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TOOLS FOR
YOUTH

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FAITH **IN** **ACTION**

FAITH IN ACTION

THE TOOLS YOUTH NEED
+ TO WIN THE BATTLE AGAINST +
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

FIRST

WATCH THE FILM *CHOSEN*,
LOCATED ON THE FLASH
DRIVE INCLUDED IN THIS KIT.

NEXT STEPS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	2
SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE	4
LEADER'S GUIDE	17
ACTION ITEMS FOR YOUTH	35

SEX TRAFFICKING: GOD'S PERSPECTIVE AND YOURS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR YOUTH

+ YOUR OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE FILM *CHOSEN*

What stood out to you most about Brianna's story?

What stood out to you most about Lacy's story?

Can you define "sex trafficking?"

Sex trafficking is when a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud or coercion OR when the person induced to perform the act is under 18 years old. A commercial sex act means any item of value is traded for any sexual service (prostitution, pornography, or sexual performance). Domestic minor sex trafficking is the commercial sexual exploitation of American children within U.S. borders for monetary or other compensation (shelter, food, drugs, etc.). This is synonymous with child sex slavery, sex slavery, child sex trafficking, prostitution of children, and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).

Before seeing *Chosen*, did you know girls and women could be tricked into prostitution? Did you know about sex trafficking before today? Now that you realize prostitution is potentially sex trafficking, how does this change your perception of that issue?

+ FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. —Genesis 1:27

What does this verse say about the value of every human life?

How does it apply to the act of someone being bought, sold, objectified, and exploited?

How are the worth and dignity of girls like Brianna and Lacy devalued? By whom?

Again, I observed all the oppression that takes place under the sun. I saw the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them. The oppressors have great power, and their victims are helpless. —Ecclesiastes 4:1

What does this verse teach us about oppressors and their victims?

In what ways did you see this play out in Brianna's and Lacy's stories?

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice. —Proverbs 31:8-9

Treat older women as you would your mother, and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters. —1 Timothy 5:2

What are your observations about Brianna's friend, Evan?

How did he embody these two passages of scripture on Brianna's behalf?

+ FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE

What does it mean to be vulnerable? Why do you think youth are targets for sex traffickers?

Do you think sex trafficking could happen in your community?

Traffickers look like ordinary guys. Could you recognize the signs if someone you knew was being recruited by a pimp? What are some of those signs?

If your friend was in the same situation as Brianna, would you do what Evan did?

What are some places that you think pimps might try to recruit girls? How often do you or your friends hang out in those places?

How can you keep this from happening to you and how would you defend your friends?

If you were threatened that inappropriate photos or videos of you (showing nudity or sexual behavior) would be posted online unless you cooperated with someone, how would you respond?

If someone made threats against your friends or family unless you complied with their demands, how would you respond?

If your boyfriend was pushing you to do things sexually that made you uncomfortable, how would you handle that?

Name one adult you trust. If you or your friend became involved in any of the situations we discussed today, would you feel comfortable telling that trusted adult? Why, or why not?

+ MALES ONLY

Boys are also targeted as victims of sex trafficking and can be recruited by pimps. How could that possibly happen to you? What would you do to protect yourself?

Most pimps and buyers are men. How did you feel when you saw the reactions from Brianna and Lacy about their first nights being exploited? Can you imagine yourself pimping a girl? Can you imagine yourself being one of the buyers?

If someone approached you to be a “spotter” to help locate girls, how would you respond?

Across the nation, teenage boys are engaging in behaviors that display a lack of value for girls. Eventually this behavior could morph into a lifestyle of disregard for females, leading those boys to become pimps or buyers. List some situations that could be harmful to girls you know. How would you respond if you saw this happening to someone?

Reading Proverbs 31:8-9 and 1 Timothy 5:2 above, how would God have you treat girls?

+ FEMALES ONLY

What are some warning signs that your boyfriend may not be a good guy for you?

If you were in an abusive relationship, what steps would you take to get out?

SMALL GROUP STUDY: LESSON 1

+ WARM-UP

What is *intention*? What is *design*? What is a *counterfeit*? What does *objectification* mean? What does *exploitation* mean?

God made man and woman in His image and likeness. His intent and design was a wholesome and healthy relationship between them. Sin has marred the intent and design of God. The objectification and exploitation of women is a counterfeit, the very opposite of what our God intends.

Federal agents don't learn to spot counterfeit money by studying the counterfeits. They study real bills until they've mastered the genuine article. Then fake money is easy to spot.

We will begin our study this week by looking at the genuine article—God's intent and design in making man and woman, and the purpose for which He created them. These verses set a foundation upon which to build our understanding of, and response to, the objectification and exploitation of women prevalent in our culture.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. —Psalm 139:14

+ LET'S GET STARTED—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

What do you suppose David (who wrote Psalm 139) meant by saying God has *made us wonderfully complex*, or as it reads in other versions, that we're *fearfully and wonderfully made*?

How many ways can you think of that we are more complex than the rest of creation? The animal kingdom? What is most unique about us (see Genesis 1:26-27 for a hint)?

