

Glorify God in your Body

Study Guide

*Studies in human identity and flourishing in
marriage, singleness and friendship*

*To accompany the book commended by CEEC for
the Living in Love and Faith project*

How to use this Study Guide

This study guide is designed to lead people through an outline of the subjects covered in *Glorify God in Your Body** and to aid them in thinking about how the Bible speaks about human identity, marriage, singleness, friendship, sex and family life. This guide can be used without the book, but study group leaders would benefit from having read it.

The guide consists of ten studies which can be used as stand alone sessions or as part of a series. Leaders should be aware that some sessions may have more questions than can be tackled in a single study, so do feel free to leave some out or encourage group members to read and think through questions before you meet.

Our prayer is that members of the Church of England would be equipped by this guide to think biblically about these issues that challenge our generation and would increasingly glorify God in the bodies that the Lord has given to them.

**Glorify God in Your Body* is a book written by Martin Davie in collaboration with Evangelical theologians and commended by the Church of England Evangelical Council as a contribution to the project commissioned by the Church of England's House of Bishops 'Living in Love and Faith: Christian teaching and learning about human identity, sexuality and marriage'.
Glorify God in Your Body can be downloaded as a free pdf from <http://www.ceec.info/> or purchased from <https://www.latimertrust.org/>.

Glorify God in Your Body Study Guide
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Part I: A Christian approach to marriage, sex and family life

Session 1: Why ethics needs God

Ethics is 'moral beliefs and rules about right and wrong' according to the Collins dictionary. Developing a biblical view of ethics can help Christians make good moral choices in a rapidly changing world. In this first session, we will lay the foundations for our future discussions by exploring questions about what it means to be human and how it points to our relationship with God.

Psalm 8

For the director of music. According to gittith. A psalm of David.

*1 Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory
in the heavens.*

*2 Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.*

*3 When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,*

*4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?*

*5 You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honour.*

*6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet:*

*7 all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,
8 the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,*

all that swim the paths of the seas.

*9 Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

1. What makes you think about God's glory? What makes the psalmist think about God's glory?

2. How do human beings flourish? How does this compare with what the psalmist tells us about God's view of humanity? (*Is this how you think of yourself? Is this how your friends/family/neighbours think about people?*)

Take some time to praise God for his glory seen in his good creation.



Genesis 1:26-27

*Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image,
in our likeness,
so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky,
over the livestock and all the wild animals,
and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'*

*So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.*

'The Christian tradition says that I am a human being, a single self, a (psychosomatic) unity consisting of a body and a soul. I am a material body, including a material brain, but that is not all I am. I am also an immaterial, conscious, rational soul that is aware of God, other people and the world in general, a mind that acts in and through my body in the light of this awareness.'

GGiYB p.19

3. What makes someone human? (*How are human beings different from animals? Write down five essential words to describe yourself and share your words with your group.*)
4. In what ways are human beings like or unlike God? How would you describe your soul? How do you think your body relates to your soul?
5. How do you make decisions? (*About small things? About big things? Do you think that you make decisions differently to other people because you are a Christian?*)
6. What does 'being true to yourself' mean to you? Do you think you need to be true to yourself? How do people decide what the 'you' to be true to is?
7. What makes a decision you make right or good? Or wrong and evil? How do you work out what is right? How do you think people in our society make these decisions?

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

8. Why would anyone want wisdom and understanding? How would you describe the fear of the Lord? How about wisdom? How do you think the fear of the Lord begins wisdom? What has helped you to grow in wisdom and understanding?

Pray together for a right fear of the Lord and growth in wisdom and understanding.



Romans 1:20

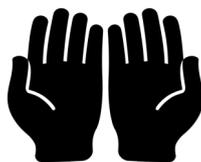
For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Romans 2:14-15

(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.)

9. What can we understand from looking at the world around us, according to Paul? Does this happen, in your experience? How do you feel when you look at what God has made?

10. What do our hearts and consciences do, even when we don't know what is right? Do you find it is easy or difficult to listen to your conscience? How has your conscience changed since you became a Christian?



Spend some time thanking God for his creation, and for creating all of us. Pray that God will help you as a group and individually to have the wisdom and understanding to live moral lives.

Part I: A Christian approach to marriage, sex and family life

Session 2: Doing the Right Thing

Having explored what it means to be human and how we relate to God, and how we can learn to think ethically in light of this, this session investigates the account given by the Christian faith how Christians can live rightly before God.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path

1. How much does Scripture shape your decision making? Be honest! What would you have to do to have Scripture shape your decision making more?

