

Real Sex Discussion Guide

Chapter 1

1. Lauren visited two pastors to learn more about chastity early in her Christian journey. What was the difference in the approaches of the two pastors? Why was the second one more helpful or meaningful than the first? Can you relate to one or the other of these experiences?
2. Were you surprised at the anecdotes and statistics provided about the efforts of Christians to abstain from premarital sex? What do you think is the root cause of this widespread failure of young Christians to remain chaste?
3. Is it helpful for you to learn some of Lauren's sexual background at the beginning of this book? Does her exposure of her own struggles and failures make you more or less anxious to hear her thoughts about chastity? Why?
4. Lauren discusses the resources that should help single Christians remain chaste (prayer, the church, reading). Which of these have been helpful for you in your spiritual journey? Are there other resources that have been helpful for you?

Chapter 2

1. Read Genesis 1-3. What does the Creation account teach us about our bodies? About sex?
2. Do you have a tendency to think of bodies as bad, like the Gnostics did? Why do you think this is a struggle for many?
3. What did you learn from the discussion of the word *porneia* about God's ideas regarding sex?
4. Why is it more helpful to start a discussion of sexuality and chastity with Creation than to start with Paul?

Chapter 3

1. Lauren discusses the obligation that Christians have to one another to have hard conversations about sexual behavior. Why do we need to have these conversations?
2. Why is it true that the most important unit for Christians is community, rather than the unit of the autonomous individual so prominent in modern American society?

3. How does a robust notion of Christian community reshape how we think not only about sex, but about other areas of our lives as well—how we use money, for example, or time?

Chapter 4

1. Even if we can technologically separate sex from procreation, why can't we theologically separate the two? How does openness to procreation lead us out of selfishness?
2. Read Genesis 1:28, Genesis 2:23, and Ephesians 5:32. How do these verses help explain the functions of marriage (unitive, procreative, and sacramental)?
3. Is sex a reason to get married? Should we reorder our assumptions about when we are "ready" to get married? Why or why not?
4. Why do our clothes matter?
5. How do we move beyond the idea that sex is "otherworldly"? How can we incorporate sex into the routines of married life? In what ways are you tempted to view sex as either a game like racquetball or a flight from the ordinary?

Chapter 5

1. Why is illicit sex *not* guaranteed to make you feel lousy?
2. Why is there no such thing as casual sex?
3. Do women struggle with sexual temptation just as men do?
4. What are the different teachings about sex that you have heard in the church? In pop culture?

Chapter 6

1. What do you think about the guideline Lauren gives to do what is "prudent, loving, [and] wise?" How does this help in a quest for concrete guidance about what is or is not ok?
2. Why is a good guideline the one that Lauren and Griff used? ("Don't do anything sexual that you wouldn't be comfortable doing on the steps of the Rotunda.")
3. What is the lie that pornography teaches us about sex?
4. What is the danger of masturbation? What are the arguments that Lauren gives for and against masturbation?

5. Why is premarital sex more “thrilling” and “exciting” than marital sex? Why does this thrill endanger marital sex?

Chapter 7

1. What is Lauren’s definition of chastity?
2. Chastity is a rule for Christians but also a discipline. What is the difference? What does prayer have to do with chastity? How do married couples practice chastity as a spiritual discipline?
3. How is practicing chastity like fasting?

Chapter 8

1. What is the difference between chastity and celibacy? Why are both more authentic in the context of community?
2. How can we make the church a more friendly and welcoming place for single Christians? Why is it important not to separate groups in the church by age or stage of life?
3. What does Lauren say about “calling” to singleness?
4. What does singleness teach us about the church? About God? About ourselves? What does marriage teach us about these same things?

Chapter 9

1. How has the church sometimes suggested that sexual sin cannot be forgiven? What is the truth?
2. What is the problem with organizing sexual ethics around virginity?
3. What did Lauren say to M. when asked why he shouldn’t have sex? What do you think about this suggestion?
4. Why are confession and repentance key in dealing with sexual sin?