Digging Deep—Our Bible Study: Adam & Eve

*Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us."
—Genesis 1:26*

Who was God talking to when He said this?

What can be understood from God's use of the plural pronouns "our" and "us"?

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. —Genesis 1:27

What do you think God meant by including both male and female in this verse?

*Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!
—Genesis 1:31*

As God considered all of His creation—certainly including human beings as His image-bearers—what was His conclusion?

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." —Genesis 2:18

Looking back through Genesis 1 and the account of creation, God said everything was good. What is the very first thing He recognizes is not good?

*So the Lord God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.
—Genesis 2:19-20*

What do these verses reveal of man's need for companionship?

*So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the Lord God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.
—Genesis 2:21-22*

*"At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh. She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.'"
—Genesis 2:23*

What does this exclamation of the first man suggest of his reaction to his companion?

This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. —Genesis 2:24

What is this verse referencing? What of God's intent and design is revealed here?

"Women were created from the rib of man to be beside him, not from his head to top him, nor from his feet to be trampled by him, but from under his arm to be protected by him, near to his heart to be loved by him."

—Matthew Henry, 17th Century Minister & Bible Scholar

How do these words of Bible scholar and commentator Matthew Henry strike you?

How do his thoughts agree with the truths that we human beings are fearfully and wonderfully made, complex, and image-bearers of our God?

+ APPLICATION—PUTTING OUR FAITH IN ACTION

How has our study of this passage informed you...

- Concerning God's intent and design for human beings and companionship?
- Concerning God's intent and design for intimacy between men and women?
- Concerning your own understanding of how you are fearfully and wonderfully made, and an image-bearer of our God?
- Concerning the marred image the objectification and exploitation of women, pornography, and our sexualized culture portrays?

+ LET'S WRAP IT UP—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some of your takeaways from our study?
- Were there any things you read or that were shared that were new to you or surprised you?
- How might the things we've studied impact you or be applied in your everyday life?

Closing prayer—Confession and Commitment

SMALL GROUP STUDY: LESSON 2

+ WARM-UP

What is *temptation*? What is *rationalization*? What does *escalation* mean? What are *consequences*?

Last week we studied the *real*—God’s intent and design for man, woman, and intimacy—so we could more quickly and surely identify the counterfeits of objectification and exploitation rampant in our society.

Sin always escalates. No one sets out to ruin themselves. No first-time drug-user thinks, “One day I’ll be an addict and lose everything!” No husband and father or wife and mother flirts with a co-worker, thinking, “I’ll have an affair and destroy my marriage and my family!” No one chooses sinful behavior thinking, “My children and grandchildren will reap the consequences of my actions!”

This week we will consider the slippery slopes of temptation and rationalization, and the escalation of sin. We will go to the heart of the matter, taking up the matter of our hearts. How does sin enter in? What happens when it does?

Sin Escalates

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.
—Proverbs 4:23

+ LET'S GET STARTED-FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

What do you suppose it means to *guard your heart*? Why do you think the wisdom writer of this proverb says it is important *above all else*?

Other versions of the Bible say “for the heart is the wellspring of life.” Wellspring is defined as “an original or bountiful source” of something. How does the image of a wellspring enhance the picture?

Digging Deep—Our Bible Study: Sin Escalates

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?” —Genesis 3:1

How did the serpent (the Devil) begin his temptation of Eve in the Garden?

The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. —Genesis 3:6

Did you notice that Adam, her husband, was WITH her and he ate too?

Why do you suppose Adam didn’t try to stop Eve from eating if he was right there?

What steps can you identify in Eve's fall?

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees.
—Genesis 3:8

What instincts did Adam and Eve's sin trigger in their relationship with God?

The Lord God asked, "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?" The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it." Then the Lord God asked the woman, "What have you done?" "The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it." —Genesis 3:11-13

What instincts do you see in Adam and Eve when they're confronted with their sin?

Can you see that being accountable for our own actions brings us closer to safety when we've made mistakes? Have you ever blamed someone else for your own failing?

What were the consequences (see Genesis 3:16-24)?

Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. —Romans 1:21

How does this verse suggest human beings get off track in our thoughts, desires, and understanding of God's intent and design?

How is this similar to what happened in the Garden long ago (perhaps look back to Genesis 3:1-13)?

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.
—James 1:12

Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. —James 1:14-15

What do these verses warn us concerning the escalation of sin in our lives?

Where do you think the temptation takes root from the verse above? What can we do to guard ourselves from sin, using the progression in this verse?

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. —Psalm 34:7

What does this verse mean? How would you put it into your own words?

How do all these verses relate to our opening verse, Proverbs 4:23, on the importance of guarding our hearts?

"We don't desire things because they are good; we call them good because we desire them." —Baruch Spinoza, 17th Century Philosopher

How do these words of the philosopher Baruch Spinoza strike you?

How does his conclusion above reflect the process through which sin escalates in our hearts and lives? Where do you see what God calls sin normalized in our society and culture?

+ APPLICATION—PUTTING OUR FAITH IN ACTION

How has our study of these passages given you insight...

