# GOD, SEX, AND YOUR MARRIAGE FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

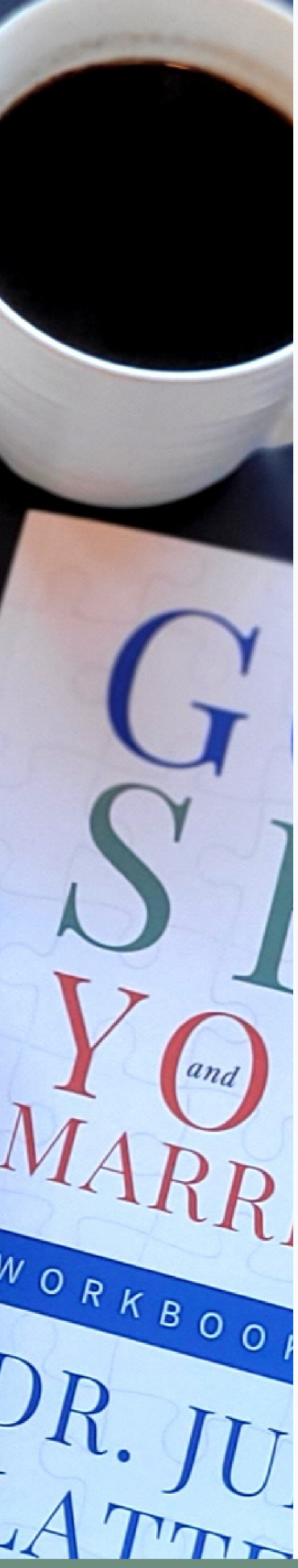



## *Welcome, leader!*

We are thrilled that you are facilitating *God, Sex, and Your Marriage* with your ministry, church, or community. Our hope and prayer is that this facilitator's guide and follow up resources will help equip you for this journey. Our team at Authentic Intimacy is praying for you and your group. If you have any questions or need a resource, please email us at info@authenticintimacy and we would be happy to direct you!

*Copyright © 2023 by Authentic Intimacy*

*All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from Authentic Intimacy.*




# TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 About Authentic Intimacy

6 Facilitator Checklists

7 Requirements for a Group Facilitator

8 Group Facilitator's Role & Responsibilities

9 Marketing & Advertising for Your Group

11 Preparing to Lead

14 Preparing Your Group

15 Facilitating Meetings

17 Suggested Layout for Each Session

38 Tips When Facilitating

44 Appendices

# ABOUT AUTHENTIC INTIMACY

Authentic Intimacy is a unique teaching ministry devoted to teaching on God's design for intimacy and sexuality. Our vision is represented by two words that are rarely put together: SEXUAL DISCIPLESHIP®.

Practically everyone, young and old, single and married, has experienced pain, shame, and confusion related to sexuality. We want men and women to understand God's purpose and redemption related to their sexuality. As a ministry, we disciple by consistently applying God's Truth to all questions, pain, and joys related to sexuality and intimacy.

**Want to know more? Check out our resources:**

- **SEXUAL DISCIPLESHIP:** For just $15/month or $144/year, the SexualDiscipleship.com platform is a place for leaders to connect with other leaders, learn about the biblical narrative of sexuality, and engage in conversations around sexual issues with a gospel focus. Your membership includes access to a Sexual Discipleship e-course, cohorts, resources, monthly office hours with Juli, and help creating your own Sexual Discipleship Plan for your ministry.

- **JAVA WITH JULI:** "Java with Juli" is a truth-centered and grace-filled podcast wrestling with your honest questions about intimacy—no topic is taboo. Find us on iTunes, Stitcher, Google Play, or our website.

- **CONTENT:** Our books, webinars, and blogs are updated regularly with new content addressing sexuality in marriage, singleness, and culture.

- **COMMUNITY:** Our online community is a place for men and women to connect with our ministry, our content, and each other, both through Authentic Intimacy and Sexual Discipleship.

- **AUTHENTIC INTIMACY MEMBERSHIP:** For just $10/month or $96/year, Authentic Intimacy members get access to monthly podcast discussions with Juli, hundreds of Java with Juli episodes from our archives, discounts on Online Book Studies and events, free digital products, and more. Join our Authentic Intimacy and Sexual Discipleship memberships for an additional 20% off. Learn more at authenticintimacy.com/member.



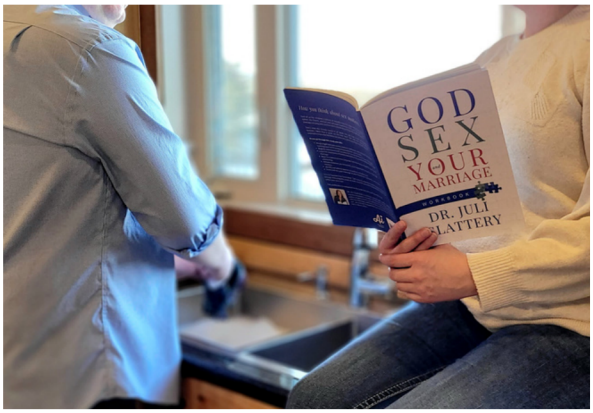
# FACILITATING 101

# FACILITATOR CHECKLISTS

GROUP DATES AND TIME: _____

| READ FACILITATOR'S GUIDE | ✓ |
|---|---|
| About Authentic Intimacy | |
| Requirements for a Group Facilitator | |
| Group Facilitator's Role & Responsibilities | |
| Marketing & Advertising for Your Group | |
| Preparing to Facilitate | |
| Preparing Your Group | |
| Facilitating Meetings | |
| Suggested Layout for Each Session with Content | |
| Tips When Facilitating | |
| Appendices | |

| BEFORE FIRST GROUP | ✓ |
|---|---|
| Confirm group time and dates with your church or ministry | |
| Pray for participants | |
| Prepare materials | |
| Partake in any needed training | |
| Market and advertise your group | |
| Send an introduction email to the group participants | |
| Prepare group covenant | |




# *Group Facilitator*
# REQUIREMENTS

While leading a group is an important responsibility, don't feel the pressure to be perfect. Before we discuss what is required, let's look at what qualifications are not necessary.

**What a group facilitator is not expected to be**:

- Someone who has mastered sexuality
- Someone with a perfect sex life or sexual past
- Someone who has all of the answers
- Someone with professional training or experience

We are all sexually broken and still on the journey of sanctification as we follow the Lord. You are not expected to be an expert or have a perfect marriage. Still, there are a few requirements to be a group facilitator. Leading a small group is not a casual responsibility.

1. **A commitment that the Bible is the standard of truth**
2. **A heart for God's people**
3. **A humble spirit - you're working on your marriage too**
4. **An interest in and knowledge of the material**

This doesn't mean you have all of the answers––but that you can point out the major signposts along the way. A group facilitator must hold to the truth of Scripture as a foundation, while also ministering from a place of compassion and humility. Don't be concerned that you need complete knowledge of the material, but plan to bring a passion for what your group is learning.




# *Group Facilitator*

## ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

**Organize Group Meetings**

Your group day and time will be set by you or your church. People will sign up for your group knowing this information, but you will also want to reiterate with your group all of the details of when, where, and how the meetings will take place. You will want to communicate with participants before the first meeting to welcome them, share details about the group, and prepare them for the first meeting.

