

## RADICAL ROMANCE

# STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT SEX

## LIFE GROUP NOTES

### **CONNECT and REFLECT**

*(10-15min) Since you may have new people visiting your group, spend some extended time getting to know each other and getting the conversation started.*

#### Play a game:

Talking about sex can make people feel awkward! So start out by playing a game to help people get over those awkward feelings. (This only works if you are meeting in person)

Get people into pairs and ask them to face each other. The aim of the game is to stare into each others' eyes until one person becomes too uncomfortable and looks away. The person who stares the longest wins! (Trust me, it's more awkward than it sounds!).

Depending on time you can keep the game going by getting the winners to compete until you have a final pair and a final winner.

#### Ask some ice-breaker questions:

- On a scale from one to ten, with one meaning not at all and ten meaning totally comfortable, how comfortable are you talking about sex?
- Why is sex such an uncomfortable topic for people?

#### Ask a reflection question:

*Be aware that talking about sex can be awkward and difficult for people. Perhaps break into pairs for this question and make sure people know they only have to share if they feel comfortable.*

- Complete this sentence with an adjective of your choice: Sex is...
  - How do you feel about the concept of 'sex'? Is it a positive, negative or neutral thing in your life? Why?
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## **READ and EXAMINE**

(20-25 min)

*From this point on I would highly recommend that you split your group into men and women where necessary, as this can help people discuss these topics more openly.*

*Read this summarised extract from Wolfi Eckleben's book 'Date Talk' on myths about sex, pausing to discuss each point.*

### **"MYTHS ABOUT SEX**

*The fact is, we are bombarded with (false) information about sex from every side and in huge doses. Let's consider some of the myths about sex, as promoted by many movies, TV shows, books, glossy magazines, music videos, pop-up ads, other advertising, and all porn. You may or may not actually believe these myths, but please do consider whether any of these influenced your thinking about sex.*

- Can you think of any myths about sex that people believe?

### **The make love myth**

*This myth says that you can make love through sex. But you can't. At best, sex can only express love, not make love. If there is no love, sex will never make love happen. If he can't love you without sex, he will not love you with sex. To love is not the same as to lie down with someone. Think about it: Why do so many people, as they lie there in the arms of someone they have just had sex with, still ask, "Do you love me?" The reason is that sex can never say "I love you" like you need to hear it. Love is not made in a momentary high, but in what happens before, and what happens after. Sex is nothing more than lust (gratifying self at the expense of another) if one of the parties involved reserves the right to reject the other the following day. Unconditional commitment is what really makes love, not sex. This "make love" myth must be busted if you are going to experience real love because sex will never be enough.*

- Do you agree that you cannot make love through sex? Why or why not?

### **The safe sex myth**

*This myth assumes that sex is just something the body takes part in. It assumes that you are just body, and forgets the soul and the spirit. The focus of this myth is about protecting the body from the possible effects of sex, like pregnancy and STDs - Sexually Transmitted Diseases. (Yes, these are real, and very serious in many cases, and not so sexy either.)*

*There has never been a condom invented that protects the mind and heart. Sex is never just a physical activity. Just imagine someone finding out that their significant other is sleeping with someone else. It's not like they are just having lunch or going for a run together, is it? There is definitely much more to sex than the physical.*

*God alone created safe sex, and he called it marriage between a man and a woman. It's safe for the individuals, it's safe for the couple, and it's a safe place for the arrival of a baby (or babies!)*

- Is there more to sex than just the physical element?
- How could sex outside of God's design be 'unsafe'?

### **The try before you buy myth**

*This myth says that it is important to explore whether you are sexually compatible with someone as part of committing to a serious relationship, especially marriage. It assumes that you can actually discover sexual compatibility in the same way as you can discover whether you are intellectually or socially compatible. So let me give you the real facts about sexual compatibility: You are sexually compatible, and you are also not sexually compatible. I'll explain this as clearly as I can.*

*Firstly, the Maker designed the male and female body to fit together in sexual union in an amazing way. It's been designed to work, and on the few occasions when there are complications, these can usually be solved medically or through mutual understanding or counselling. You probably will not discover these through a one night stand or a few drunken moments of passion.*

*On the other hand, we have already learnt that males and females get turned on differently, and it takes quite a lot of understanding to tune in to one another's needs and pleasures. Assessing a potential relationship by one or a few sexual encounters is simply a very poor measure.*

- Wolfi argues that sexual compatibility is something you work for not something you discover. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?

### ***The sex gives intimacy myth***

*This myth claims that adding a sexual expression to your dating relationship will deepen the intimacy between you. That's definitely true in marriage, but definitely not true in dating. In fact, sex in a dating relationship most often gets in the way of developing true intimacy in a dating relationship, rather than deepening it. You have to bust this myth if you want to make sure that you find the real intimacy that you need for laying a solid foundation in your relationship.*

- How could sex in a dating relationship get in the way of developing true intimacy?

### ***The everybody is doing it myth***

*This myth proclaims that virginity is totally uncool and that there must be something seriously wrong or weird about you if you are not having sex at every opportunity, or at least in a committed relationship. It assumes that there is no need or point or value or reason to wait for "I do" before being sexually active. It's a message repeated over and over again in every love story of our culture, where sex is the next step after meeting someone, and that it's always wonderful. The reality is that there are many, many people who are realising that this myth is misleading and an empty promise. Everybody isn't doing it, and for many that are, sex is not doing it for them. They realise that sex can't deliver what it was never intended for.*

- What do you think about virginity or abstaining from sex before marriage?

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## **APPLY**

*(10-15min) What will we do?*

*Be aware that this can be a difficult and vulnerable topic for people to discuss. Make sure that you give people the freedom to share as much or as little as they feel comfortable, while letting them know that this is a safe, non-judgemental and confidential space.*

*Safe question:*

- Are there any unhealthy myths that have informed your thinking about sex? How can you cultivate a healthier attitude towards sex?

*More vulnerable questions:*

**SINGLE** - What role does sex play in your life? How can you cultivate a healthier attitude towards sex and sexual desire?

**DATING** - What role does sex play in your relationship? How can you cultivate a healthier attitude towards sex and sexual desire?

**MARRIED** - How is your sex life? How can you cultivate a healthy and fulfilling sexual relationship with your spouse?

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## **PRAY**

*(5-10min)*

*If you find you have any non-Christians visiting your group who may not feel comfortable with prayer, take this opportunity to pray a brief prayer asking God to help you based on what you have shared.*

*If your group is more comfortable with prayer, spend some time praying for one another based on what you have shared.*

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## **HOME**

*(5 min) Take the opportunity to connect people to the wider church family and what might be next for them:*

- **Group Life:** Is there anything happening outside of the group meeting to draw people into?
- **Church Life:** What's happening next service, are there any key opportunities to highlight, are group members taking their place as contributing church members?
- **Discipleship Step:** Is there a next step that members need to take on the discipleship growth path?