- Concerning sin and the manner in which we fall into temptation?
- Concerning the way shame, hiding, rationalization, and blame-shifting follow and harm our relationship with God?
- Concerning your own life?
- Concerning the harm that is presented by thinking of women as objects, the exploitation of women, the normalizing of pornography, and our overly sexualized culture?

+ LET'S WRAP IT UP—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some of your takeaways from our study?
- Were there any things you read or that were shared that were new to you or surprised you?
- Can you see how the things we've studied will impact you or be applied to your everyday life?

Closing prayer—Confession and Commitment

SMALL GROUP STUDY: LESSON 3

+ WARM-UP

What is *prostitution*? What is *hypocrisy*? What does it mean to be *enslaved*? What are *victims*?

Last week we studied the slippery slopes of temptation and rationalization where sin is concerned. This week we'll follow that same road with Judah, in the book of Genesis.

We discovered that sin always escalates, in both its effects and in who it affects. Judah set out to gratify his sinful appetite, never realizing how his behavior directly opposed God's intentions for him and his identity in God, nor imagining the painful and lasting consequences of his actions.

Bought, Sold, Objectified, Exploited

God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world.
— 1 Corinthians 7:23

+ LET'S GET STARTED—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

More than Jesus dying on the cross, what did Paul mean in saying *God paid a high price for you*?

Who *owns* you? Why is that important? Try to put it into your own words what Paul was conveying in the verse above.

What does it mean to be *enslaved*? How is that inconsistent with the fact that Jesus Christ said he came to set us free?

Digging Deep—Our Bible Study: Judah & Tamar

Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Go back to your parents' home and remain a widow until my son Shelah is old enough to marry you." (But Judah didn't really intend to do this because he was afraid Shelah would also die, like his two brothers.) So Tamar went back to live in her father's home.
—Genesis 38:11

Understand that the culture of the day entitled a widowed woman to have the right to marry her deceased spouse's brother. In light of that understanding, what does this verse reveal about how Judah failed to protect, defend, and provide for his daughter-in-law?

What does it say about his view of her?

Tamar was aware that Shelah had grown up, but no arrangements had been made for her to come and marry him. So she changed out of her widow's clothing and covered herself with a veil to disguise herself. Then she sat beside the road at the entrance to the village of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. Judah noticed her and thought she was a prostitute, since she had covered her face. So he stopped and propositioned her. "Let me have sex with you," he said, not realizing that she was his own daughter-in-law. —Genesis 38:14-16

How did Judah view Tamar in this encounter?

What did he ask of her?

What didn't he ask?

How does this encounter depict the idea that a woman is meant to be used for a man's gratification? Think about how that is objectification and exploitation of a woman.

Judah contracted with Tamar—without realizing her identity, seeing her face, or knowing anything about her—to share the intimacy God intends between husband and wife. How does this stand opposed to the “two becoming one” we studied two weeks ago as God's intent and design?

“How much will you pay to have sex with me?” Tamar asked. “I'll send you a young goat from my flock,” Judah promised. “But what will you give me to guarantee that you will send the goat?” she asked. “What kind of guarantee do you want?” he replied. She answered, “Leave me your identification seal and its cord and the walking stick you are carrying.” So Judah gave them to her. —Genesis 38:16-18

What does it say of Judah's intentions that he spent time negotiating a price but never took the time to discern this woman's identity?

Then he had intercourse with her, and she became pregnant. —Genesis 38:18b

Was this Judah's intention?

How does this story's circumstances relate to the heart of the matter and the escalation of sin and consequences that we studied last week?

About three months later, Judah was told, “Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has acted like a prostitute. And now, because of this, she's pregnant.” “Bring her out, and let her be burned!” Judah demanded. —Genesis 38:24

How does Judah's response strike you? How do you feel about him? Tamar?

How is Judah's hypocrisy similar to all cases where a man objectifies and exploits a woman?

But as they were taking her out to kill her, she sent this message to her father-in-law: "The man who owns these things made me pregnant. Look closely. Whose seal and cord and walking stick are these?" Judah recognized them immediately and said, "She is more righteous than I am, because I didn't arrange for her to marry my son Shelah." And Judah never slept with Tamar again. —Genesis 38:25-26

What does this story teach us about whether disrespecting and using women is a victimless crime? Who are the victims in this case? How far reaching are the consequences?

*"Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body."
—Paul the Apostle, 1 Corinthians 6:20*

How do these words of the Apostle Paul strike you?

What are some ways you can honor God with your body in everyday living? At school? At home? At your job? With your friends?

Consider that your mouth is a part of your body. How might you dishonor God when talking about women?

How do they relate to the passage and topic we've studied today? What do they say to you, and of your walk?

+ APPLICATION—PUTTING OUR FAITH IN ACTION

How has our study of these passages informed you...

- Concerning the thinking of women as objects instead of as an equal?
- Concerning the manner of hypocrisy in buyers of exploitive materials and means?
- Concerning the escalation of sin and its consequences?
- Concerning how you live your own life?
- Concerning the victims of sexual exploitation or women who are being prostituted?

+ LET'S WRAP IT UP—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some of your takeaways from our study?
- Were there any things you read or that were shared that were new to you or surprised you?
- How might the things we've studied impact you or be applied in your everyday life?