'Like water gushing forth from a large and copious spring, immense crowds of gods have issued forth from the human mind, every man giving himself full license, and devising some form of divinity, to meet his own views.'

John Calvin

GGiYB p.33

2. What gods are you tempted to worship? What gods do you see worshipped in our culture at the moment?
3. How did you become a Christian? How did you grow in faith? Can you think of any specific idols you have had to turn away from, either when you first came to faith or in your life since then?

2 Timothy 3:14-17

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

4. How did Timothy become a Christian? And how did he grow in faith? What help do you need to follow in his footsteps? (*How could you be more “thoroughly equipped for every good work”?* Think of a way you could help someone else to be thoroughly equipped this week.)

Pray for members of your group to grow in faith, to identify and cast out idols, and that you would all be equipped for every good work. Pray for any good works that you are involved in.



Christians have developed different ways to summarise Christian faith. The Church of England refers in particular to the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. The Book of Common Prayer includes a Catechism (a brief question and answer summary of Christian belief).

These documents give theological and liturgical expression to the faith witnessed to by the Scripture and the Early Church.

GGiYB p.35

5. Have you ever read any of the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal? Why or why not?

Catechist*: Rehearse the Articles of thy Belief

Answer: I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting. Amen.

Question: What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief?

Answer: First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world.

Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God.

The Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer

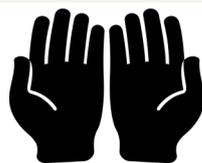
*Catechist: a teacher of the principles of Christian religion.

6. How often do you say the Creed (as given in the first answer above) or a version of it in your church? Is there any part of it you don't understand or would like to know more about? How do you think the Creed can help Christians?
7. The second answer in The Catechism above gives three clear statements about what Christians believe. What other ideas do people believe about where they come from and the purpose of life? For each of the three statements above, discuss how this belief might shape how we live rightly before God and how we know how to do the right thing.

Romans 8:18-25

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

8. What is freedom? Do you feel free? What traps you? What frustrates you about life in this world as we wait for redemption? (*What frustrations did you experience this week? Today?*)



The free life of the Christian in this world is also a frustrated life. Often our frustration leads us into sin. Spend some time reflecting on your own life and then pray this confession together:

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, We have offended against thy holy laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us: But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us miserable offenders; Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults, Restore thou them that are penitent, According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord: And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

The Order for Morning Prayer, Book of Common Prayer

Part I: A Christian approach to marriage, sex and family life

Session 3: Men, Women and Marriage in This World

In our next four studies we will be thinking about how to view marriage, singleness and friendship as Christians. With a biblical understanding of what is right in the eyes of God leads us onto our next session where we consider God's original creation of sex and marriage in this world.

Mark 10:6

But at the beginning of creation God "made them male and female".

Psalm 139:13-14

*For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.*

1. What do you think is the most amazing thing about human beings?

Spend some time praising God for the beauty of his creation of humanity the diversity of people and the intricate design of our bodies.



Genesis 1:26-31

Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'

*So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.*

God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'

Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground – everything that has the breath of life in it – I give every green plant for food.'

And it was so.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning – the sixth day.

Genesis 5:1-2

This is the written account of Adam's family line. When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them 'Mankind' when they were created.

2. What do these accounts of creation teach us about the creation of 'Mankind'? How are men and women like God and each other? (*What aspects of the image of God do you see in others? In yourself?*)
3. What does God call men and women to do? How have you been able to obey this command in your life? What parts of the command are difficult to follow?

Pray for one another in the work you are called to do and in the struggles you have with that.



Genesis 2:18-25

The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'

Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

*The man said,
'This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called "woman",
for she was taken out of man.'*

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

4. What does this passage tell us about the creation of humanity? What did God do? What roles were the man and woman given? How did Adam feel about the woman?
5. What does this passage tell us about the relationship between men and women? In what ways do people in our society follow this pattern and how do they fail to do this?
6. How is marriage thought of in our society? How does Genesis 2 describe the marriage relationships? How do people succeed in living according to this pattern? In what ways do people fail to follow this model?
7. What makes people ashamed? Do you think shame is increasing or decreasing in our society? Why were the man and woman in Genesis 2 free from shame?



Pray for marriages in our society, in your church and for married couples you know. Pray for godly relationships between men and women.

