

session 2 study guide

influences

message

The first chapter in Genesis describes how God created earth and sky, light and water, man and beast. The second chapter describes how God gave Adam and Eve responsibilities (take care of the Garden and the animals) and some rules—specifically, He told them not to eat fruit from one tree in the Garden of Eden. According to the Bible, this is the ONE rule He gave to Adam and Eve—and, as you may have heard, they had a little trouble keeping it.

Read the following account from Genesis 3:1-13. As you read, consider the following questions: (1) What were Adam and Eve’s intentions? Did they plan on breaking God’s rule? (2) How much convincing did it take to get them to disobey?

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

dig

1. What were Adam and Eve influenced by?

2. What was the result of them following that influence?

3. Adam and Eve knew what was right. They weren't confused about what God had commanded them to do, and they planned to obey. Yet they still were led astray. Why did Adam and Eve fall prey to the serpent's influence?

4. How could they have avoided the temptation?

5. Influences are not inherently bad. Positive influences can play an important role in our lives. But because of the actions of Adam and Eve, every single person is born with a sinful nature. And this sinful nature can be easily tempted by negative influences. What do these passages reveal about our sinful nature?

Romans 7:18

Romans 8:5

Galatians 5:16-17

Galatians 6:7-8

1 Peter 2:11

apply

Everyone is influenced when it comes to the subject of sexuality. The question is who and what are influencing you.

1. Whether we like it or not, those things that we spend the most time listening to, watching and being around will undoubtedly impact our views and beliefs. What gets most of your time and attention today? Rate from 1 (the most influential) to 13 (the least influential) the following things and people in regard to their influence on you.

Music	_____
TV	_____
Parent	_____
Brother/Sister	_____
Movies	_____
Government	_____
Youth Worker	_____
Teachers	_____
Friends	_____
Books	_____
Church	_____
Advertisements	_____
Bible	_____

2. Look at what you ranked as the top three things and/or people that influence you. What messages about sex and sexuality do these influences promote?

3. Why do these influences hold so much sway over people your age?

4. One of the major influences of today's teens is the media. Though you may not realize it, when we consistently see certain images, attitudes or behaviors portrayed on TV and in films, we begin to view them as acceptable or at least as not that bad. On the Internet, search for episode descriptions of the following shows from different decades:

1960s: *Leave It to Beaver, Gilligan's Island, The Dick Van Dyke Show*
 1970s: *The Partridge Family, Eight Is Enough, The Brady Bunch*
 1980s: *Full House, Saved by the Bell, Family Ties*
 1990s: *Clueless, Melrose Place, 90210*
 2000s: *Gossip Girl, One Tree Hill, The Hills*

Do you notice a shift in the content of the shows? When we continue to see as normal things like premarital sex, couples living together before marriage and promiscuous teens, how we view sexuality in our own life is influenced.

5. Check the box if you've heard or seen of any of the following being portrayed on TV shows or in movies:

- ☐ adultery
- ☐ individuals going further physically than they originally wanted to
- ☐ teenagers having multiple sexual partners
- ☐ people viewing pornography
- ☐ provocative or seductive dancing
- ☐ blatant or implied sexual intercourse
- ☐ sexual touching
- ☐ non-married couples living together
- ☐ one-night stands
- ☐ heavy kissing
- ☐ someone cheating on a boyfriend or a girlfriend

6. Read Philippians 4:8. What does the Bible say about all inappropriate behavior?

7. Why does what we fill our brains with through media, music and friends matter?

8. Read the following verses aloud and then summarize them in your own words.

You have heard that it was said, "Do not commit adultery." But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell (Matthew 5:27-30).

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God (Ephesians 5:3-5).

9. Based on these passages, develop a list of God's standards for the TV, movies and music we consume.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

reflect

1. What is your own view of sexuality?

2. What influences have shaped your understanding of and views on sexuality?

3. Is it okay for actors and actresses to act in the nude or in sexually explicit scenes since they are “only acting”? Why or why not?

4. Do you think Christians should view sexually explicit films? Why or why not? Would the age or maturity of the viewer be a factor in this regard?

5. Why do you think movies today contain so much sexually explicit material? What is its purpose?

6. Do you believe that the movies present an accurate portrayal of sexuality and male/female relationships?

7. Who or what in our culture is portraying a positive biblical view of sexuality?

8. A friend says, “There’s no harm in just *watching* that kind of stuff. I’m not actually doing it.” How would you respond? Is there harm in “just watching”?

9. Do you agree (A) or disagree (D) with the following statements? Respond and then discuss your answers as a group.

(A) (D)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I need to be proactive about developing a healthy and godly view of sex. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parents make too big a deal about the sex that is on TV and in movies. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | As a Christian, my views about sexuality should be different from those of the secular world. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I gather most of what I know and think about sex from TV and movies. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Even though I see sex portrayed in films and TV, my personal views and behavior aren’t affected. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | One way that my friends can see Christ in my life is through my decisions regarding sexuality. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My views and actions regarding sexuality impact my effectiveness as a witness for Christ to others. |

meditation



Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice.

And the God of peace will be with you.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9