Closing prayer—Confession and Commitment

SMALL GROUP STUDY: LESSON 4

+ WARM-UP

What does it mean that you were created *in the image of God*? What is *sin*? What is *confession*? What does it mean to be *forgiven*? What is the *Great Commandment*?

This week we will conclude our four-week study, moving from reading to application. What does the Bible say about who we are? How do we embody being like Christ? How do we maintain it? When we've blown it, how has our loving and gracious God provided for our healing and restoration?

Coming Full Circle; Going Forward

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! —2 Corinthians 5:17

+ LET'S GET STARTED—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Who is *a new creation in Christ*? Who is included? Who is excluded?

How would you put this verse into your own words?

Digging Deep—Our Bible Study: Embodying Our Identity in Christ

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. —Genesis 1:27

What did we discover this verse says about the value of every human life?

How does it apply to the notion of someone being bought, sold, objectified, and exploited?

How does using or treating another person as something for our pleasure mean they are being devalued?

How do some women/girls feeling insecure or devaluing themselves become easier targets for men/boys who choose to disrespect them?

By whom?

Again, I observed all the oppression that takes place under the sun. I saw the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them. The oppressors have great power, and their victims are helpless. —Ecclesiastes 4:1

What does this verse teach us about God's view of oppressors and their victims? Have you ever been an oppressor? How or why?

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice. —Proverbs 31:8-9

How does this passage apply to you, as one of God's children?

Are there things that you could do to ensure justice? How can you use your voice to speak up for victims?

What are some ways in which you can practically do this in regard to the objectification and exploitation of women and girls? How does anyone show respect in all ways, at all times—even when no one is looking—towards others, particularly women and girls, even if they are one?

Treat older women as you would your mother, and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters. —1 Timothy 5:2

Do you see boys and men being respectful in their actions, words, and thoughts towards how they view and treat women and girls?

Ladies, if you believe you deserve dignity and respect, does it change how you allow others to treat you?

What does this verse teach girls and women about the proper way in which boys and men should treat them?

Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself." —Matthew 22:37-39

How does the "Great Commandment" affect the way we treat one another?

Why do you think our culture thinks it's all right to make lewd jokes about other's bodies or how they are used or desired?

What would you do if you heard comments towards someone calling another person names based on their sexuality or perceived worth as a sex object?

How does it relate to this issue?

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. —Romans 8:5-6

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. —Philippians 4:8

What do these verses say to those who would objectify women? To those who would be buyers of a prostituted woman/girl? To us, as children of God?

Think about some television commercials or movies and measure it against these things in Phil. 4:8 When you see certain things, how does it affect your thoughts? Talk about how you jeopardize your thoughts and how can you protect your thoughts by what you allow yourself to see?

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

—1 Corinthians 10:13

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. —1 John 1:9

What do you think might be your way out of a tempting situation?

What can you do when you see a friend falling into sin? Will your actions towards them help them find a way out, or make them feel shamed?

When we recognize that sin is common to everyone, how does that help us help others? How can you humbly help another person who is in sinful failure?

“Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.”
—King David, in Psalm 51:10

We’ve all heard of David’s great sin with Bathsheba, yet God says he’s a man after his own heart—what could that mean?

How might it relate to what we’ve studied these last few weeks? When have you thought of this type of prayer and begged God to clean up your own heart?

+ APPLICATION—PUTTING OUR FAITH IN ACTION

This is a song King David wrote after confessing his sin—giving in to taking Bathsheba for his own even though she was married to another man, and all its terrible consequences.

*Oh, what joy for those
whose disobedience is forgiven,
whose sin is put out of sight!*

*Yes, what joy for those
whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt,
whose lives are lived in complete honesty!*

*When I refused to confess my sin,
my body wasted away,
and I groaned all day long.*

*Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me.
My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.*

*Finally, I confessed all my sins to you
and stopped trying to hide my guilt.*

*I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord."
And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.*

+ LET'S WRAP IT UP—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some of your takeaways from our study?
- Were there any things you read or that were shared that were new to you or surprised you?
- How might the things we've studied impact you or be applied to your life?

Closing prayer—Confession and Commitment

SEX TRAFFICKING: GOD'S PERSPECTIVE AND YOURS

SMALL GROUP STUDY: LEADER'S GUIDE

Sex Trafficking: God's Perspective and Yours is a four-lesson Bible Study and Discussion Group curriculum for youth. It is outlined to include:

- God's intent and design in making man and woman, and the purpose for which He created them.
- The heart of the matter: How sin enters in and what happens when it does.
- A consideration of the painful and lasting consequences of choices and actions.
- Our identity in Christ: How do we embody it, maintain it, and, when we've blown it, what means our loving and gracious God has provided for our healing and restoration.

Leader prep is minimal. The study follows the same pattern each week. Leaders should only need to prepare themselves by prayerfully reading through the Bible passages and questions in advance of each small group meeting.

Each study begins with a **Warm-up** segment. Each warm-up offers a few topic-setting questions to help prepare the group for the study, and a brief introduction. Leaders should share the introduction with group participants verbally along the lines of, "This is what we're going to discover tonight..."