Part I: A Christian approach to marriage, sex and family life

Session 4: Men and Women in the World to Come

Thinking about God's original creation of sex and marriage in this world poses the question of what human existence will be like in the world to come. In the new creation we shall still be men and women but marriage will cease. In this study we will examine how we will relate to one another and to our bodies in glory.

Matthew 22:30-32

'At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead – have you not read what God said to you, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.'

If the woman shall not rise again as a woman nor the man as a man, there will be no resurrection of the dead. For the body is made up of sex and members. But if there shall be no sex and no members what will become of the resurrection of the body, which cannot exist without sex and members? And if there shall be no resurrection of the body, there can be no resurrection of the dead...

...how shall we in that case be like the angels with whom there is neither male nor female, hear my answer in brief as follows. What the Lord promises to us is not the nature of angels but their mode of life and their bliss.

St Jerome (c347-420AD) explains Matthew 22:30 in a letter to a woman named Eustochium

GGiYB p62-63

1. How does our society portray 'heaven'? How do you envision your eternal life? How often do you think about eternity? How do you imagine your body in the next world?

Luke 24:36-42

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'

They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.'

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, 'Do you have anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

2. What was the resurrection body of Jesus like? How is it different from our bodies now? How is it similar?

Pray for our bodies - how we view them and how we treat them. Pray for anyone you know who has difficulties with the body they have been given.



Revelation 19:6-9

Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

'Hallelujah!

For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

*Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!*

*For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.*

*Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given her to wear.'*

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.)

Then the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' And he added, 'These are the true words of God.'

Revelation 21:1-3

Then I saw a 'new heaven and a new earth', for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling-place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.'

Revelation 21:9-10

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

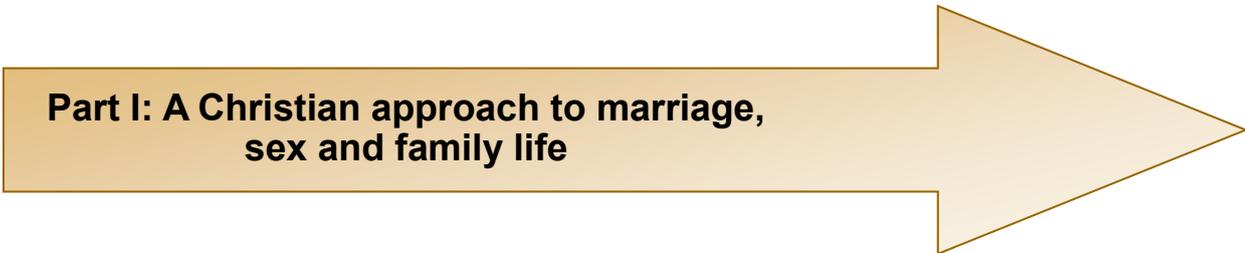
In the next world another form of marriage **will replace and fulfil** marriage and sexual activity as we experience them in this world.

GGiYB p66

3. Think of some weddings you have attended. What were they like? How does John describe heaven here at the end of the book of Revelation? What are we told about God/the Lamb and what are we told about the bride?
4. What is the closest relationship you have? How does this relationship compare with your relationship with God? How do you envision life and relationships in heaven?



Spend some time in prayer looking forward to life in the new creation.



Part I: A Christian approach to marriage, sex and family life

Session 5: Marriage, singleness and friendship (I)

This session looks at the Christian understanding of marriage and singleness as the two vocations to which God calls men and women in this world.

Galatians 3:26-29

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

1. How do people treat one another in your church? How do people support one another? Is the way that people interact in church different to how you see that in your neighbourhood, your workplace or your place of study?
2. Are there cliques or groups that 'keep themselves to themselves'? How could you work towards being 'all one in Christ Jesus' in your church? What helps you to remember that you belong to Christ? What prevents you holding onto that promise?
3. Can you think of a time when you have reached out to someone who is very different to you? How well do married couples and singles relate in your church? Is your church community more important to people than their natural family ties? How can divisions be countered in relationships between church members?

Spend some time praying for the unity of your church and Christian community across divides of race, status and sex.



1 Corinthians 7:3-4

The husband should fulfil his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.

4. How should a husband and wife treat each other according to 1 Corinthians 7? Why do you think husbands and wives need this instruction?

