SEX AND THE SINGLE GIRL Participant's Guide





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SEX AND THE SINGLE GIRL

Leffel to the PARTICIPANT

Hello!

We are thrilled for you to join *Sex and the Single Girl* in a small group setting. Joining a group on the topic of sexuality might be a bit intimidating. Because you said "Yes" to God even though you may feel unsure, we want to give you as much encouragement as we can to prepare you for this journey.

You might feel as though you are forging new ground through this study. After all, many Christian groups and churches haven't addressed sexuality so directly.

Remember God equips His people in every generation to be the light of the world in the darkness around them. In our day, this is the topic that presents our greatest challenge.

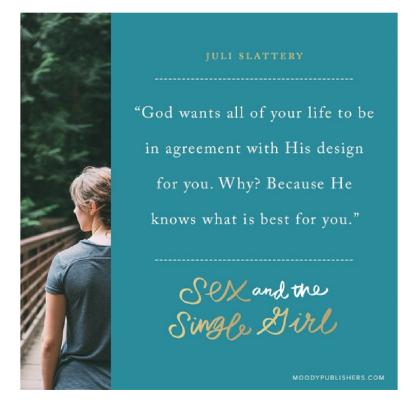
When God sent His people into new territory and challenges, He told them, "Be strong and courageous, for I am with you." Those words still apply to us today.



If you ever need anything, please don't hesitate to reach out via emailing info@authenticintimacy.com.

We are praying for you!

-Juli Slattery and the Authentic Intimacy Team



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 <u>SexualDiscipleship.com</u> 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-courses, 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 <u>our website</u>.
- **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 <u>authenticintimacy.com/member</u>.



GROUP MEETINGS

Syllabus & Schedule

Session	Торіс
1	Introduction
2	Week 1: Why Sexuality Matters
3	Week 2: Embracing a Grand Design
4	Week 3: Sexuality and Your Character
5	Week 4: Sexual Boundaries
6	Week 5: Battling Temptation
7	Week 6: Restoring Intimacy with God
8	Now What?



SESSION 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 learn about the group and the material. The following is an example agenda for a first meeting:

If time allows, you may discuss these questions (from pg. 12):

- Why do many women separate their sexuality from their faith?
- What does it mean to be a sexual woman?
- Is there a deeper purpose underneath my sexuality than just having sex?
- How does my sexuality paint a picture of the Gospel?
- What do most people base their sexual choices on?
- Is my sexuality and my spiritual identity separate or do they align?

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

Introduction to Group Material (10–15 min)

Discussion (30–40 min)

- Introduce yourself and begin to get to know each other.
- Here are some possible discussion questions for the first meeting:
 - Why did you decide to join this study?
 - What do you hope to learn?
 - How do you hope to grow?
 - Have you ever been in a Bible study about the topic of sexuality?
 - Do you have any concerns?

4 Review Group Covenant (10–15 min)

SESSION ONE (CONTINUED)

Weekly Meeting Structure (10–15 min)

The First Meeting and Introduction

- Introduction to the Material & Homework (5 min)
 - The homework each week is divided into five days. We highly recommend that you don't cram several days of homework into one day. The questions are designed to bring you to God's Word, to meditate on how His truth applies to your life, and to grow closer to Him. Roughly between 30-60 minutes should be budgeted for homework each day.
 - Homework: Read Week 1, Day 1 through Day 5

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)



SESSION TWO



Why Sexuality Matters

This week you will learn about why sexuality matters. For some of you, this could be a message that you have never heard before. Maybe you grew up hearing the message, "Just don't do it," instead of learning that God designed men and women as sexual beings. In your group, you have an opportunity to break free from the chains of sexual shame.

You may have questions like: Does God really care if I sleep around? Is it okay to look at porn or experiment with another woman sexually? Most Christian sources haven't been very helpful in sorting through these deep questions women are asking. Our prayer is that you will learn and grow along with your group members. Incorrect messages about sexuality are everywhere, and we all have experienced their negative impact.