Each study begins with a **title** followed by an **opening, over-arching Bible verse** and a few **discussion questions** related to the title and verse. This section is intended to further set the tone for the meeting. Leaders should use this step in the meeting's unfolding to allow group members to warm up and find their voice in the discussion.

[Hint: A little silence as people ponder questions is not a bad thing! Don't be quick to fill all "open space" with your own voice. Let the group warm up. Be sure to recognize every contribution from group members, "Thank you for sharing that thought..." or "You've made an important observation..." Keep in mind that in this section, you aren't looking so much for right and wrong answers as much as you're looking for thought provocation.]

The heart of each study is the **Digging Deep** section. Here, group members should read the Bible verses and passages and consider the corresponding questions in order. Leaders can discern whether having individuals work silently on verses and answers and then discussing them, or work as a group discussing as you go, works better for your group's dynamic. In this section you are looking for a little more specific answers than in the **opening** discussion. Suggested answers are provided in this guide. Leader should work to gently steer contributed answers in the general direction of specific aims and answers provided.

The **Application** section is intended to help leader and group members take what has been studied and find connection points and make applicable the study's discoveries for each person. Group members should be encouraged to ponder the few application suggestive questions and ponder answers—whether they share or keep to themselves.

Each study concludes with a **Wrap Up** section. This is intended to foster a closing discussion. Whereas the **Application** section may be considered more personal, this segment should be facilitated in a much more general sense.

[Hint: Be sensitive to the possibility that different group members may come away with different impressions from the study—that's okay. God is at work—His Word never returns void, but always accomplishes His intended ends!]

LEADER'S GUIDE: LESSON 1

+ WARM-UP

What is *intention*? What is *design*? What is a *counterfeit*? What does *objectification* mean? What does *exploitation* mean?

[Leader: Prepare yourself with working and conversational definitions of the words and phrases.]

God made man and woman in His image and likeness. His intent and design was a wholesome and healthy relationship between them. Sin has marred the intent and design of God. The objectification and exploitation of women is a counterfeit, the very opposite of what our God intends.

Federal agents don't learn to spot counterfeit money by studying the counterfeits. They study real bills until they've mastered the genuine article. Then fake money is easy to spot.

We will begin our study this week by looking at the genuine article—God's intent and design in making man and woman, and the purpose for which He created them. These verses set a foundation upon which to build our understanding of, and response to, the objectification and exploitation of women prevalent in our culture.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. —Psalm 139:14

+ LET'S GET STARTED—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

What do you suppose David (who wrote Psalm 139) meant by saying God has *made us wonderfully complex*, or as it reads in other versions, that *we're fearfully and wonderfully made*?

How many ways can you think of that we are more complex than the rest of creation? The animal kingdom? What is most unique about us (see Genesis 1:26-27 for a hint)?

[Leader: Allow group to share thoughts and impressions. Remember, you aren't looking so much for right and wrong answers as much as you're looking for thought provocation.]

Digging Deep—Our Bible Study: Adam & Eve

*Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us."
—Genesis 1:26*

Who was God talking to when He said this?

[God was speaking to Himself — Father, Son, and Spirit were active in creation.]

What can be understood from God's use of the plural pronouns "our" and "us"?

[It is suggestive of the triune nature of our God, and we can understand that God, in Himself, is relational. This implies that we, also, are created to be relational.]

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. —Genesis 1:27

What do you think God meant by including both male and female in this verse?

[Men and women are both created in His image; equal in worth in God's eyes.]

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!
—Genesis 1:31

As God considered all of His creation—certainly including human beings as His image-bearers—what was His conclusion?

[His creative work pleased Him.]

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." —Genesis 2:18

Looking back through Genesis 1 and the account of creation, God said everything was good. What is the very first thing He recognizes is not good?

[You can suggest group members look back to find "it was good" at the close of each day during the creation narrative. The first thing God said was not good was that man—created in God's image to be relational—was alone.]

So the Lord God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.
—Genesis 2:19-20

What do these verses reveal of man's need for companionship?

[Man's equal wasn't to be found in created objects or the animal kingdom.]

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the Lord God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.
—Genesis 2:21-22

"At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh. She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.'"
—Genesis 2:23

What does this exclamation of the first man suggest of his reaction to his companion?

[This is indeed an exclamation. Man shouted with joy at the sight of his companion. He recognized her similarity to himself, and her differences.]

This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. —Genesis 2:24

What is this verse referencing? What of God's intent and design is revealed here?

[This verse forms the institution of marriage. God's intent and design for husband and wife is that they be joined and the two become one.]

"Women were created from the rib of man to be beside him, not from his head to top him, nor from his feet to be trampled by him, but from under his arm to be protected by him, near to his heart to be loved by him."

—Matthew Henry, 17th Century Minister & Bible Scholar

How do these words of Bible scholar and commentator Matthew Henry strike you?

[This question is intended for thought provocation. Allow group members to muse over their answers. For the aim of this study, Henry's observation affords a nice illustration of the role God intends man to play as defender and protector of woman, and to cherish her, not exploit her.]