Ephesians 5:21

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Colossians 3:18-19

*Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.*

5. What attitudes should Christian husbands and wives have to one another? (See also *Titus 2:3-5* and *1 Peter 3:1-7*). How does submission show reverence for Christ? Why is it difficult? Why might a husband need to be reminded to love his wife?

Ephesians 5:22-33

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church – for we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

...the devil will assay all things, to interrupt and hinder your hearts and godly purpose, if you will give him any entry. For he will either labour to break this godly knot, once begun betwixt you, or else at the least he will labour to encumber it with divers griefs and displeasures. And this is his principal craft: to work dissension of hearts of the one from the other; that whereas there is now a pleasant and sweet love between you, he will in the stead thereof, bring in a most bitter and unpleasant discord.

Church of England homily 'Of the State of Matrimony' 1563

6. What do we learn about Christ and the church in Ephesians 5? And what does this passage tell us about the ultimate purpose of marriage? Who do you think has the more difficult task in marriage - husband or wife?
7. How do you think Christian marriages should differ from other marriages? What damages Christian marriage? How can we support Christian marriages as a church?



Pray together for Christian marriages and the witness of the church as the bride of Christ.

Part I: A Christian approach to marriage, sex and family life

Session 6: Marriage, singleness and friendship (II)

In this session we will focus on the idea that friendship is the basic pattern of Christian relationship which undergirds two vocations to which God Calls people: marriage and singleness.

John 15:14-17

You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: love each other.

1. What is the difference between a servant and a friend? Who is your best friend? How would you describe your relationship? What is the difference between a servant and a friend? What makes a good friendship?
2. How does Jesus describe his friends in John 15? What do Jesus's friends do? What do they have? Do you feel like you have that sort of friendship with the Lord? Do you have those sort of relationships with other believers?

What does it mean, then, to love one another as friends? The Kellers identify three characteristics that mark out friendship: constancy, transparency, and common passion. Friends are always there for each other, they are open and honest, and they share a common enthusiasm for something or somethings (in the words of C S Lewis 'even if it were only an enthusiasm for dominoes or white mice'). In the Bible we find that all three of these characteristics apply to the relationships of love that should exist within the life of God's people.

GGiYB p.104

3. What sort of friend are you? What makes it difficult to be constant? How can we show spiritual constancy? Look at the following passages and discuss some characteristics of Christian constancy: Galatians 6:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14-15, Hebrews 13:16. (for further study: *Philippians 4:14, 2 Corinthians 9:13, Romans 12:3-6, 10, Proverbs 27:2, Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:19.*)

4. How are our relationships helped by transparency? Look at the following passages and discuss how you can encourage one another in spiritual transparency: James 5:16, Romans 15:14, Galatians 6:1. (for further study: *Hebrews 10:24, Hebrews 3:13, Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 5:23ff, Matthew 18:15ff.*)

5. What are you passionate about? How can we spur one another on in gospel passion?

Spend some time praying that friendships in your group would be characterised by constancy, transparency and common passion, especially our passion for the gospel. Pray for friendships you have beyond the group.



Matthew 12:46-50

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.' He replied to him, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' Pointing to his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'

6. How do you get along with your family? How about your church family? What priority did Jesus have for family relationships? How do you negotiate this model of relationship with your own family?

Matthew 22:30

Those who have been resurrected 'neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven'.

'To this eschatological* hope the New Testament church bore witness by fostering the social conditions which could support a vocation to the single life. It conceived of marriage and singleness as alternative vocations, each a worthy form of life, the two together comprising the whole Christian witness to the nature of affectionate community. The one declared that God had vindicated the order of creation, the other pointed beyond it to its eschatological transformation.'

GGiYB p101 quoting Oliver O'Donovan Resurrection and Moral Order

*eschatological: concerning the ultimate of final things.

7a. How are marriage and singleness seen amongst your friends and family? In wider society? Does your church treat single and married people differently? Could things be done better? If so, how? How does thinking of marriage and singleness in the light of eternity make a difference to how you think about both those states?

7b. How do you build friendships with Christian brothers and sisters who are not single/married as you are? How can you encourage them in their 'witness to the nature of affectionate community'?



Pray for your church and the growth of friendships and affection amongst all believers. Pray that your church would be a strong 'witness to the nature of affectionate community'.

Part II: Challenges facing a Christian approach

Session 7: Intersex and Transgender

Moving into the second part of this study we begin this session by looking at the challenge to traditional Christian anthropology posed by intersex and transgender.

