

Relationships between the Genders

By David Hutchison

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read Proverbs 3:3 and 1 Peter 3:8. Also study the comments relating to Colossians 3:12-13 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share insights from that reading and also some of the greatest acts of kindness you have ever seen.

Assignment Two

Read Matthew 5:28 and the comments relating to Ephesians 5:3 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share an answer to this question: How do you think lust can lead to adultery or other forms of sexual immorality?

Assignment Three

Read Philippians 4:8 and the comments relating to Ephesians 5:3 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share an answer to this question: How do you think Philippians 4:8 could help you when you are tempted? Also, find and share at least one other verse that can help you.

Scripture to Memorize

"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:32

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit - by the end of this session, disciples will commit to kindness and purity in relationships with the opposite gender.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Your pastor asked you to make a video for the worship service showing how guys and girls can relate to each other in godly ways, even in the midst of so much evil around you. What are you going to put in the video?

The Value of Both Genders

Read Genesis 1:27 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 27. male and female He created them. Both males and females are made in the image of God. Humans represent God like nothing else in creation. Humans are the pinnacle of God's creation. All humans have dignity by virtue of being created in God's image. Gender is a gift of God that should be celebrated. Remember that people are neither objects to be teased nor objects to be lusted after.

Be Kind

Read Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:12-15 out loud.

Studying the Passage, Colossians 3:12-13

It's not uncommon for guys and girls to tease each other. This is usually meant in fun, but it can quickly do damage even if they do not mean any harm.

Verses 12. compassionate hearts, kindness. Compassion involves concern for the needs of others. Rather than teasing others, disciples should be kind and compassionate. Think about the way your actions make other people feel. Be intentional in your kindness. One of Jesus' distinguishing characteristics was compassion for others.

Verses 12–13. patience . . . forgiving. You are going to make mistakes in this process and so are your friends. Be patient with one another and when someone does you wrong, be quick to forgive. Forgiveness is different from "no problem." Forgiveness says, "It was a problem, but I won't hold it against you."

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week should now share insights from Proverbs 3:3 and 1 Peter 3:8. They will also share several great acts of kindness.

Be Pure and Flee Immorality

Read 1 Timothy 5:1-2 out loud.

Studying the Passage

It is appropriate for guys and girls to have non-romantic friendships with each other. However, even in these relationships, people may wonder if there is or ever could be something more. Even when that is not the case, friends or parents may think something more could be going on. For your own sake and for the sake of others, live out these relationships with explicit purity. Furthermore, even if you hope something more may develop, a wise disciple will learn how to be a good friend before moving toward a romantic relationship.

Verse 2. as sisters. Paul instructs Timothy to treat younger women as sisters in all purity. Following this same advice will allow you to focus on friendship and to keep your mind from wandering.

If you are a man and your mind tends to wander in lustful directions, think about women in ways that are appropriate for you to think about your sister. You may also benefit by remembering that every woman has a father. How would you feel if you had to share your lustful thoughts about a female with her father? If you are a female, you can easily reverse the advice. Imagine that men are your brothers.

Even among friends, you may find our sinful culture encouraging you to act in a variety of sexually inappropriate ways. Rather than embracing immorality, you must flee it.

Discussion Question

How do you think Paul's advice to Timothy would help you act purely? What other advice do you recommend?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:18 and Ephesians 5:3 out loud.

Studying the Passage, Ephesians 5:3

Verse 3. immorality. The word translated "immorality" is a broad term referring to any type of sexual intercourse outside of marriage, including homosexual intercourse and intercourse with animals. God designed intercourse to be enjoyable, but it is reserved for marriage; the covenant union of one man and one woman.

In order to flee immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18), you should flee not simply the final action, but the heart issues that lead to it. Jesus taught that lust leads to adultery (Matthew 5:28).

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week should now share insights from Scripture that point out how lust can lead to sexual immorality.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** should now share insights from Philippians 4:8 and other Bible verses that can help disciples to overcome lust.

On Your Own

In the space below, write at least three ways you can be kind to people of the opposite gender and at least three ways you can pursue explicit purity.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and be ready to share that with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue, I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Relating to the opposite gender requires you to remember that all humans are created in the image of God. People are not objects. Disciples will treat one another with kindness and live with explicit purity.

Genesis 1:27 tells us that God created humans in His own image. Humans represent God like nothing else in creation. Gender is a gift of God that should be celebrated. Remember that people are neither objects to be teased nor objects to be lusted after.

Guys and girls often tease each other or may even say things that are mean. Rather than this, disciples should treat one another with kindness and compassion (Colossians 3:12-15). Intentional, kind actions and concern for others are far more valuable than selfish teasing. Of course you will certainly make mistakes and will need forgiveness. At the same time, you should be quick to forgive, remembering that Jesus has forgiven all who have placed their trust in Him.

Whether a relationship is purely a friendship or a potentially romantic relationship, disciples should live with explicit purity. Paul advises Timothy to treat younger women as sisters (1 Timothy 5:2). This same advice will serve you well. Think of friends as you think of a brother or sister, focusing only on the pure actions that would be appropriate with family.

In order to be pure, the disciple must actively flee sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18 and Ephesians 5:3). Rather than fleeing just the final sexual act, disciples need to flee the lust that leads to immorality. Memorizing and meditating on Scriptures such as Philippians 4:8 can help when the mind wanders.

Disciples who value, love and respect members of the opposite sex reveal the mind of Christ. Disciples who treat members of the opposite sex with kindness, compassion and purity glorify Jesus.

Follow-Up Question

What does the Bible say about how friends of the opposite gender can relate to one another in godly ways?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.