

session 4 study guide

drawing the line

message

Finding the proper balance in a relationship is not easy, and determining an appropriate physical relationship is often one of the most tempting issues to tip the scale. Why are thinking about balance and boundaries in a relationship—especially in regard to your physical relationship—so important?

If you've ever sat down with a whole half gallon of ice cream and a spoon and thought, *I'll just take a bite*, or ever started up that computer game, thinking, *I'll only play for a few minutes*, you know that when we don't set boundaries for ourselves ahead of time, we often end up going much farther than we had intended.

The same is true of our physical relationship. But unlike having a stomachache or the tired, dull glaze of having wasted four hours on the computer, the consequences of going past a physical boundary can have a huge impact in our life.

First Thessalonians was written by Paul as a letter to new believers in Thessalonica who needed instruction and guidance on how to set boundaries and live godly lives. Read the following passage from 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8. As you read, consider the following questions: (1) What are the consequences of sexual immorality? (2) What kind of life has God called us to?

Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust

like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

dig

1. What does “be sanctified” mean (verse 3)?

2. Think about your current relationship or any relationship between a boyfriend and girlfriend. Practically, how can you “control [your] own body” in a way that is holy and honorable” (verse 3)?

3. If we allow lust and passion to override us, what are we like?

4. According to these verses, what are the consequences of sexual immorality?

5. Sometimes we think that our sins just impact us. We can forget that our sins can have consequences for other people too. How can your sexual sins impact other people?

6. God calls us to live holy lives. What does this mean in your own life? Are you living a holy life?

7. If God were here in the flesh, would you look Him in the eye and say, “God, I’m going to disobey You because I like my boyfriend [girlfriend] more than You.” Most of you probably wouldn’t dream of doing this. But the way that we act may be sending this very message to God. Do your actions and behaviors with your boyfriend or girlfriend glorify God?

apply

The Sexual Purity Pledge in the last session required you to commit your sexuality to God and refrain from sexual intercourse until marriage. Does that mean that everything except sexual intercourse is fair game? Not exactly. Reread 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8.

1. In your own words, how does the Bible describe how we ought to act?

- 2 Notice how the Bible defines “sexual immorality”:

You should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to _____ his own _____ in a way that is _____ and _____, not in passionate _____ like the heathen, who do not know _____. For God did not call us to be _____, but to live a _____ life (verses 4-5,7).

3. In light of Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, circle which of the following behaviors would be acceptable for you to engage in.

Hugging	French kissing
Holding hands	Oral sex
Making out	Touching breasts/ genitals

4. So, exactly how far should you go? As the saying goes, the best offense is a good defense. By setting your boundaries *before* you are faced with crossing them, you provide yourself with a better chance of sticking to them. So let’s think about it now.

The chart below gives you an opportunity to categorize specific actions and determine the type of relationship in which each one belongs. Consider each of these actions in light of this question: What would be pleasing to God? And remember, God loves you and wants the very best for you. Note that the headings range from “Friends” to “Married.”

At the bottom is a list of abbreviations. Each letter(s) stands for a certain action. Write the letter(s) in the column or columns representing the relationship in which you think that the action would be pleasing to God. For example, “SI” for “sexual intercourse” has already been placed in the “Marriage” column.

session 4: drawing the line

We know God's will for intercourse. It is clearly set forth in the Bible. For the other listed actions, thoughtfully and logically determine the standards that will be best for you and that will glorify God. (*Note:* Letters can be used multiple times.)

Friends	Dating	Exclusive Dating	Engaged	Married
				SI

L = Looking at someone of the opposite sex

HH = Holding hands when together

HG = Hugging

K = Light kissing

MK = Making out

FK = French kissing

B = Touching the breasts

SO = Touching sexual organs

DH = Dry humping/motions of sexual intercourse with clothes on

UN = Being in your underwear together

NK = Being naked together

O = Oral sex

SI = Sexual intercourse

5. Sexual actions are meant to lead to sexual intercourse—one action progressing to another. When you come to the end of your limits, you are often tempted to go beyond them. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What “way out” does God provide for us in sexual temptation?

Every normal red-blooded young person will most likely, at one time or another, come in contact with sexual temptation—this includes Christian couples who are working to remain sexually pure. Matthew 26:41 says, “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” Even if our mind and spirit have decided one thing, often times, in the moment, our bodies want to do something different. So how can we make sure to keep our body in line with what our mind and spirit have decided to do?

6. Think of some ways to avoid sexual temptation. Be creative. The pull of sexual temptation can be strong, and you want to be prepared with an arsenal of tricks to help you stick to the plan you’ve set for yourself. Then share these suggestions with the group as a whole.

7. Without God's help, let's face it: We're in trouble! Fortunately, God has a promise for us. Read Philippians 4:13. What promise does God give us?

Here are six positive steps to overcoming sexual temptation:

1. *Talk about the problem with your boyfriend or girlfriend.* If you do not feel comfortable enough to talk with him or her about your problem, you are definitely going too far and need to seriously consider where your relationship is going to take you.
2. *Set standards.* As you get to know your special friend, talk about the standards you would like to set in your relationship. Don't be afraid your friend will think you are a prude. He or she will respect you; if not, is the relationship worth it? Set your standards before you find yourself in the wrong place at the wrong time.
3. *Have others hold you accountable.* Tell a close friend, a trusted adult and/or your youth-group leader about your commitment to stay sexually pure and avoid sexual temptation. Ask them to pray for your commitment and to check in with you occasionally to see how you are doing.
4. *Plan dates that are fun and enjoyable.* One way to overcome sexual temptation is to stay away from driving to Make-Out Point or lying in bed together. Plan dates that allow you to have a lot of fun, be around others and include time for good communication and getting to know more about each other.
5. *Let God be a part of your dating life.* Invite God on your dates. Let Him lead you and direct you to the right people to date. Many Christians find it a great help to pray before a date. This puts the date in a proper perspective and often will remind both of you that, in a very real sense, the Lord goes with you on your dates.

6. *Break up.* If you are unable to overcome sexual temptation, it would be wise to break up. At the time, you might not feel that there are other guys or girls out there, but there are; and there are some out there who are better for you. Also remember that a breakup does not have to mean forever. Perhaps both of you need some time to redirect your thoughts. At another point in your life, you may be able to get back together.

reflect

1. What is the hardest part about staying sexually pure?

2. How is sexual temptation different from other kinds of temptation?

3. Linda is 14. She says she isn't planning on having sex before marriage, but believes doing anything else physical with her boyfriend is okay. What advice would you give her?

4. Think about your future husband or wife. How would you feel if you knew that your future spouse was engaging in sexual activities with another person? How might that impact your future relationship?

5. Why would God warn us about sexual immorality and set aside sexual intercourse for marriage?

6. Has this study changed your view of the importance of sexual purity or your definition of “sexual purity”? If so, in what ways?

meditation



Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you.
Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm.
Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.
For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord.

PROVERBS 4:25-27; 5:21

Note

1. Chap Clark, *Next Time I Fall in Love* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), adapted from p. 104. Used by permission.