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

1. How is God's image seen in people? How does humanity being created "male and female" reflect the image of God?

Everyone agrees that intersex people have bodies that differ from what is typical for male or female human bodies at the level of either their genotype [genetic constitution of the body] or their phenotype [differences in genitalia, body shape, the sound of the voice, etc] or both.

[True intersex conditions (also known as DSDs - Disorders of Sexual Development), where there is confusion as to whether the individual concerned is male or female, occur in 0.018% of live births.] This means that more than 99.98% of human beings are clearly either male or female...True intersex conditions are very rare indeed.

GGiYB p.113;115

What we find in the bodies of people with intersex conditions is therefore, in the words of Oliver O'Donovan, 'an ambiguity which has arisen by a malfunction in a dimorphic human sexual pattern.'

GGiYB p.118

'Transgender is an umbrella term for the many ways in which people might experience and/or present and express (or live out) their gender identities differently from people whose sense of gender identity is congruent with their biological sex.'

Mark Yarhouse, Understanding Gender Dysphoria

GGiYB p.119

Psalm 139:13-18

*For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.
How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!
Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand –
when I awake, I am still with you.*

2. Have you any experience or knowledge of intersex conditions/DSDs or of people who identify as transgender? What particular challenges do you think people with these conditions might face - in life and in their faith?
3. How do you think your church would respond to someone who intersex or transgender? Do you think people would respond in a biblical way? Why or why not?
4. How can we faithfully reflect God's image if we have difficulties and disabilities in our bodies? How could we do that with an ambiguity in our sexual makeup or a discomfort with our biological sex?
5. How does Psalm 139 describe God's role in the creation of every human being? What is the response of the Psalmist in contemplating this? What does it mean to be "fearfully and wonderfully made" when our bodies don't follow the usual pattern of createdness or our inner sense of self is at odds with our created bodies?

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for our bodies, in all their brokenness and fallenness.



Romans 8:20-21

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

6. How do you imagine the “freedom and glory of the children of God”? What signs of the frustration of creation do you see in your own life? What helps you to deal with that frustration?

7. How can we encourage one another in the frustration of living in a decaying world? How could you help others who are frustrated with their bodily createdness?



Pray for everyone who is dealing with frustration with their body, and for all who minister to them and care them. Pray for medical staff and for parents of children dealing with these issues.

Part II: Challenges facing a Christian approach

Session 8: Sex Outside Marriage

This session helps us to consider how the Bible views sex outside marriage, including same-sex relationships and therefore how Christians should understand how to live.

1 Thessalonians 4:3

'For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from un-chastity'.

Matthew 15:17-20

'Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts – murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.'

1. What sort of activities are condemned in our society? How does this compare with the list of activities that Jesus says are 'evil thoughts'. What does Jesus tell us that these activities do to us? How do we see that effect working out in our lives? What is the remedy?

Galatians 5:19-26

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

The words translated ['sexual immorality', 'impurity' and 'debauchery']... are all general terms for sexual immorality, which in the New Testament context means sexual activity outside marriage.

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2. What acts of the flesh are hardest to resist? How are different ones connected? How do you battle the temptation to them? How do you feel and act when you give into temptation?

3. What does holiness look like? What about sexual holiness (chastity)?

Spend some time in quietness, reflecting on the acts of the flesh. Join together in prayers of repentance, giving thanks for Jesus' death that frees us from the penalty of sin, and for the Holy Spirit who enables us to change the way we live. Pray also that the Holy Spirit would help you to honour God with your body.



4. Which fruit of the Spirit do you struggle most to display? Where can you see fruit in the lives of others? What helps you to 'crucify the flesh', to resist sin?

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

'I have the right to do anything,' you say – but not everything is beneficial. 'I have the right to do anything'– but I will not be mastered by anything. You say, 'Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.' The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh.' But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.

5. How do you feel about your body? What issues do you or others have with their bodies? *(What influences in our culture are affecting the way we feel about our bodies? What attitudes inform why people think it does or doesn't matter what we do with our bodies?)*
6. What does this passage in 1 Corinthians 6 teach us about how we should view our bodies and what we do with them?
7. How does our society view sexual immorality ('un-chastity')? How about your church? What is now included in this category and what isn't?
8. How does this differ from the Bible's view? Areas to discuss might include prostitution, pornography, masturbation, sexual surrogacy (where someone provides sexual experience to people who might not otherwise experience sex because of disability or illness), sex and cohabitation outside marriage, same sex sexual relationships.
9. How can we 'honour God' ('glorify God' in the RSV) with our bodies? Is there something specific you can do this week to honour God with your body?