**Facilitate Discussion**

While some groups will naturally fill the set time with their thoughts and questions, some may not. Most groups will need a bit of encouragement, at least as the study begins. Facilitating discussion is one of your most important roles, which includes pre-selecting discussion questions, engaging quieter members, rephrasing or clarifying questions when needed, and at times redirecting a group member who naturally dominates conversations.

**Safeguard the Discussion**

It's the group facilitator's job to monitor group discussion. This may include stepping in if someone becomes disrespectful, if the discussion becomes too explicit, or if someone is critical toward their spouse. You can bring up the group covenant to remind your group of the safeguards in place. See Appendix: Sample Group Covenant.

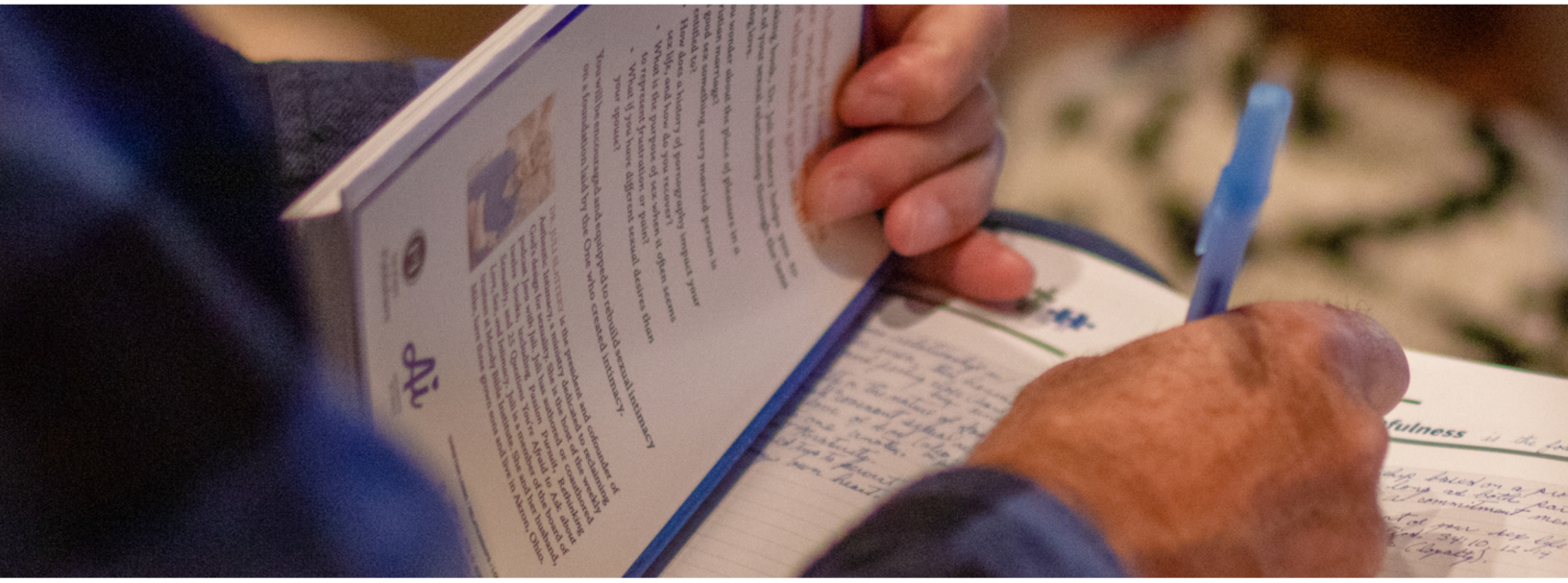
**Pray for Group Members**

Beyond the logistical or social details, each group facilitator should engage in spiritual preparation for his or her group. Praying for the group should be a regular habit, both during group meetings and outside of the meetings.

**Share Responsibilities with Members (Optional)**

A few weeks into the group you may want to assign roles to the group members. For example, encourage one person to be the prayer leader to encourage prayer throughout the week and perhaps another to provide snacks. The more group members contribute, the more they will feel like it is *their group*. Take notice of the people who step up to lead. These people could be future co-leaders or could branch out and lead their own groups.

# MARKETING & ADVERTISING FOR YOUR GROUP



## *4 Week Promotion Strategy*

**Week 1:** Gather email addresses of those interested, print these flyers, make an announcement with this slide, and decide the last day couples can join your group. Be as clear as you can on location, dates, and times--the more information you can give, the better your recruitment will go!

**Week 2:** Send out an interest email (sample email copy on page 10) and make an announcement with this slide at church or small group.

**Week 3:** Send out a follow-up email and meet with people in person who are interested but have not committed to the group. This can be a phone call or even a coffee meet-up. Make sure to walk through their barriers and listen to their fears or concerns. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you and them discern if this is a good next step for their relationship.

For those who have committed, make sure they have ordered their workbooks and let them know you are glad they are a part of the group.

**Week 4:** Send a follow-up email (sample email copy on page 10) letting them know how to register and that this deadline is the last chance for them to sign up. Make sure those who are committed to the group have all the information they need for your first meeting together.

# MARKETING & ADVERTISING FOR YOUR GROUP



**Sample Email:**

Dear Friend,

We are excited to share that we will lead a group through the God, Sex, and your Marriage Curriculum by Authentic Intimacy. The group will meet every _____ over the next ten weeks. While together, we will watch a teaching video from the author, Dr. Juli Slattery, and engage in a discussion over the workbook curriculum. We would love for you to join us!

This 9-week workbook along with corresponding 10-minute teaching videos answers the question, “What is a healthy sex life supposed to look like?" You and your spouse may be surprised to learn that God’s Word has practical answers to that question!

As you go through this study, you will learn how to:

- Identify and address barriers to passion and pleasure.
- Bring to light how past events, culture’s teaching, and simplistic religious teaching have led to wrong expectations for your sex life.
- Move from sexual activity to sexual intimacy.
- Begin to understand God’s purpose for sexual intimacy in your marriage.
- Learn the importance of healthy boundaries to promote faithfulness in your marriage.
- Create a common language and vision as a couple for your sexual relationship.
- Reframe problems you encounter as an opportunity to grow in love and intimacy.
- Invite God into your marriage as your Redeemer, Counselor, and Healer.

We hope to see you there. You can register by _____ or emailing me back and letting me know you are interested.

**Sample Follow- up Email:**

Hi Friend,

We wanted to let you know this is the **last week to register** for our small group based on the book *God, Sex, and Your Marriage.* We would love for you and your spouse to join us! You can find more about the workbook and videos here as well as watch a sample of the first week. You can register _____, or please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.


PREPARING
TO LEAD




# *Before the Group* BEGINS

1 **Material Preparation:** A few weeks before the first group meeting, become familiar with the content of the study. Depending on your familiarity with the material, you may want to watch all of the videos, read the entire book, or review the study guide before the group starts. These tools will help ensure that you will have a good understanding of the material to be covered by the group and will prepare you for content questions as they arise. We encourage participants to read the *God, Sex, and Your Marriage* book along with the workbook, but we know that schedules may not allow that. The book is recommended as a way to dive deeper into the material.

2 **Training**: Another way for a group facilitator to prepare includes investing in training provided through Authentic Intimacy's leader platform, SexualDiscipleship.com

- Participate in live and recorded training sessions.
- Complete the Sexual Discipleship Training E-course (at your own pace or with a cohort).
- Learn from Small Group Leader Training Videos.
- Attend monthly office hours with Juli Slattery.

