex. But tonight, we’re talking about sex. And no, this is not awkward. Sex is not awkward to talk about. How do I know that? I’ve already said the word sex 8 times. You don’t say a word that many times if it was so awkward because it’s awkward. And sex is not that.

In all seriousness, why are we talking about sex? Because sex is incredibly important to our walk with Christ. Sex is a gift from God that He gave us in how He designed us. We know this just by looking at the creation narrative in the opening chapter of Genesis. In verse 28, God blessed man and woman and said,

“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it”.

How do you think humankind was equipped to fill the earth and subdue it? You guessed it, through sex. God created it for us, to be enjoyed by us, but sex is not a gift we have done well receiving. Culturally, to Satan’s pleasure, we have taken something good and twisted it. Sex in our culture today is about ourselves, our own pleasure, power, status, and degradation. Are these the things you want from ANY kind of relationship? One found on your own self-centeredness and without love?

This is a real problem we have. In a study done by Guttmatcher Institute in New York that interviewed more than 38,000 people, they found that about 95% of people had sex before they got married. That is 19 out of 20 people.

DoSomething.org states that 1 in 4 teens in the United States contract a sexually transmitted disease every year. 25% of teens.

I believe those statistics affirm what many of us probably already thought or would have guessed had I asked you beforehand. They might surprise you with how high they are, but I doubt they surprise you that they’re real. Here’s the thing: God is all about sex. He created it, invented it, it’s one of His greatest gifts to us and is meant to be enjoyed. But listen: as wonderful as sex is, we also need to approach it with real clarity because it will be destructive otherwise.

I want to pause here and make myself very clear about something: statistically speaking, I can assume that this topic is incredibly vulnerable for you to even be in the room about. Your story is possibly a story that involves being on the receiving end of sexual sin in some capacity. Your story could be one that includes having a history of having sex outside of the sacred relationship of marriage or someone forcing themself on you in an unwelcoming way. **Please hear me on this: if you are feeling guilt, fear, damaged goods, or shame right now, those feelings are not from our heavenly father.** His language does not consist of guilt, fear, or shame. Our God is a God who calls us into conviction that leads to repentance, but he does not have those feelings in his vocabulary. He is not done with you, He is for YOU, and He loves you. He will heal you from your past and stay with you through your journey of exiting the damage that has happened in your life.

Scripture has plenty to say about sex, and one passage that addresses how God designed sex for us is 1 Corinthians 6 and 7, an eye-opening letter from the apostle Paul in the 1st Century A.D. Here’s what must be understood about 1 Corinthians…

Paul was writing to a group of very new Christians in Corinth, a port city in Greece. Corinth was known for thousands of people to be coming and going from the city, and for being the sexual capital of the world at that time due to their large temples that were filled with prostitutes. Challenging place to be a new Christian, right?! Thankfully, they had Paul, who knew about all the adversity they faced in Corinth. Addressing why casual sex is problematic, Paul says to the Corinthians,

 **13**You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. **14**By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. **15**Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! **16**Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” **17**But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

Paul makes it clear: your view and idea of sex is not helpful to following Christ. They don’t go together. The Corinthians didn’t realize that casual sex is problematic because they didn’t understand sex or understand what happens during sex. Sex was created to bond a man and a woman together, but not just any man and any woman: a married couple. See, when a couple is married, they’re united as one, and in the same way, sex bonds a couple as one.

Chemically, something happens to us during sex. Pastor David Marvin made this point in a sermon last summer. Oxytocin, a hormone in our bodies, is known as the attachment hormone or the love hormone. The only occasion when both man and woman have a surge of this hormone is during sex. Friends, this points directly to our God as our creator! Since sex is a gift from Him, designed and invented by Him, it makes a lot of sense that chemically both man and woman share the greatest release of the love hormone when they are having sex.

Sex is a gift from God. By now, maybe you’re beginning to see the power of sex. Paul pleaded with the Corinthians to change their sexual habits because Paul understood the power of sex and the intention of God to enjoy the gift of sex in the context of marriage. Oxytocin, the attachment hormone, makes a lot of sense. It’s not all that surprising the greatest surge of attachment we feel chemically is when having sex. And for all of these reasons, it is so crucial to gain clarity on this because sex absolutely will be destructive without it.

**I want to reiterate something I said a few minutes back: if you are feeling guilt, fear, damaged goods, or shame right now, those feelings are not from our heavenly father.** His language does not consist of guilt, fear, or shame. Our God is a God who calls us into conviction that leads to repentance. When we are convicted, we feel a deep sense of truth that is worth standing firm in. Out of that, we repent, which means to literally leave behind what is keeping us away from God and move towards Him. It’s not just not doing something, it’s actively pursuing what’s better, what God wants for us. Any shame and guilt isn’t from him, but we must have clarity on the power of sex.