Pray for opportunities to honour God with your body in the coming week. Pray for Christians to encourage one another to flee sexual immorality.

Part II: Challenges facing a Christian approach

Session 9: Divorce and Re-marriage

The Christian view of marriage is that it is a permanent commitment but this premise can be very difficult to follow in a fallen world. This penultimate sessions explores the matters of divorce and re-marriage.

Genesis 2:24

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

1. What does the ideal marriage look like? Can you think of good marriages in public life, or fiction, that show aspects of marriage that you admire?

Mathew 19:5-6

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh”? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.’

2. How is marriage described in Genesis 2 and Matthew 19? How can we fall short of God’s design for marriage as described in these passages?

Malachi 2:13-16

Another thing you do: you flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favour on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, 'Why?' It is because the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

'The man who hates and divorces his wife,' says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'does violence to the one he should protect,' says the Lord Almighty. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.

3. What is society's view of divorce? Do you think that divorce can ever be justified? Why or why not?
4. According to Malachi 2, what is God's view of divorce? In what ways can we support those who have suffered the pain of divorce?
5. How can we support those struggling in a difficult marriage? How can we encourage those who are married to be on their guard and to not be unfaithful?

Pray for marriages in our society and for all seeking to help others to build strong marriages. Pray for all who have been affected by divorce and for all those who minister to them.



Matthew 19:8-9

Jesus replied, 'Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.'

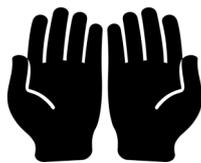
1 Corinthians 7:10-16

To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): a wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

6. What is your reaction to this teaching of Jesus in Matthew 19:8-9? What about the teaching in 1 Corinthians 7? How do you think a wife or husband can be 'saved' by their believing spouse, isn't it God alone who saves us? How would you advise a couple thinking of divorcing from these passages?



Pray for marriages in your church and community. Pray for those in pain from divorce or difficult marriages. Pray that your church would be a place for healing and compassion for all those for whom marriage is hard.

Part II: Challenges facing a Christian approach

Session 10: Birth control and infertility treatment

In this session we will consider birth control and infertility treatment in relation to the fulfilment of law to be 'Fruitful and multiply'.

1. Do you have a clear idea about your purpose in life? What has God called you to do? Are there any roles that you find it hard to imagine being a 'calling'?

Genesis 1:27-28

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'

2. What does God call mankind to do here, in the very first instruction they receive? How do you think humanity is doing in following these commands? In what ways should Christians behave differently to others in their attitude to the created world?
3. If people are to 'increase in number', how can the use of birth control be defended? How should Christians steward their own fertility? Are there any forms of contraception that Christians should not use? Why or why not?

Stop and pray for Christian parents: for wisdom as they make decisions about the size of their families, for godliness in parenting. Pray that our churches would be places where children are encouraged in their faith and led to follow Christ.



I Samuel 1:1-20

There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the Lord Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the Lord. Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the Lord had closed her womb. Because the Lord had closed Hannah's womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. Her husband Elkanah would say to her, 'Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?'

Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the Lord's house. In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. And she made a vow, saying, 'Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.'

As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, 'How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine.'

'Not so, my lord,' Hannah replied, 'I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief.'

Eli answered, 'Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.'

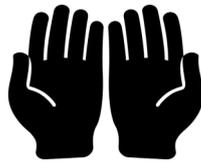
She said, 'May your servant find favour in your eyes.' Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

Early the next morning they arose and worshipped before the Lord and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her. So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, 'Because I asked the Lord for him.'

4. Hannah wept, refused to eat and was downhearted because she was childless. How can we counsel and encourage friends in similar situations, knowing that not all prayers are answered in the same way Hannah's was? What was Hannah's response when her prayer was answered with a child?

5. How far should Christians use technology to assist conception and pregnancy? Consider areas such as surgery, artificial insemination, donor sperm/eggs, in vitro fertilisation, surrogacy.

6. How do those who are single or unable to have children participate in God's calling on his people to be fruitful and multiply? How can the whole church encourage them in this calling?



Pray for one another and for all members of your church - for wisdom, kindness and grace as people face these challenges and ethical questions.