3 **Number of Group Participants:** If your group is larger than six couples, we recommend you break into small groups for discussion time. You can still watch the videos together and meet as a large group, but then break into smaller groups for discussion. In a large meeting space, we recommend using round tables to promote engagement and keeping the same couples in their discussion groups each week to build trust and consistency. You may also want to assign a mature leader to be in each small discussion group to ensure that the discussion stays on-track and constructive.

# GENERAL MEETING STRUCTURE

We recommend following the same general structure within the recommended 90 minutes of group time. The time ranges are estimates, so feel free to edit them based on your group.

| Topic & Time | Key Point |
|---|---|
| **Welcome & Opening Prayer (10–15 min)** | Allow for a little small talk or get-to-know-each-other conversations, and then pray to start the meeting officially. |
| **Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)** | Ask a get-to-know-you question. For a list of example icebreaker questions, see Appendix: Icebreakers. As a group grows closer together, you may want to skip the standard ice breaker and instead spend a little time saying hello and catching up with each other. |
| **Video (10 min)** | Watch the session video together which will set up the topic for the week. Your group participants will not have access to the videos outside of the group time. If the group is meeting online, we recommend participants watch the videos before the group. |
| **Discussion (30–40 min)** | This should be the bulk of the meeting and will include discussing the workbook, book, the video, or any scripture passages assigned. Feel free to structure the discussion time of the group. You are encouraged to highlight your favorite questions that you want to make sure you cover as there won't be enough time to cover them all. We have narrowed down the questions in the suggested session layouts below, but you still may need to narrow them down more. |
| **Connection Point Exercise (10–15 min)** | We encourage you to be familiar with the exercise before the group so you are able to briefly explain it to the group. Share with the group that, "We'll take about 10 minutes to complete the exercise on our own or as a couple and then discuss it as a couple." Allow the couples time to work through the exercise on their own and then discuss with one another. After the couple's discussion, feel free to ask the group if anyone wants to share what they learned through the exercise. If you find that you need more time in group each week for discussion, you can have the couples complete the exercise before the group and share highlights during the meeting. |
| **Introduce the Material & Assign Homework (5 min)** | Give a quick preview of the "homework" that each member should complete before the next meeting. |
| **Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)** | Ask for any prayer requests. Then close in prayer by nominating one person to pray for the group, initiating "popcorn" style corporate prayer, or splitting the group into small groups to pray with each other. |

# PREPARING YOUR GROUP

Organization and communication are essential for making sure your group members feel comfortable and know what to expect.

**Introduction Message:** The introduction message is probably the most important tool for starting your group well. Here is a template to use for the introduction email. Feel free to personalize the email as you wish, but you'll want to ensure all of the following elements are present:

Hi Friends,

Welcome to the God, Sex and Your Marriage small group! What a joy it will be to dive into His Word together as we work through this small group. We are [FILL IN NAMES], and it is our joy to lead this marriage group as a couple!

In our first meeting on [FILL IN DATE AND TIME], we will get to know each other and talk through how our time will be structured each week.

Please let me know if you have any questions before we gather together. We look forward to meeting you and are praying over each of you.

Many blessings,

**Before Each Meeting:** While the time of your meetings do not change week to week, it can be very helpful for members if you send an "agenda" or reminder message each week, including any special notes about your time together.




# *Before Each* MEETING

As the group facilitator, you'll want to set aside a few hours each week to prepare for the group meeting. This time should include the following:

1 **Complete the Material**
Complete any "homework" from the group, including readings, videos, or response questions. Even if you have participated in the study before, it is essential to revisit the material to ensure you have a solid reference point for discussion during the meeting.

2 **Choose an Icebreaker (optional)**
Fun icebreakers are a great way to catch up after a week apart and get new groups more comfortable sharing. For a list of icebreaker ideas, see Appendix: Icebreakers.

3 **Identify Discussion Questions**
We highly recommend that you stick to the discussion questions suggested for each week. This will keep your group focussed on the content of the course and prevent tangents that may take the group off course. We have prepared a list of suggested questions for each week. It's not important to finish all of the questions, but be prepared to use them as the structure of your conversation.

Beyond the group-specific preparation, you may want to dive into some referenced Scripture passages, setting aside a time of prayer, or listening to some related "Java with Juli" episodes. For a list of often-referenced "Java With Juli" episodes, see Appendix: Helpful Java with Juli Episodes. Some of our Java with Juli episodes will be locked as member-only resources, and others will be open to the public.

# LEADING MEETINGS

## GSYM Workbook Syllabus and Schedule

| Week | What to read in the workbook: | Watch: | Activity: | Optional reading from GSYM book to be discussed at group: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A Word from Juli (iv) and How to Get the Most Out of This Study (vi) | None | Complete the Pretest (vii) and go over the Group Covenant | Introduction: Why God Cares about Your Sex Life (and You Should Too) (9) |
| 2 | Session One: What Does a Healthy Sex Life Look Like? (1) | Watch Session One video | Connection Point (4) | Chapter 1: Knowing Your Backstory (17) |
| 3 | Session Two: Understanding God's Story of Sex (8) | Watch Session Two video | Connection Point (11) | Chapter 2: God's Story of Sex (33) |
| 4 | Session Three: Pursuing Sexual Integrity (15) | Watch Session Three video | Connection Point (18) | Chapter 3: Wholeness Beyond Sexual Purity (47) |
| 5 | Session Four: Pillar One \| Faithfulness (22) | Watch Session Four video | Connection Point (25) | Chapter 4: Pillar 1—Faithfulness (69) |
| 6 | Session Five: Pillar Two \| Intimate Knowing (30) | Watch Session Five video | Connection Point (33) | Chapter 5: Pillar 2—Intimate Knowing (89) |
| 7 | Session Six: Pillar Three \| Sacrificial Love (38) | Watch Session Six video | Connection Point (40) | Chapter 6: Pillar 3—Sacrificial Love (107) |
| 8 | Session Seven: Pillar Four \| Passionate Celebration (44) | Watch Session Seven video | Connection Point (48) | Chapter 7: Pillar 4—Passionate Celebration (125) |
| 9 | Session Eight: Overcoming Barriers (50) | Watch Session Eight video | Connection Point (52), Posttest (65) | Chapter 8: Take the Next Step (145) |
| 10 | Bonus Session:Confronting Counterfeit Intimacy (56) | Watch Bonus video | Connection Point (58) | Review Chapter 8: Take the Next Step (145) |



# SUGGESTED LAYOUT FOR EACH SESSION

# WEEK ONE

## The First Meeting and Introduction

The first meeting for each group is set aside as an introduction meeting. In this meeting you'll introduce yourself, get to know the group members, and cover introductory information for the group and the material. The following is an example agenda for a first meeting:

### 1 Welcome & Opening Prayer (10–15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)

- Allow for a little small talk or get-to-know-each-other conversations, and then pray to start the meeting officially.
- Ask a get-to-know-you question. For a list of example icebreaker questions, see Appendix: Icebreakers. For this first icebreaker, you might want to start out on a positive note and ask, "What is one thing you love about your spouse?" Or "Briefly share your engagement story."

### 2 Introduction to Group Material (10–15 min)

- During this time, you may want to share why you chose to facilitate *God, Sex, and Your Marriage*. You may share how the content impacted your marriage or why you think this topic is important.

### 3 Discussion (30–40 min)

- During this first meeting, you want to allow time for the group participants to introduce themselves and begin to get to know each other. Share about yourself and then invite each member to share about themselves and what they want to get out of the group. Here are some possible discussion questions for the first meeting:
  - Why did you sign up for this group?
  - What do you hope to get out of this group?
  - How do you hope your marriage in changed or impacted by the end of the study?