SESSION TWO

- Welcome & Opening Prayer (10– 15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)
- Discussion Week 1 (30–40 min)
- Introduction to the Material & Homework (5 min)
 - Homework: Read Week 2, Day 1 through Day 5
- Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

DAY 1

- Who taught you about sex? How did the conversation go?
- What pressures and challenges are you, your roommate, and/or close friends battling right now? (Page 15)
- What questions are you having a hard time sorting through on your own? (Page 15)
- What are the primary things you've heard about sex from each of these sources? Parents, religion, media, and other? (Pages 16-17)

DAY 2

- When you think of the word *intimacy*, what first comes to mind? (Page 20)
- What is your response to this concept: underneath your sexuality is a drive and desire to be known and loved? (Page 20)

DAY 3

- What are some ways the world portrays sexuality as separate from the relational and spiritual aspects of *yada*? How has this impacted your thinking about sexuality? (Page 24)
- What do you think about the concept of your sexuality being connected with your relationship to God? Explain in your own words how sexuality is a metaphor for intimacy with God. (Page 24)

DAY 4

• Look at the chart you completed on page 27. Are your spiritual identity and your sexual beliefs consistent or at odds with each other? How so?

DAY 5

- What would it look like for God to be the Lord of all of your life, including your sexuality?
 (Page 30)
- What barriers or fears are in the way of yielding this area of your life to God? (Page 30)

NEXT STEP

• Look at the chart on pages 31–32. Which truth did you rate the lowest? Write that truth on a 3x5 card or on your phone to look at this week.



Scan the QR code for follow up resources or click the link <u>here</u>.



SESSION THREE

Embracing a Grand Design

This week you will be studying how God created men and women as sexual beings. Sexuality is an intentional aspect of God's design. You may have a hard time processing this, especially if you've never heard this message before. You may also struggle with guilt and shame over past sexual sin. You can begin to experience forgiveness and freedom. Nothing is beyond God's healing and forgiveness! The enemy does not want you to be free, but 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" If we are in Christ, living with integrity means that God has made all things new.

SESSION THREE

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

Discussion - Week 2 (30–40 min)

- Introduction to the Material & Homework (5 min)
 - Homework: Read Week 3, Day 1 through Day 5
- Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

DAY 1

• Do you think it is more difficult to submit your sexuality to God compared to other areas of your life? If so, why? (Page 39)

DAY 2

- Are your sexual actions consistent with your relational and spiritual commitments? Why or why not? (Page 43)
- Read James 1:22–25. If your choices are not consistent, what needs to change? What is one thing you can do today in pursuit of sexual integrity? (Page 44)
- On page 44, what was your definition of sexual integrity?

DAY 3

- Read Proverbs 1:7. What does this verse say about the difference between the wise person and foolish person? (Page 46)
- How do porn and erotica distort God's design for real relationships to function? (Page 47)
- Why do you think the culture has so wholeheartedly approved of living together? (Page 48)

DAY 4

- When you think about your sexual choices and attitudes, do they reflect wisdom? Why or why not? (Page 52)
- Read Proverbs 1:23. What does wisdom (God) promise when you repent of your rebellion and folly? (Page 52)

DAY 5

- Read Psalm 32:1–5. Describe how David felt when he hid his sin. Now describe how he felt after confessing his sin. Do you feel more like David felt before he confessed or after? (Page 55)
- Is there something specific you need to confess to the Lord? If so, what's holding you back? (Page 55)

NEXT STEP

• Look at the chart on pages 55–57. Which truth did you rate the lowest? Write that truth on a 3x5 card or on your phone to look at this week.



SESSION FOUR

Sexuality and your Character

This week you will study how our sexuality impacts our character. We often fail to realize how God can use our sexuality to test us, refine our character, and make us more like God. Our sexual choices reveal what we believe about God. Sexual integrity is an act of worship. You may struggle believing this concept. Your group is providing a safe place to process and ask questions. Your sexuality can be a testimony to others, because what we believe about God is reflected in how we live out our sexuality.