How do his thoughts agree with the truths that we human beings are fearfully and wonderfully made, complex, and image-bearers of our God?

[This question, too, is intended for thought provocation. Allow group to muse over their answers. The relational aspect—we were created to be relational—is a part of the complexity with which God designed us, and in which He intends for us to live.]

+ APPLICATION—PUTTING OUR FAITH IN ACTION

How has our study of this passage informed you...

- Concerning God's intent and design for human beings and companionship?
- Concerning God's intent and design for intimacy between men and women?
- Concerning your own understanding of how you are fearfully and wonderfully made, and an image-bearer of our God?
- Concerning the marred image the objectification and exploitation of women, pornography, and our sexualized culture portrays?

+ LET'S WRAP IT UP—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some of your takeaways from our study?
- Were there any things you read or that were shared that were new to you or surprised you?
- How might the things we've studied impact you or be applied in your everyday life?

Closing prayer—Confession and Commitment

LEADER'S GUIDE: LESSON 2

+ WARM-UP

What is *temptation*? What is *rationalization*? What does *escalation* mean? What are *consequences*?

[Leader: Prepare yourself with working and conversational definitions of the words and phrases.]

Last week we studied the *real*—God's intent and design for man, woman, and intimacy—so we could more quickly and surely identify the counterfeits of objectification and exploitation rampant in our society.

Sin always escalates. No one sets out to ruin themselves. No first-time drug-user thinks, "One day I'll be an addict and lose everything!" No husband and father or wife and mother flirts with a co-worker, thinking, "I'll have an affair and destroy my marriage and my family!" No one chooses sinful behavior thinking, "My children and grandchildren will reap the consequences of my actions!"

This week we will consider the slippery slopes of temptation and rationalization, and the escalation of sin. We will go to the heart of the matter, taking up the matter of our hearts. How does sin enter in? What happens when it does?

Sin Escalates

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.
—Proverbs 4:23

+ LET'S GET STARTED—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What do you suppose it means to *guard your heart*? Why do you think the wisdom writer of this proverb says it is important *above all else*?

Other versions of the Bible say "for the heart is the wellspring of life." *Wellspring* is defined as "an original or bountiful source" of something. How does the image of a wellspring enhance the picture?

[Leader: Allow group to share thoughts and impressions. Remember, you aren't looking so much for right and wrong answers as much as you're looking for thought provocation.]

Digging Deep—Our Bible Study: Sin Escalates

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" —Genesis 3:1

How did the serpent (the Devil) begin his temptation of Eve in the Garden?

[He began by questioning God's Word, "Did God really say...?" Temptation gets a foothold by calling us to question what we know to be true.]

The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. —Genesis 3:6

Did you notice that Adam, her husband, was WITH her and he ate too?

Why do you suppose Adam didn't try to stop Eve from eating if he was right there?

What steps can you identify in Eve's fall?

[Eve saw the fruit was beautiful, desirable, she ate it, she influenced Adam to eat it.]

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees. —Genesis 3:8

What instincts did Adam and Eve's sin trigger in their relationship with God?

[Shame, dishonesty, hiding.]

The Lord God asked, "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?" The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it." Then the Lord God asked the woman, "What have you done?" "The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it." —Genesis 3:11-13

What instincts do you see in Adam and Eve when they're confronted with their sin?

[Blame-shifting—the serpent ... the woman ... made me do it.]

Can you see that being accountable for our own actions brings us closer to safety when we've made mistakes? Have you ever blamed someone else for your own failing?

What were the consequences (see Genesis 3:16-24)?

[Their relationship with God suffered; their relationship with one another changed; the first death mention in the Bible occurred (in the animals that provided skins to cover them); their own deaths, inevitably.]

Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. —Romans 1:21

How does this verse suggest human beings get off track in our thoughts, desires, and understanding of God's intent and design?

[When human beings take their eyes off God as our creator and instead allow lesser affections to take over our hearts, confusion enters, and danger ensues.]

How is this similar to what happened in the Garden long ago (perhaps look back to Genesis 3:1-13)?

[Allow group members to muse. In the Genesis account, Eve allowed her eyes to shift from God and His goodness to the appeal of the forbidden fruit; from the bounty (eat from any tree in the garden) to the prohibition (except this one); and as she did, confusion and danger—and consequences—entered in.]

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.
—James 1:12

Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. —James 1:14-15

What do these verses warn us concerning the escalation of sin in our lives?

[Temptation must be endured, which suggests it's not easy. And it originates in our own desires—some of them healthy desires, like the desire for companionship is a natural and God-given desire we're built with—but when they're focused inappropriately, can drag us away to terrible and perhaps even irreparable harm.]

Where do you think the temptation takes root from the verse above? What can we do to guard ourselves from sin, using the progression in this verse?

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. —Psalm 34:7

What does this verse mean? How would you put it into your own words?

[This verse offers us hope that, in delighting ourselves in the Lord, He will both form and fulfill the desires of our hearts.]

How do all these verses relate to our opening verse, Proverbs 4:23, on the importance of guarding our hearts?