## The First Meeting and Introduction

Tip: Feel free to tailor the first meeting to your specific group. Having a positive and engaging first meeting will encourage group members to be honest in following weeks.

### 4 Review Group Covenant (10–15 min)

- During this time, you will want to read over the covenant. See Appendix A: Sample Group Covenant.

### 5 Explain the Weekly Meeting Structure (10–15 min)

- There are a few things you can cover during this time:
- Briefly explain the time structure for the group. Look at the General Meeting Structure on the page before.
- A common question will be what to read before the group sessions.
- You could also look through the workbook together to briefly talk about what will be covered each week.

### 6 Introduce the Material & Assign Homework (5 min)

- Give a quick preview of the “homework” that each member should complete before the next meeting.
- Homework: Read "Session One: What Does a Healthy Sex Life Look Like?" (pg 1) in the workbook. Optional reading: "Chapter 1: Knowing Your Backstory" (pg 17) in *GSYM* book. Explain that you will watch the session videos together during the group.

### 7 Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)

- Ask for any prayer requests. Then close in prayer by nominating one person to pray for the group, initiating “popcorn” style corporate prayer, or splitting the group into small groups to pray with each other.

# WEEK TWO

## Session One: What Does a Healthy Sex Life Look Like? (Pg 1)

1 Welcome & Opening Prayer (10–15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)

- Allow for a little small talk or get-to-know-each-other conversations, and then pray to start the meeting officially.
- Ask a get-to-know-you question. For a list of example icebreaker questions, see Appendix: Icebreakers.

2 Read this week's Key Point

- "How you think about sex impacts everything about your sex life."

3 Watch Session One Video (10 min)

4 Discussion (30–40 min)

**Workbook Discussion Questions (pg 3):**

- How has the culture's picture impacted the way you view your sex life?
- On page 25 of *God, Sex and Your Marriage*, Juli writes, "The culture's greatest fault is not that it over promises on sex but that it under promises." What do you think about this statement?
- What are some specific ways the church's picture has impacted your sex life?
- Why does the traditional church's picture often keep people or couples stuck in shame? To what extent has this been true in your sexual journey?
- In what ways do you think the church's traditional picture falls short of God's design for sex in marriage?
- Why is it important that we not be conformed to thinking as the world does about sexual intimacy in marriage?

**Optional *GSYM* Book Discussion Question from Chapter 1: Knowing Your Backstory (pg 167–168):**

- You don't come to your marriage bed with a blank slate. You come with expectations, fears, secrets, shame, and an unspoken understanding of what "good sex" should look like. What do you think about this statement?
- Read Romans 11:33–12:2.
  - What do these verses say about God's ways?
  - What does verse 11:36 teach about the purpose of God's creation? How would you apply this to His creation of sexual intimacy?
  - What does God call us to do in response to His greatness and goodness?
  - How does 12:2 instruct us to surrender our backstory to God's truth?

**Session One: What Does a Healthy Sex Life Look Like? (Pg 1)**

5 Connection Point Exercise (10–15 min): (Pg 4)

- Allow the couples time to work through the exercise on their own and then discuss with one another as a couple. After the couple's discussion, feel free to ask the group if anyone wants to share what they learned through the exercise.

6 Introduce the Material & Assign Homework (5 min)

- Give a quick preview of the "homework" that each member should complete before the next meeting.
- This week's take home challenge (pg 7): Take some time this week to write a paragraph or two about the "sexual picture" you have been living with. (If this sounds overwhelming, try answering questions like, What messages did I learn about sex from my family? My church? Media? Pornography? Significant past events? How did these messages frame how I think about our sex life today?) Before next week, share with your spouse what you have written. Pray together that God would give you His picture for sex.
- Homework: Read "Session Two: Understanding God's Story of Sex" (pg 8) in the workbook. Optional reading: "Chapter 2: God's Story of Sex" (pg 33) in *GSYM* book.

7 Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)

**Scan the QR code for follow up resources or click the link here.**

# WEEK THREE

**Session Two: Understanding God's Story of Sex (Pg 8)**

1 Welcome & Opening Prayer (10–15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)

- Allow for a little small talk or get-to-know-each-other conversations, and then pray to start the meeting officially.
- Ask a get-to-know-you question. For a list of example icebreaker questions, see Appendix: Icebreakers.

2 Read this week's Key Point

- "Sexuality is first and foremost a way God reveals His covenant love."

3 Watch Session Two Video (10 min)

4 Discussion (30–40 min)

**Workbook Discussion Questions (pg 9):**

- What is your reaction to God's picture of sex?
- How does this picture challenge the way you have learned to think about sex within your marriage?
- How does seeing this picture of sex help you put into context some of the challenges you have faced in your sex life?
- How would you describe the difference between a "contract" view of marriage versus viewing marriage as a covenant?
- Why do you think understanding the concept of covenant might be important to understanding healthy sexuality?
- How does becoming "one flesh" refer not just to marriage but also to sex within marriage?
- How do you feel about connecting your sex life with God's love for you?
- How might it impact your sex life if this "mystery" became the sexual narrative in your life and marriage?

**Optional *GSYM* Book Discussion Questions from Chapter 2: God's Story of Sex (pg 169–170):**

- Why do you think God's enemy, Satan, chooses to so aggressively attack sexuality?
- What are three ways you have personally experienced spiritual attack in your sex life?
- How does understanding God's story of sex give you hope for sexual intimacy within your marriage?
- Read Ephesians 5:21–33.
- Read Genesis 2:21-25. How does Paul connect the "first wedding" in Genesis to the last wedding of Christ and His bride?
    - Why do you think this is called a mystery? How is that mystery being revealed to you in your marriage?
    - What does the real-life work of becoming "one flesh" teach you about Christ's love for us?

**Session Two: Understanding God's Story of Sex (Pg 8)**

## 5 Connection Point Exercise (10–15 min): (Pg 11)

- Allow the couples time to work through the exercise on their own and then discuss with one another as a couple. After the couple's discussion, feel free to ask the group if anyone wants to share what they learned through the exercise.

## 6 Introduce the Material & Assign Homework (5 min)

- Give a quick preview of the "homework" that each member should complete before the next meeting.
- This week's take home challenge (pg 14 ): Pay attention this week to how "creation reveals the glory of God." Throughout the week, have at least three five-minute conversations together about what God is showing you through something that He has created. You might even reflect together on what you are learning about God as you interact together romantically and sexually.
- Homework: Read "Session Three: Pursuing Sexual Integrity" (pg 15) in the workbook. Optional reading: "Chapter 3: Wholeness Beyond Sexual Purity" (pg 47) in *GSYM* book.

## 7 Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)

**Scan the QR code for follow up resources or click the link here.**

# WEEK FOUR

**Session Three: Pursuing Sexual Integrity (Pg 15)**

1 Welcome & Opening Prayer (10–15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)

- Allow for a little small talk or get-to-know-each-other conversations, and then pray to start the meeting officially.
- Ask a get-to-know-you question. For a list of example icebreaker questions, see Appendix: Icebreakers.

2 Read this week's Key Point

- "Honoring God with your sex life means more than following the rules."

3 Watch Session Three Video (10 min)

4 Discussion (30–40 min)

**Workbook Discussion Questions (pg 17):**

- Why do you think it can feel awkward to “invite” God into your sex life?
- How does only thinking about purity (the rules) keep you on “defense” without a vision for what God designed you to experience in sex?
- What feels more difficult? Being sexually "pure" in marriage or pursuing sexual integrity?
- What do you think it practically looks like as a couple to pursue sexual integrity?