SESSION FOUR

- Welcome & Opening Prayer (10– 15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)
- Discussion Week 3 (30–40 min)
- Introduction to the Material & Homework (5 min)
 - Homework: Read Week 4 Day 1 through Day 5
- Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

DAY 1

• What do your sexual choices and beliefs reveal about your character? (Page 63)



DAY 2

- How do you see this same pattern (from Romans 1:18–32) playing out in your world and in our churches today? (Page 66)
- In your own words, describe the meaning of worship. (Page 67)
- How is sexual integrity an act of worship? (Page 67)
- What needs to change in your life for God to be worshipped in your sexuality? (Page 67)

DAY₃

- Read Genesis 3:1–7. How was Satan's lie an attack on God's character? Why do you think Eve believed Satan? (Page 70)
- How does a worldly perspective on sex make you think that God is keeping you from something good? (Page 70)
- How does Satan use your sexuality to tempt you to doubt God's character? (Page 70)
- Do you trust that God's design for intimacy is the best for you right now? Why or why not? (Page 71)

DAY 4

- Read 2 Corinthians 12:7–10. How did God use Paul's struggle to make him more like Christ? (Page 74)
- How is God using the area of sexuality to make you more like Him? (Page 74)

DAY 5

- How does this week's study change your perspective of sexual struggles and temptations?
 (Page 77)
- How can God use sexual struggles and temptations to work out for your good? (Page 77)

NEXT STEP

• Look at the chart on pages 78–80. Which truth did you rate the lowest? Write that truth on a 3x5 card or on your phone to look at this week.



SESSION FIVE

Sexual Boundaries

This week's study will help answer many of the questions you have been asking. For example: *How do we determine which sexual choices are right and which are wrong?* While God is clear about some of our sexual choices, there seem to be a lot of grey areas. The most common questions from both single and married women usually relate to whether certain things are right or wrong for Christians to engage in. In other words, how do we practically live out sexual integrity? Our prayer is that your group will be a safe place for you and others to feel comfortable asking questions that you may have never had the courage to ask before.

SESSION FIVE

- Welcome & Opening Prayer (10– 15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)
- Discussion Week 4 (30–40 min)
- Introduction to the Material & Homework (5 min)
 - Homework: Read Week 5, Day 1 through Day 5
- Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

DAY 1

- How are you currently seeking truth through the Bible, prayer, and the Holy Spirit? (Page 85)
- Page 85 states, "Living with sexual integrity means addressing very practical questions in everyday life. To help you apply God's wisdom, you can ask yourself three important questions to find God's opinion (also known as Truth!) on any question you might have." What are a few grey area issues I wonder about related to sexuality? Take an example situation through the three questions as a group.
 - Question #1 Does the Bible say it's wrong?
 - Question #2 Is it consistent with God's design for sexuality?
 - Question #3 Is it beneficial?



DAY 2

- Look at the list on page 87. Does anything from this list surprise you? If so, which one(s)? Explain. Why do you think God says "no" to these sexual activities? (Page 88)
- How do you respond as Christians when God's Word is different than the world's perspective?
 (Page 88)

DAY 3

- What are some examples of how God's design has been "acceptably" distorted among Christians? (Page 91)
- On page 92, what did you write to describe "God's design for sexuality?"

DAY 4

- Why do you think God leaves some sexual choices to your discretion rather than clearly saying "no"? (Page 94) (This is a good place to talk about God wanting us to seek His wisdom and honor and not just follow a list of rules.)
- Is it difficult for you to ask God for wisdom about sexual decisions? If so, why? (Page 94)

Day 5

- Day 5 discusses a few of the common "grey areas" like masturbation. Discuss with the women if what they read is similar or different to what they have learned in the past.
- What are some things in your life that God is calling you to give up or abandon to seek righteousness and purity in Him? (Page 98)

NEXT STEP

• Look at the chart on pages 98–99. Which truth did you rate the lowest? Write that truth on a 3x5 card or on your phone to look at this week.



SESSION SIX



Battling Temptation

This week's study will help you understand the four stages of how we move from temptation into sin and destruction. Here are the four stages:

Stage 1: We feel a desire.

Stage 2: We linger in the desire.