[Allow group members to muse. The importance of our hearts is what is in view—keeping our hearts focused on God is the safest way to navigate life—what He intends for us.]

"We don't desire things because they are good; we call them good because we desire them." —*Baruch Spinoza, 17th Century Philosopher*

How do these words of the philosopher Baruch Spinoza strike you?

[Allow group members to muse. The philosopher correctly observed the dangerous ends to which sinful man arrives: deeming things acceptable because they're enticing and desirable.]

How does his conclusion above reflect the process through which sin escalates in our hearts and lives? Where do you see what God calls sin normalized in our society and culture?

[Allow group members to muse. We see this in society that accepts things like obscenity and indecency as art or advertising, etc.]

+ APPLICATION—PUTTING OUR FAITH IN ACTION

How has our study of these passages given you insight...

- Concerning sin and the manner in which we fall into temptation?
- Concerning the way shame, hiding, rationalization, and blame-shifting follow and harm our relationship with God?
- Concerning your own life?
- Concerning the harm that is presented by thinking of women as objects, the exploitation of women, the normalizing of pornography, and our overly sexualized culture?

+ LET'S WRAP IT UP—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some of your takeaways from our study?
- Were there any things you read or that were shared that were new to you or surprised you?
- Can you see how the things we've studied will impact you or be applied to your everyday life?

Closing prayer—Confession and Commitment

LEADER'S GUIDE: LESSON 3

+ WARM-UP

What is *prostitution*? What is *hypocrisy*? What does it mean to be *enslaved*? What are *victims*?

[Leader: Prepare yourself with working and conversational definitions of the words and phrases.]

Last week we studied the slippery slopes of temptation and rationalization where sin is concerned. This week we'll follow that same road with Judah, in the book of Genesis.

We discovered that sin always escalates, in both its effects and in who it affects. Judah set out to gratify his sinful appetite, never realizing how his behavior directly opposed God's intentions for him and his identity in God, nor imagining the painful and lasting consequences of his actions.

Bought, Sold, Objectified, Exploited

God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world.
—1 Corinthians 7:23

+ LET'S GET STARTED—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

More than Jesus dying on the cross, what did Paul mean in saying *God paid a high price for you*?

Who *owns* you? Why is that important? Try to put it into your own words what Paul was conveying in the verse above.

What does it mean to be *enslaved*? How is that inconsistent with the fact that Jesus Christ said he came to set us free?

[Leader: Allow group to share thoughts and impressions. Remember, you aren't looking so much for right and wrong answers as much as you're looking for thought provocation.]

Digging Deep—Our Bible Study: Judah & Tamar

Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Go back to your parents' home and remain a widow until my son Shelah is old enough to marry you." (But Judah didn't really intend to do this because he was afraid Shelah would also die, like his two brothers.) So Tamar went back to live in her father's home. —Genesis 38:11

Understand that the culture of the day entitled a widowed woman to have the right to marry her deceased spouse's brother. In light of that understanding, what does this verse reveal about how Judah failed to protect, defend, and provide for his daughter-in-law?

[He lied to and misled her. His intentions didn't include her best interests.]

What does it say about his view of her?

[He disregarded her.]

Tamar was aware that Shelah had grown up, but no arrangements had been made for her to come and marry him. So she changed out of her widow's clothing and covered herself with a veil to disguise herself. Then she sat beside the road at the entrance to the village of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. Judah noticed her and thought she was a prostitute, since she had covered her face. So he stopped and propositioned her. "Let me have sex with you," he said, not realizing that she was his own daughter-in-law. —Genesis 38:14-16

How did Judah view Tamar in this encounter?

[As a commodity; something to be bought, sold, and used for his own pleasure. Something less than himself; less than human.]

What did he ask of her?

[Let me have sex with you; satisfy my wants and desires.]

What didn't he ask?

[He never asked her name, about her life's story, background, family, or home. He wanted nothing beyond the contractual.]

How does this encounter depict the idea that a woman is meant to be used for a man's gratification? Think about how that is objectification and exploitation of a woman.

[He never saw her as a person, but as a thing—something to satisfy his wants and desires.]

Judah contracted with Tamar—without realizing her identity, seeing her face, or knowing anything about her—to share the intimacy God intends between husband and wife. How does this stand opposed to the “two becoming one” we studied two weeks ago as God's intent and design?

[Allow group members to muse. Judah entered into intimacy with a woman—intimacy God intended and designed for within the context of marriage, two becoming one—for his momentary pleasure, never intending to care for the woman beyond the transaction. This wasn't two becoming one; this was one using and abusing another.]

“How much will you pay to have sex with me?” Tamar asked. “I'll send you a young goat from my flock,” Judah promised. “But what will you give me to guarantee that you will send the goat?” she asked. “What kind of guarantee do you want?” he replied. She answered, “Leave me your identification seal and its cord and the walking stick you are carrying.” So Judah gave them to her. —Genesis 38:16-18

What does it say of Judah's intentions that he spent time negotiating a price but never took the time to discern this woman's identity?

[All he was interested in was “What?” and “How much?”]

Then he had intercourse with her, and she became pregnant. —Genesis 38:18

Was this Judah's intention?