**Optional *GSYM* Book Discussion Questions from Chapter 3: Wholeness Beyond Sexual Purity (pg 171–172):**

- How has purity culture impacted your view of God and sex?
- How might your sex life look different a year from now if you committed to growing in sexual integrity?
- Read 1 Corinthians 6:9–20 and 2 Corinthians 5:14–17.
  - How does your identity in Christ change the way you view your sexual past? Your spouse’s sexual past?
  - How does your identity in Christ change the way you view your sexual choices today?

**Session Three: Pursuing Sexual Integrity (Pg 15)**

## 5 Connection Point Exercise (10–15 min): (Pg 18)

- Allow the couples time to work through the exercise on their own and then discuss with one another as a couple. After the couple's discussion, feel free to ask the group if anyone wants to share what they learned through the exercise.

## 6 Introduce the Material & Assign Homework (5 min)

- This week's take home challenge: Take a few minutes at least three times this week to pray about your sex life together. Your prayers can be very short or as long as you'd like them to be.
- Homework: Read "Session Four: Pillar One | Faithfulness" (pg 22) in the workbook. Optional reading: "Chapter 4: Pillar 1 - Faithfulness "(pg 69) in *GSYM* book.

## 7 Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)

**Scan the QR code for follow up resources or click the link here.**

# WEEK FIVE

**Session Four: Pillar One | Faithfulness (Pg 22)**

1 Welcome & Opening Prayer (10–15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)

- Allow for a little small talk or get-to-know-each-other conversations, and then pray to start the meeting officially.
- As a group grows closer together, you may want to skip the standard ice breaker and instead spend a little time saying hello and catching up with each other.

2 Read this week's Key Point

- "Faithfulness lays the foundation for every other aspect of your sex life."

3 Watch Session Four Video (10 min)

4 Discussion (30–40 min)

**Workbook Discussion Questions: (Pg 23)**

- Why is faithfulness foundational to every other aspect of your sex life?
- What is your reaction to this statement: “Character is the most important aspect of your sex life.”
- How did it make you feel to learn that part of faithfulness is “holy jealousy?”
- How would your relationship with God be different if He were not jealous for your heart, your love, and your devotion?
- Many people consider faithfulness a “pass/fail” test rather than an area we all need to grow in. How would you describe what it looks like to grow in faithfulness in your marriage?

**Optional GSYM Book Discussion Questions: (Pg 173–174)**

- What emotional needs might you have attached to sex, making it feel more like a basic need?
- What role does discipleship and community play in how God wants to develop the character trait of faithfulness in your life and marriage?
- Read James 4:1–12.
  - How does this passage describe unhealthy jealousy—the kind that causes divisions?
  - How does this passage describe God’s holy jealousy?
  - What advice does this passage give about how to deal with our past sin and current temptations?

**Session Four: Pillar One | Faithfulness (Pg 22)**

## 5 Connection Point Exercise (10–15 min): (Pg 25)

- Allow the couples time to work through the exercise on their own and then discuss with one another as a couple. After the couple's discussion, feel free to ask the group if anyone wants to share what they learned through the exercise.

## 6 Introduce the Material & Assign Homework (5 min)

- This week's take home challenge (pg 29): Consider the three options listed on page 29. Which of these three things do you believe is a good first step for you personally to focus on?
- Homework: Read: Session Five Pillar Two | Intimate Knowing (30) in the workbook. Optional reading: Chapter 5: Pillar 2—Intimate Knowing (89) in GSYM book.

## 7 Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)

**Scan the QR code for follow up resources or click the link here.**

# WEEK SIX

**Session Five: Pillar Two | Intimate Knowing (Pg 30)**

1 Welcome & Opening Prayer (10–15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)

- Allow for a little small talk or get-to-know-each-other conversations, and then pray to start the meeting officially.
- As a group grows closer together, you may want to skip the standard ice breaker and instead spend a little time saying hello and catching up with each other.

2 Read this week's Key Point

- "Sex was created to be a journey of authentic intimacy. "

3 Watch Session Five Video (10 min)

4 Discussion (30–40 min)

**Workbook Discussion Questions (pg 31):**

- How would you describe the difference between sexual activity and sexual intimacy?
- Why do you think it's so common, both in sex and in our relationship with God, to substitute activity for intimacy?
- Share your reaction to this quote: "Sex without yada is like food without nutrition. God gave you the gift of sex not simply so that your body could experience pleasure, but so that the physical act of becoming one would usher in a deeper knowing and intimacy with one another."
- How has a focus on sexual activity interfered with your pursuit of intimacy in marriage?
- There is no such thing as "risk-free" yada. Why do you think intimacy always comes with risk?

**Optional GSYM Book Discussion Questions (pg 175–176):**

- How has your "activity" in trying to please God kept you from intimacy with Him?
- What are some ways that you have learned to hide your flaws and insecurities with people? How does this play out in your marriage?
- Read Psalm 139, noticing all of the places the psalmist mentions yada. How is the relationship with God that David describes a call to intimacy?
- Read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. How does this passage set the stage for intimacy in your marriage?

**Session Five: Pillar Two | Intimate Knowing (Pg 30)**

## 5 Connection Point Exercise (10–15 min): (Pg 33)

- Allow the couples time to work through the exercise on their own and then discuss with one another as a couple. After the couple's discussion, feel free to ask the group if anyone wants to share what they learned through the exercise.

## 6 Introduce the Material & Assign Homework (5 min)

- This week's take home challenge (pg 35-37): Look at the three activities that will help you take steps towards intimate knowing in your sexual relationship. Each of these exercises will take approximately an hour, so set aside time this week to tackle them. Every couple is at a different stage of trust and vulnerability, so choose the activity that you both feel comfortable with in your current state of your relationship. (You can always come back to the other activities when you feel ready to tackle them.)
- Homework: Read "Session Six: Pillar Three | Sacrificial Love" (pg 38) in the workbook. Optional reading: "Chapter 6: Pillar 3—Sacrificial Love" (pg 107) in *GSYM* book.

## 7 Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)

**Scan the QR code for follow up resources or click the link here.**

# WEEK SEVEN

**Session Six: Pillar Three | Sacrificial Love (Pg 38)**

1 Welcome & Opening Prayer (10–15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)

- Allow for a little small talk or get-to-know-each-other conversations, and then pray to start the meeting officially.
- Ask a get-to-know-you question. For a list of example icebreaker questions, see Appendix: Icebreakers.

2 Read this week's Key Point

- "The challenges in your sex life might actually be part of the gift of sex."

3 Watch Session Six Video (10 min)

4 Discussion (30–40 min)

**Workbook Discussion Questions (pg 39):**

- What were your expectations for sexual fulfillment when you first got married?
- How do the challenges and differences in your sex life invite you to a deeper kind of love?
- How would your understanding of love be limited if sex were always easy and fulfilling?
- Why does a demanding or withholding spirit toward sex distort the kind of love God asks us to show in marriage?

**Optional *GSYM* Book Discussion Questions (pg 177–178):**

- Have you ever considered that self-control and self-denial are also part of marital sex? Why or why not?
- Why is it important to remember that sacrificial love still has boundaries? How do we see this in the example of Jesus' life?
- How do your limitations keep you from being a willing and cheerful giver in your sexual relationship?
- When your spouse offers sexual love, which are you more like—the person who receives with gratitude or the one who complains or pouts because of what is lacking?
- What does it look like to "nurture" the sex life of your spouse? How is that different than just having sex?
- Read 1 Corinthians 7:1–6. Now read 1 Corinthians 13:1–7. These passages are within the same letter written by Paul. How do they together teach you about what it means to love each other sexually?