Stage 3: We take the bait.

Stage 4: We experience death.

All of us can relate with Paul, "I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.... what a miserable person I am!" (Romans 7:15, 24a). For the most part, people do not set out to fall into temptation or to have a sexual struggle. It's key to understand that the foundation of sexual temptation is the natural, God-given desire for something good. This week you will understand this at a deeper level by studying the word *yada*. By the end of the week, you will have created an action plan for dealing with temptation. This is very important. You may want to spend extra time processing through Day 5.

SESSION SIX

- Welcome & Opening Prayer (10– 15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)
- Discussion Week 5 (30–40 min)
- Introduction to the Material & Homework (5 min)
 - Homework: Read Week 6 Day 1 through Day 5
- Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

DAY 1

• Read James 1:13–15 on page 103 and then read the four stages. When does temptation turn into sin?



DAY 2

How have you seen this progression (the four stages of temptation) play out in your own life?
 (Page 107)

DAY 3

- How do you "flirt with sin"? (Page 109)
- Read Ephesians 6:10–18 on page 110. Share one way that you can put on this armor in real life from your list under "Reflect and Respond."
- Read Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 on page 111. What does this passage say about the importance of fighting temptation with help rather than alone? How can you be more proactive in sharing your temptation with people who can help you and encourage you? (Page 111)

DAY 4

• Look at the four steps to implement when you experience temptation on pages 114–115. Which step is the hardest for you and why? List some practical examples of how God has provided you a way of escape in the past. (Page 116)

DAY 5

• This day is very important because the women will be creating an action plan. Encourage the women to share their action plans from pages 117–120.

NEXT STEP

• Look at the chart on pages 121–122. Which truth did you rate the lowest? Write that truth on a 3x5 card or on your phone to look at this week.



SESSION SEVEN



Restoring Intimacy with God

God has invited you to go through this study, *Sex and the Single Girl*, not because He wants you to "clean up" your sex life nor because he wants you to "fix" others. We can obey all of the Christian "rules" about sex and still be very distant from God, locked in fear, and hindered by brokenness or legalism. God wants a relationship with us. He offers complete freedom in forgiveness and the power to live with a new identity! You can ask God for forgiveness and experience it. This is so important because our sexual experiences often keep us from intimacy with God. We build up walls or run from God. The good news is that God never moves. He is right there next to us ready with an open embrace.

SESSION SEVEN

- Welcome & Opening Prayer (10– 15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)
- Discussion Week 6 (30–40 min)
- Introduction to the Material & Homework (5 min)
 - Homework: On pages 144–145 answer the self-reflection and discussion questions
- Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

DAY 1

- How would you describe your personal relationship with God? What barriers do you feel stand in the way of you actually knowing God? (Page 127)
- Do you assume sexual sin is worse (or harder for God to cleanse) than other sins? Why? (Page 127)

DAY 2

- Read Psalm 32:1–5. What was David's relationship with God like when he hid (or lied about) his sin? What did David do to "come out of hiding?" (Page 131)
- Read 1 John 1:8–9. What do these verses say is the difference between hiding sin and confessing it? (Page 131)



DAY 3

• Think back on a time when you felt guilty and then look at the chart on the top of page 134. Knowing the characteristics of God's voice versus Satan's voice, who was speaking to you? How do you know? (Page 134)

DAY 4

• Activity in group: On page 137 the women were given an activity during Day 4 of their homework. Some may have done this and others might not have, but this is a powerful activity to do together. Ask them to write down on a separate paper any sin areas in their lives where God is calling them to confess, repent, and draw near to him again. Ask God to reveal any unconfessed sin. As he brings sin to mind, have the women write each down on the paper and specifically confess them to God. Next have them write the words of 1 John 1:9 across the list of sins. As a symbol of his total forgiveness, tear the list up and throw it away. Ask, how did this activity impact you?

