

## Small Group Study Guide

Is Saving Yourself for Marriage Still a Thing? |

1 Corinthians 7:1-6

From Sunday July 19, 2020

### Appetizer:

**Question:** Sex, Politics, and Religion. Three subjects that consume a lot of our thoughts, but are not easy to talk about! When it comes to sexuality, ask the group what do they remember hearing, either from their parents or their church regarding abstaining from sex before marriage?

**Have someone read 1 Corinthians 7:1-6**

**What stands out to you? Who do you think Paul is addressing? Why is this an issue that he is addressing?**

**What do you think of the idea of remaining celibate for a period of time for prayer?**

### Main Course:

It was mentioned in the sermon that the subject of abstinence is a touching subject because it's seen as personal (and so it's offensive if you bring it up), something that doesn't matter anymore, and something that has been unfair to young people with burgeoning sex drive (the age of consent is higher than puberty, the argument goes, and a few centuries ago, you just got married as a teenager. Now you have to... wait).

**Question:** What do you think of these arguments? When do we talk about about abstinence? Who gets to have the conversation. And to whom?

The sermon talked about abstinence being valued in Christian circles for three reasons:

1. Christianity has a high view of sexuality
2. Christianity has a high view of marriage
3. Marriage allows for a disciplined approach to sexuality.

**Question:** How is the Christian value of sexuality different than the greater society?

**Question:** How is marriage a public display of faith?

**Question:** What do you think it means for marriage to be an avenue to provide a disciplined approach to sexuality? How does this work?

**Question:** Jeff talked about consummation as a concept. In Christian circles, consummation is seen as the very act of marriage. However, culturally speaking, consummation is quite biased towards the purity of the female rather than the male. Is consummation the ultimate proof of marriage? Why or why not? Is the language that Paul uses in Corinthians regarding marriage sexuality dealing with sex as proof of marriage or sex as something that is disciplined by marriage? Or both?

One argument for "saving yourself for marriage" is this idea of preparing for monogamy: that abstinence before marriage is a spiritual discipline of saving yourself for the person that you will be saving yourself for IN marriage as well. **Is this a good argument for abstaining?**

### Dessert:

The sermon ended by talking about the need for grace for couples who struggle with abstinence, citing examples in church history where Christians have not been kind to those that miss the mark.

The encouragement for the group: Talking about sex with others is NOT an easy thing to do, and may come across as a bit creepy. However, there may be young couples in your sphere of influence that you can encourage by painting a "more excellent way" when it comes to a healthy relationship.

**Commit to having a "discussion of encouragement" with another couple, taking time to paint a picture of how beautiful a relationship can be, and how much more it is than a physical act. See if you can find truths that you have experienced that are joyful and compelling when it comes to expressing the beauty of marriage.**

**Pray together as a group in closing.**