**Session Six: Pillar Three | Sacrificial Love (Pg 38)**

## 5 Connection Point Exercise (10–15 min): (Pg 40)

- Allow the couples time to work through the exercise on their own and then discuss with one another as a couple. After the couple's discussion, feel free to ask the group if anyone wants to share what they learned through the exercise.

## 6 Introduce the Material & Assign Homework (5 min)

- This week's take home challenge (pg 43): Sometime this week, make the effort to show unselfish love to your spouse within your sexual relationship. See examples on page 43.
- Homework: Read: "Session Seven: Pillar Four | Passionate Celebration" (pg 44) in the workbook. Optional reading: "Chapter 7: Pillar 4—Passionate Celebration" (pg 125) in *GSYM* book.

## 7 Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)

**Scan the QR code for follow up resources or click the link here.**

# WEEK EIGHT

**Session Seven: Pillar Four | Passionate Celebration (Pg 44)**

1 Welcome & Opening Prayer (10–15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)

- Allow for a little small talk or get-to-know-each-other conversations, and then pray to start the meeting officially.
- Ask a get-to-know-you question. For a list of example icebreaker questions, see Appendix: Icebreakers.

2 Read this week's Key Point

- "Sexual pleasure is meant to be a passionate celebration of covenant love."

3 Watch Session Seven Video (10 min)

4 Discussion (30–40 min)

**Workbook Discussion Questions (pg 45):**

- What is the danger of pursuing pleasure and fun without also growing in the areas of faithfulness, intimate knowing, and unselfish love?
- Why do you think it is difficult for many Christians to really believe that God wants them to enjoy sexual passion within marriage?
- What is the problem of building a sex life with these three pillars but neglecting passionate celebration?
- What would it look like for you to play together as a couple? Why is this important to your sexual relationship?

**Optional *GSYM* Book Discussion Questions (pg 179 –180):**

- What do you think of the idea of sex being the regular celebration of your covenant?
- Why are the other three pillars of covenant important guardrails to sexual pleasure?
- Why is it important to be confident in the boundaries of healthy, holy sexuality? How have undefined boundaries kept you from pleasure in your marriage?
- How do the disappointments in your sex life keep you from enjoying and celebrating what is good during this current season of marriage?
- What are some barriers you face in enjoying sexual pleasure? What can you do to address those barriers together?
- Read Matthew 7:9–11.
  - Do you see God as a Father who gives good gifts to His children?
  - Do you believe that sexual pleasure in your marriage is a good gift from God? Why or why not?

**Session Seven: Pillar Four | Passionate Celebration (Pg 44)**

## 5 Connection Point Exercise (10–15 min): (Pg 48)

- Allow the couples time to work through the exercise on their own and then discuss with one another as a couple. After the couple's discussion, feel free to ask the group if anyone wants to share what they learned through the exercise.

## 6 Introduce the Material & Assign Homework (5 min)

- This week's take home challenge (pg 49): Take ten minutes to daydream and plan a date for this week. The date must include something interactive and fun for both of you. (Think playfulness, adventure, or erotic sensations.) Date/Time: When can we go on a date this week? (This can even be something you do at home if that's the only option.) What is something interactive and special we can plan for our date? And then… go on your date!
- Homework: "Read: Session Eight: Overcoming Barriers" (pg 50) in the workbook. Optional reading: "Chapter 8: Take the Next Step" (pg 145) in *GSYM* book.

## 7 Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)

**Scan the QR code for follow up resources or click the link here.**

# WEEK NINE

**Session Eight: Overcoming Barriers (Pg 50)**

1 Welcome & Opening Prayer (10–15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)

- Allow for a little small talk or get-to-know-each-other conversations, and then pray to start the meeting officially.
- Ask a get-to-know-you question. For a list of example icebreaker questions, see Appendix: Icebreakers.

2 Read this week's Key Point

- "A great sex life begins with freedom."

3 Watch Session Eight Video (10 min)

4 Discussion (30–40 min)

**Workbook Discussion Questions (pg 51):**

- In this lesson, you learned that “faith is living according to truths that don’t yet feel true.” What are some truths you have learned through this course that don’t yet “feel true”?
- What does it practically look like for you as an individual and for you as a couple to continue to pursue God’s truth about sexuality?
- How has the material you have learned through this course challenged your love for God? Challenged your love for each other?

**Optional GSYM Book Discussion Questions (pg 181–182):**

- “The spiritual battle for your sex life is less about what happened to you in the past and more about the lies the enemy planted in the pivotal moments of your life.” List some of the lies Satan has planted in your life related to intimacy and sexuality.
- What would it look like for us to “roll away the stone” and invite God to speak life into the wounded places of our marriage?
- How have we seen God’s power at work in our lives already?
- Who are the people God has placed in your life to help you “remove the graveclothes” of your brokenness?
- Read John 11:1–44.
  - Why do you think Jesus was angry and cried even though He knew Lazarus would soon be resurrected?
  - Why do you think Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead?
  - How does this miracle give you faith in the work God wants to do in your heart and marriage?

**Session Eight: Overcoming Barriers (Pg 50)**

5 Connection Point Exercise (10–15 min): (Pg 52)

- Allow the couples time to work through the exercise on their own and then discuss with one another as a couple. After the couple's discussion, feel free to ask the group if anyone wants to share what they learned through the exercise.

6 Introduce the Material & Assign Homework (5 min)

- This week's take home challenge (pg 55): Complete the posttest individually. Then compare your results from your pretest. What is one clear way you have grown as a couple through this course? Do something tangible this week to "cement" that growth. See examples on page 55.
- Homework: Read "Bonus Session: Confronting Counterfeit Intimacy" (pg 56) in the workbook. Optional reading: Review "Chapter 8: Take the Next Step" (pg 145) in *GSYM* book.

7 Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)

**Scan the QR code for follow up resources or click the link here.**

# WEEK TEN

**Bonus Session: Confronting Counterfeit Intimacy (Pg 56)**

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer (10–15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)
   - For the last session, you can spend time asking the group to reflect on their experience or to share one takeaway from the group.
2. Read this week's Key Point
   - "Porn and intimacy are mutually exclusive."
3. Watch Bonus Session Video (10 min)
4. Discussion (30–40 min)

**Workbook Discussion Questions (pg 57):**

- What is your reaction to the statistics of how many men and women regularly report using pornography?
- If pornography is such a common struggle, why do you think it is so often also associated with shame?
- How does pornography work against the pillars of faithfulness, intimate knowing, and unselfish love within a couple's sexual relationship?
- When was the first time you remember seeing pornography?
- A battle with lust and pornography can sometimes cause us to conclude that sexual pleasure itself is wrong. Why is it important to rediscover the beauty of sexual pleasure even while addressing the counterfeit of porn?

**Take a few minutes to discuss the results from the Posttest. Compare results to the Pretest.**
***A lower score does not indicate failure. For some couples, they now have more revelation to the areas they struggle with, and when they completed the pretest they were unaware.**

**Bonus Session: Confronting Counterfeit Intimacy (Pg 56)**

## 5 Connection Point Exercise (10–15 min): (Pg 58)

- Allow the couples time to work through the exercise on their own and then discuss with one another as a couple. After the couple's discussion, feel free to ask the group if anyone wants to share what they learned through the exercise.