DAY 5

- Read Luke 7:36–50. What did you learn about the woman? How is she like you? Unlike you? Why do you think she was so desperate to be near Jesus? (Pages 138–139)
- In what ways are you holding on to your old identity and not allowing God to change you completely? (Page 141)
- How will you respond to God's invitation to forgiveness, freedom, and a new you? What is one way you can bring your shame or hidden wounds before the Lord this week? (Page 141)
- Brainstorm a few action steps you can take to allow Jesus to tear down the strongholds in your life so you might know true intimacy with Him. (Page 141)

NEXT STEP

• Look at the chart on pages 142–143. Which truth did you rate the lowest? Write that truth on a 3x5 card or on your phone to look at this week.



SESSION EIGHT



Now What?

If there is time, we encourage leaders to add this week to the study to wrap up and provide next steps for the women. On pages 144–145 in *Sex and the Single Girl*, there are self-reflection and discussion questions. We encourage you to go through these questions on your own and then in a group. We are including the questions below.

SESSION EIGHT

- Welcome & Opening Prayer (10– 15 min) & Ice Breaker (5–10 min) (optional)
- Discussion Week 7 (30–40 min)

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (5–10 min)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BACKWARD-LOOKING

- How would you describe your view of sexuality when you first started this study?
- Did you have an "ah-ha" moment that powerfully impacted you? If so, when was that moment?



INWARD-LOOKING

- What are a few ways you've developed or grown as a result of what you've learned?
- Of all the topics addressed in this study (boundaries, temptation, character, etc.) which do you feel you are strong in? Which do you feel you are weak in?
- In the area(s) you are weak in, what steps will you take to develop and strengthen them?

UPWARD-LOOKING:

- What have you learned about God throughout these six weeks?
- What are a few ways God has spoken to your heart?

FORWARD-LOOKING

- What is your next step in living out what you've learned?
- What are a few practical tools you gained from this study that you can take with you into daily life?
- Are there Scripture verses that really stuck out to you that you'd like to commit to memory? If so, make a list of them and consider transferring them to a notecard or your phone for continued meditation.
- What are a few principles on sexuality you can share with a friend or peer when the time is right?
- Can you think of a few friends or peers that you believe would really benefit from this study?
- Brainstorm names and pray about reaching out to them.
- What suggestion(s) would you give to someone starting this study that would help her get the most from it?



Scan the QR code for follow up resources or click the link <u>here</u>.

A Note From Juli



Friend,

We hope this isn't goodbye! Just because your group finished the *Sex and the Single Girl* study, we don't want to lose touch with you or the women in your group. Connect with us through authenticintimacy.com, Facebook, or Instagram.

Thank you for persevering in finishing this study! I pray God is using it to change and equip you to reach a hurting world. This is just an introduction to the concept of sexuality. I trust that you are hungry to learn more about God's design for sexuality and his redemption in response to our brokenness.

The ministry of Authentic Intimacy exists to encourage you on this journey as we continue to develop resources and a community for men and women. We have podcasts, blogs, books, conferences, trainings, webinars, and other materials to help you apply the biblical narrative to the questions and problems you may face related to sexuality. You are not alone!

Finally, we would love to hear from you! Please let us know about your group experience and any feedback you have as we strive to serve God's people more effectively.

All for Him. Duli





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 Sex and The Single Girl.

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 pray and support one another throughout our time meeting together.
- We agree to give our full attention to the group and study (as much as we are able) during the meeting time, and limit distractions in our surroundings.

"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: 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"
- #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"
- #273 "Tell Someone You're Broken"
- #297 "Finding Freedom in the Midst of Brokenness"

Authentic Intimacy Blogs:

- "The 'Why' for Every Sexual Question"
- "Why your Story Matters"
- "You Can be Single and Sexual"

Other Ministries and Book Recommendations:

- MyCounselor.Online
- Is God Anti-Gay? Sam Allberry
- Holy Sexulaity and the Gospel Dr. Christopher Yuan
- Gay Girl, Good God Jackie Hill-Perry
- 7 Myths About Singleness Sam Allberry
- Born Again This Way Rachel Gilson
- People to be Loved Preston Sprinkle
- <u>Unwanted Jay Stringer</u>
- Messy Grace Caleb Kaltenbach
- Embodied Preston Sprinkle



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