Paul continues in verses 18-20 on the power of sex…

**18**Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. **19**Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; **20**you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Paul understood how powerful sex was, but he also understood the power of the cross. He calls us to FLEE! RUN! SPRINT AWAY! GET YOUR RUNNING SHOES ON AND GET MOVING FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY! It’s incredibly dangerous. It’s damaging. It hurts. There’s so much pain that you’ll feel by festering in sexual immorality. And yet, God is not done with you! We were bought by the blood of Jesus, an unimaginable price. Because of what Jesus did on the cross, we can be made new. He is greater than anything you’ve done in your past and any temptation you are battling right now. But understand, messing around with sexual immorality will lead to lots of pain.

Friends, God wants so much better for you than that. This gift of sex, the power of sex, can be incredible if we have clarity. It can also be destructive.

(Share story of someone you know who caused incredible damage due to a sexual sin)

I had a friend in college who opened up to me one time about a mistake he made before he became a Christian. My friend was, and still is, in a relationship with the girl of his dreams. The way he loves her is so beautiful, and the love they have for each other is incredible. He was telling me on this occasion about how in high school he sex with his girlfriend and the ripple effect of damage that caused in his life. Early on in his relationship with his girlfriend, he had to tell her about the past relationship that involved him having sex with that girl from high school, and it was heartbreaking for his girlfriend to hear. She had kept and pursued sexual integrity, but he could not say the same. I don’t share this story to cause any guilt or shame on someone, but to simply emphasize that any decision we make in life has consequences. He had to tell her about his past because not only was she deserving of knowing his past, but the damage would have been so much greater had he not done that. She deserved to know. Today, they’ve together to overcome that and have a beautiful relationship. They love each other so much guys. But I’ll never forget him telling me how much we wished he could’ve advised the high school version of himself to not do that.

Sex is powerful. Paul understood that. And in chapter 7 of 1 Corinthians, Paul acknowledges the power of sex and offers a solution… (verses 1-4)

Now for the matters you wrote about: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” **2**But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. **3**The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. **4**The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.

What’s Paul’s advice to the Corinthians having a hard time with sexual desires? Marriage! In fact, it’s beautiful! Paul calls for men and women as husband and wife to fulfill their marital duty to one another, becoming one. Paul calls for us to love as a husband and wife. This is how sex was meant to play out. Real sex, between husband and wife, strengthening their relationship together by serving one another through the gift of sex that God gave us.

As we all pursue sexual integrity in our walks with Christ, I want to offer a few ways to protect your heart that will strengthen your pursuit.

1. Be clear and upfront about your pursuit of sexual integrity in your relationships

One of the most impactful ways to pursue sexual integrity is to be open about your pursuit of sexual integrity. When you enter a romantic relationship, be clear on this. You will save yourself a lot of potential pain by being upfront about this, and maybe even be encouraged about the relationship you’re entering if that other person aligns with you on this.

1. Have an accountability partner

Another great way to pursue sexual integrity is with someone you trust. This should be a person who you trust and know that you can count on to not only hold you accountable but be consistent. Decide to regularly check-in with each other on this.

 3. Make a commitment and tell someone.

You will most likely be asked by your parent/guardian when you get home, “So how was church?”. My encouragement for you is to not say “good”. Respond with “Mom, Dad, I made a commitment tonight”. Your parent/guardian loves you, wants the best for you, and wants to walk alongside you. And they know what we talked about tonight! Step into this opportunity to add someone who loves you deeply into your pursuit of sexual integrity.

Here’s the commitment I invite you to make. I’m going to pray a prayer to encourage us all to pursue sexual integrity, and I encourage you to repeat this prayer to yourself.

Let’s pray!

Lord, create in me a pure heart and renew a spirit of pursuing sexual integrity within me. I am sinful by nature and unworthy of you and your grace, yet you love me and choose me anyway. Forgive me, God, and rid me of the immorality within me. Purify my spirit and make me worthy of you. I repent for my transgressions—both intentional and unintentional. Cleanse my spirit, God. Only You can. Give me the courage to stand firm in your truth and voice my intentions in romantic relationships. Protect and strengthen me with your Holy Spirit, and watch over me, as I pursue to honor you with my sexuality. Provide community around me to support and encourage me, as I support and encourage them too. I love you, Lord. Amen.

FEEDBACK:

Tanner – Good job brother! A hard topic to write a message on. I love the passage of Scripture you pointed to. Just like it’s a problem today, it was a problem in the early church! Glad we’re addressing sex, and pointing to Paul’s words on the topic. I also LOVE including a story in how sexual immorality has damaged people and relationships. Some revisions/additions I suggest are around pornography and how sex is talked about in the church, in schools, and in the home. When I was a new believer and I heard that sex was not okay, I then figured I could just lean on pornography. But obviously that’s not we want our students to takeaway! So as obvious as it may sound, be sure to address it in the room. As far as the talk of sex outside of Northview Students, think about the context of a student. Are they hearing the sex talk in school? Are they hearing it from their parents? Just a thought!

Devyn – Great script! A use of illustrations could be interesting? Just a mention of pornography skewing the view of sex could be a way to address something that is apparent in their lives. Challenging them to practice repentance and explain what that process looks like.

Scott – Paul was a virgin. Why do we listen to him for sex advice? ...we should totally make an image of Paul with the movie poster for 40 year old virgin