## 6 Introduce the Material & Assign Homework (5 min)

- This week's take home challenge (pg 62): Pick one of the three optional challenges listed on page 62 in the workbook.

## 7 Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)

**Scan the QR code for follow up resources or click the link here.**



# TIPS WHEN FACILITATING

# *Tips* WHEN FACILITATING




**Tips for Getting Discussion Going:**

Some groups may be naturally talkative, but others may need a little coaxing. To help kickstart discussion, choose a few open ended questions, especially any that speak more to a person's experience or perspective than right/wrong concepts. You can also ask for participants' reaction to the material or if anyone has had an experience like an example used.

Questions where the answers are obvious can sometimes stifle discussion, while too abstract questions can confuse group members. If no group members are responding to a question, resist the urge to answer it yourself. Instead, try to restate the question using different words, or allow for some silence. Group members may just be formulating their thoughts, so allow for a little time. If "How is the gospel revealed in sexuality?" is receiving blank stares, try, "What were you taught about the purpose of sexuality growing up?" Referring to the past can often be a safe way to get topics started if people still aren't sure what to make of the material.

If you know group members well, you may consider calling on someone for an answer, but be very careful that you aren't pressuring someone to share something they aren't comfortable sharing.

A discussion dominated by one person isn't healthy, even if it is more active than silence. If a few people tend to dominate the conversation, you may want to ask for a response from "anyone who hasn't spoken yet" or ask a quiet person if there are any topics they'd like to discuss or questions they might have. You could say something like, "We want to be sure that everyone who wishes to speak has the opportunity to do so," or "Would anyone on this side of the room like to share?" If necessary, speak to the person who is dominating the conversation after the group. Let them know that you appreciate their participation, but that it is also important to give others the opportunity to share their thoughts. Affirm them, but it must be clear that everyone must be given an opportunity to share.

# Tips WHEN FACILITATING, CONT.

**When Group Members Disagree:**

There is no guarantee that group members will agree on issues of sexuality or that their beliefs will be rooted in the Bible. When group members disagree, don't panic. Sometimes a difference of perspective can lead to great discussion. If someone leads with a very different perspective on sexuality, do not think you need to immediately prove them wrong. Ask questions. How did they come to that conclusion? You can point back to specific Scriptures or to content in the resource. (Let the authors take the heat, in a sense.)

The key is to approach with humility. This is not a matter of being right or developing the best theological defense. Often, contradictory opinions are born out of pain. Be sensitive that your group members may have sexual pain from their past, and never let the goal of your group be to "fix" someone.

If a group member becomes verbally forceful, it's time to redirect. You could even take a moment to pray with the group, that God would reveal the truth of that matter, and that you will work together to find it. If verbal aggression around disagreements becomes a reoccurring issue, it may be time to speak to the instigating member.

If a group member is making sexual choices that are contradictory to Biblical standards of sexuality, which may look like a man in an "open marriage" or an unmarried couple living together, it's important to remember you do not need to be the Holy Spirit for them, convince them why they are wrong, or convict them. Instead, love them and pray for them. Don't be afraid to ask honest questions, but remember to show love and grace, which begins with humility. Be careful to not let a blatant untruth be treated as truth. If someone makes a proclamation to the group that affirms or approves of sin, gently provide the Biblical perspective in response. Return to Scripture when needed to provide a foundation for truth.

# Tips WHEN FACILITATING, CONT.

**When Pain or Brokenness is Revealed:**

Sexuality may represent the darkest, most shameful and painful part of your group members' lives. At some point, someone may share a past experience or a current struggle that leaves you speechless. Here are some tips for wading into the brokenness:

**Weep with those who weep.**
"Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15).

When faced with the damage of evil and sin, sometimes your best option is just to grieve with the hurting person. Don't think you need to have a solution or provide some key piece of advice. Depending on where the person is on their journey, advice may be well received, but they may just need to lament and no longer feel alone in the pain.

**Care for the rest of your group.**
A raw display of pain or brokenness can knit a group together. You may not have had similar experiences, but someone else in your group may have walked that path before and be able to offer insight and encouragement. If your group is rallying around the hurting group member, embrace the messiness and lean in. However, if the display of pain or brokenness is making the rest of your group uncomfortable, or if the details being shared are infringing on the discussion guidelines, you may need to find an opportunity to speak privately with the hurting group member. Don't be worried if the honesty redirects discussion for a short time. But, if the hurting member is repeatedly derailing your time together or preventing discussion on the material at hand, you may need suggest that they seek outside help for what they are walking through.

**Follow up.**
Sharing something painful takes courage, so thank the group member for his or her honesty and authenticity. If the hurting group member is still in the depths of pain, it may be good to send them an encouraging note after the meeting or follow up a few days later to see how they are doing and processing.

# Tips WHEN FACILITATING, CONT.

**Ask for help.**

Part of a good leader's job is recognizing when an issue goes beyond the scope of the group or your expertise. You may encounter situations that involve past abuse and trauma, sexual or substance addiction, possible domestic violence, an active affair or mental illness. It is not your job to diagnose or to provide counsel in such situations. This group is intended to be for encouragement and education, not therapy. Offering advice on difficult and sensitive issues may end up doing more harm than good, even if you are well intentioned. It is wise to be aware of respected Christian counselors in your area to which you can refer when necessary.

Here are links to ministries we trust and often refer people to:

- BeBroken
- Pure Desire
- HopeQuest
- MyCounselorOnline
- Focus on the Family Counseling

**If A Couple Disagrees:**

There may be a time during the group when a couple disagrees. Disagreements can lead to positive growth if handled well, or they can become heated and turn into arguments. Signs of a disagreement could include raising voices, distancing one another, or intensifying emotions. In these moments, it might be helpful to encourage a pause in the group to give the couple time to refocus. You might also want to encourage a couple to stay after the group to talk through the disagreement. If this happens, encourage the couple that disagreements can lead to positive growth in their marriage as they can better understand each other and show each other love and empathy. As the facilitators, try to lead the discussion in love and not choose a side between the couple.

DO YOU NEED MORE HELP?

Schedule a call with our director of discipleship!

sexualdiscipleship.com
info@sexualdiscipleship.com

# *Tips* WHEN FACILITATING, CONT.

**Meeting Follow-Up:**

After each meeting, you may want to consider sending out the list of prayer requests, links to any referenced resources, or a brief summary of the time you spent together.

If the homework for each week is not self-explanatory, it is very helpful to post or email the homework so that anyone who missed the meeting can be prepared for the next week.

**Ending a Group:**

Every group must come to an end. Here are some tips for handling the end of your group:

- Set aside some time at the end of the group for reflection. Ask about takeaways from the group, what was surprising, or what members want to know more about.
- Set aside time in your last meeting to pray together.
- Send an email to members with next steps and how they can continue to engage with materials when the group ends.

**Caring for Members Who Miss Meetings:**

It's unlikely that all of the members who sign up will attend every single week. There may also be members who miss a few meetings in a row without an explanation. If you find that any members have stopped interacting or attending, you may want to send a quick email asking how you can be praying for them or whether they need any help getting caught up. Some people may leave and never respond, but reaching out after someone misses a meeting or two can help people stay engaged and feel valued.

# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A: SAMPLE GROUP COVENANT

**Group Facilitators:**

1. Copy and paste the covenant below into a new document.
2. Customize it to fit the details of your study.
3. Share the covenant with your group on or before the first day you meet.
4. During your first meeting together, read through the covenant with your group.
5. Ask each participant to affirm their agreement to these standards for your time together.
6. Record everyone's name who affirmed the covenant on this document.

**Small Group Covenant:**

Our group will be studying *God, Sex and Your Marriage.*

We will be meeting from _(Date)_ through _(Date)_ on _(Day of week)_ from _(Time)_.

To get the most out of this study and ensure the best experience possible, we agree together to live by the following standards throughout our time together doing this study:

- We agree to be on time in order to respect others.
- We agree to keep things said in group confidential.
- We agree to attend group as faithfully as possible, making it a priority.
- We agree to participate in group, while being careful not to dominate.
- We agree to treat one another with respect at all times, especially in times of disagreement or conflict.
- We agree to keep our conversation focussed on what God wants to do in our hearts, not how He should change our spouses.
- We agree to only share things about our marriage we have agreed as a couple to share.
- We agree to pray and support one another throughout our time meeting together.
- We agree to give our full attention to the group and study during the meeting time and limit distractions in our surroundings.
- We agree to guard our marriage by not sharing intimate details that might trigger others or compromise our one-flesh union. (Group leaders will give guidance on what is appropriate to share in the group.)

*"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* Hebrews 10:24-25

I am in agreement with this Group Covenant:

# APPENDIX B: ICE BREAKERS

- How did your spouse propose (or how did you get engaged)?
- What is a fun thing you did with your spouse when you were first dating?
- What was one of the first good things you noticed about your spouse?
- What was a memorable date with your spouse?
- In what ways are you and your spouse opposites?
- What is something that your spouse does better than you do?
- What is a food or specific meal that is special to you and your spouse?
- Best/Worst: Have each person share their best and worst moments from the previous week.
- Most Unique: Have each person share something that makes him or her unique, such as “I’ve never left the state I was born in” or “I am one of 10 kids.”
- Two Truths and a Lie: Have each person make three statements about him or herself: two true statements and one lie. For example: “I’ve never broken a bone. I have five sisters. I was born in Yugoslavia.” The group tries to guess which statement is the lie.
- What do you do for fun?
- What would be your ideal vacation?
- What is the most memorable activity you did with your family as a child?
- What quality do you appreciate most in a friend?
- What is one characteristic you received from your parents that you want to keep and one you wish you could change?
- What is a good thing happening in your life right now? What makes it good?
- If you knew you couldn’t fail and money was no object, what would you like to do in the next five years?
- What would you like said at your funeral?
- When, if ever, did God become more than a word to you, and how did it happen?
- If you could talk to anyone in the world (alive or dead), who would it be? Why?
- Deserted Island: Ask: “You’ve been exiled to a deserted island for a year. You are told you may take three things you want, apart from the essentials. What would you take and why?”
- Heroes: Ask each member to name three people, past or present, he or she admires. Why?
- What was a typical dinner growing up? Or what meal makes you think of home?
- Describe your week in terms of weather (metaphorically).
- If you could keep any animal as a pet (regardless of whether it is tamed or not and assuming you could care for it effectively), what animal would you pick?
- If you could have dinner with anyone, past or present, who would it be?
- If you could travel anywhere in the world, all expenses paid, where would you go?
- How have you seen Jesus show up in the last few weeks?
- If you know it, what’s your spiritual gift?

# APPENDIX C: HELPFUL JAVA WITH JULI EPISODES AND RESOURCES

Some of our Java with Juli episodes will be locked as member-only resources and others will be open to the public. You can become an Authentic Intimacy member here to have access to all of the content below.

Java with Juli Episodes:

- #133 "How to Follow Jesus in an UnChristian Culture"
- #139 "Why Your Story Matters"
- #146 "All You Need is Jesus… and Your Therapist"
- #159 "When Your Child Struggles with Gender"
- #160: "Why God Created You to be Sexual"
- #166 "We Are All Sexually Broken"
- #192 "Engaging in Restorative Relationships"
- #203 "Navigating Different Views on Sexuality"
- #236 "Pursue Wholeness, Not Purity"
- #267 "Are You Having Sex or Building Intimacy?"
- #273 "Tell Someone You're Broken"
- #297 "Finding Freedom in the Midst of Brokenness"

Authentic Intimacy Articles:

- "How to say 'Yes, Yes, Yes!' after "No, No, No!'"
- "The 'Why' for Every Sexual Question"
- "Why your Story Matters"

Other Resources:

- Dr. Jennifer Degler's CWives
- *The Gift of Sex* by Clifford & Joyce Penner
- BeBroken Ministries
- *Restoring the Pleasure* by Clifford & Joyce Penner
- *A Celebration of Sex* by Douglas Rosenau
- *A Celebration of Sex After 50* by Douglas Rosenau
- *A Celebration of Sex for Newlyweds* by Douglas Rosenau
- *Intimacy Ignited* by Jody and Linda Dillow and Pete and Lorraine Pintus
- MyCounselor.Online

# APPENDIX D: 4 PILLARS SUMMARY

Sexual maturity is not simply the absence of problems. It means progressively moving toward the beautiful gift sexual intimacy was created to be.

Often, we don't see the metaphor of marriage and God's love because we don't know God very well. If our understanding of love is wrong, the outworking of sex in marriage will also be skewed.

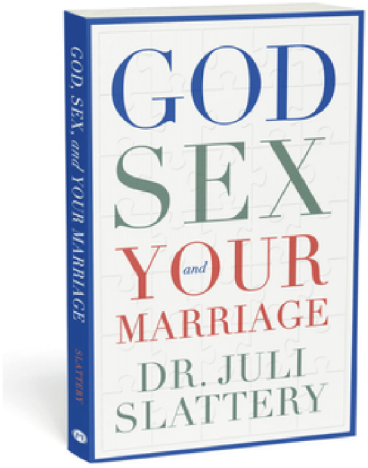
Pursuing sexual integrity as a married couple means that your sex life will increasingly be characterized by 4 qualities or ***Pillars*** that are true about the way God loves His people.

***Pillar 1 — Faithfulness***
***Pillar 2 — Intimate Knowing***
***Pillar 3 — Sacrificial Love***
***Pillar 4 — Passionate Celebration***

### *Pillar 1 — Faithfulness*

God's covenant love is based on a promise: "I will never leave you or forsake you. God's love is not based on how He is feeling, but on His character.

The same is true for your marriage covenant. Your covenant is only as strong as your character to walk out what you have promised to each other.




### *Pillar 2 — Intimate Knowing*

Our relationship with God is a journey of knowing Him more completely. Every day presents opportunities to step into deeper intimacy with God or to put up walls.

The same is true of your sex life. Sexual intimacy isn't just "having sex," but the intentional act of sharing mind, body, and soul.

### *Pillar 3 — Sacrificial Love*

God's love for humanity has been one of patient kindness. The climax of His love was the cross where He suffered and died for His bride.

Why then are we surprised when marriage and sex ask us to sacrifice for one another? The inability to steward your sexual urges, temptations, and desires is not a marriage problem, but a reflection of your lack of surrender to the Holy Spirit.

### *Pillar 4 — Passionate Celebration*

Your relationship with God was never meant to be one of stoic duty. God's people are meant to express their love to him with passion, just read the Psalms.

Sex is one of the most profound ways we celebrate covenant love.
Tim Keller described sex as a "covenant renewal ceremony," celebrating with our bodies what we have promised to do with our whole lives.

# notes