[Not his intention. Sinful choices and actions always come with unforeseen consequences.]

How does this story's circumstances relate to the heart of the matter and the escalation of sin and consequences that we studied last week?

[Allow group to ponder.]

About three months later, Judah was told, “Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has acted like a prostitute. And now, because of this, she's pregnant.” “Bring her out, and let her be burned!” Judah demanded. —Genesis 38:24

How does Judah's response strike you? How do you feel about him? Tamar?

[Allow group to muse. You're asking for feelings here, so there are no right and wrong answers.]

How is Judah's hypocrisy similar to all cases where a man objectifies and exploits a woman?

[Allow group to muse. Obviously, men looking at women as an object devalues and exploits them.]

But as they were taking her out to kill her, she sent this message to her father-in-law: “The man who owns these things made me pregnant. Look closely. Whose seal and cord and walking stick are these?” Judah recognized them immediately and said, “She is more righteous than I am, because I didn't arrange for her to marry my son Shelah.” And Judah never slept with Tamar again. —Genesis 38:25-26

What does this story teach us about whether disrespecting and using women is a victimless crime? Who are the victims in this case? How far reaching are the consequences?

[Allow group to muse. Victims are Tamar, her child, Judah's family and posterity. Judah is even a sad victim of his own actions.]

*“Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.”
—Paul the Apostle, 1 Corinthians 6:20*

How do these words of the Apostle Paul strike you?

What are some ways you can honor God with your body in every day living? At school? At home? At your job? With your friends?

Consider that your mouth is a part of your body. How might you DIShonor God when talking about women?

[Allow them to think.]

How do they relate to the passage and topic we've studied today? What do they say to you, and of your walk?

[Allow them to ponder.]

+ APPLICATION—PUTTING OUR FAITH IN ACTION

How has our study of these passages informed you...

- Concerning the thinking of women as objects instead of as an equal?
- Concerning the manner of hypocrisy in buyers of exploitive materials and means?
- Concerning the escalation of sin and its consequences?
- Concerning how you live your own life?
- Concerning the victims of sexual exploitation or women who are being prostituted?

+ LET'S WRAP IT UP—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some of your takeaways from our study?
- Were there any things you read or that were shared that were new to you or surprised you?
- How might the things we've studied impact you or be applied in your everyday life?

Closing prayer—Confession and Commitment

LEADER'S GUIDE: LESSON 4

+ WARM-UP

What does it mean that you were created *in the image of God*? What is *sin*? What is *confession*? What does it mean *to be forgiven*? What is the *Great Commandment*?

[Leader: Prepare yourself with working and conversational definitions of the words and phrases.]

This week we will conclude our four-week study, moving from reading to application. What does the Bible say about who we are? How do we embody being like Christ? How do we maintain it? When we've blown it, how has our loving and gracious God provided for our healing and restoration?

Coming Full Circle; Going Forward

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! —2 Corinthians 5:17

+ LET'S GET STARTED—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Who is *a new creation in Christ*? Who is included? Who is excluded?

How would you put this verse into your own words?

[Leader: Allow group to share thoughts and impressions. Remember, you aren't looking so much for right and wrong answers as you're looking for thought provocation.]

Digging Deep—Our Bible Study: Embodying Our Identity in Christ

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. —Genesis 1:27

What did we discover this verse says about the value of every human life?

[Every human life, male and female, was made in God's image and has equal inherent value and worth.]

How does it apply to the notion of someone being bought, sold, objectified, and exploited?

[Someone bought, sold, objectified, and exploited is devalued and harmed.]

How does using or treating another person as something for our pleasure mean they are being devalued?

[When we use or treat another person as something for our pleasure we turn them into an object instead of valuing them as an image bearer of God.]

How do some women/girls feeling insecure or devaluing themselves become easier targets for men/boys who choose to disrespect them?

[They are viewed as a commodity, not of equal worth to the one buying, selling, or using them.]

By whom?

[Buyer, seller, user—and anyone else who looks the other way.]

Again, I observed all the oppression that takes place under the sun. I saw the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them. The oppressors have great power, and their victims are helpless. —Ecclesiastes 4:1

What does this verse teach us about God's view of oppressors and their victims? Have you ever been an oppressor? How or why?

[Oppressors wield the power. Victims are powerless. God's heart goes out to victims.]

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice. —Proverbs 31:8-9

How does this passage apply to you, as one of God's children?

[As our Father's children, this is our mission to fulfill. We cannot be silent or still.]

Are there things that you could do to ensure justice? How can you use your voice to speak up for victims?

[Allow group members to come up with their own ideas.]

What are some ways in which you can practically do this in regard to the objectification and exploitation of women and girls? How does anyone show respect in all ways, at all times—even when no one is looking—towards others, particularly women and girls, even if they are one?

[Allow group to muse.]

Treat older women as you would your mother, and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters. —1 Timothy 5:2

Do you see boys and men being respectful in their actions, words, and thoughts towards how they view and treat women and girls?

Ladies, if you believe you deserve dignity and respect, does it change how you allow others to treat you?

[Women and girls should be treated with respect and care. The phrase "treat them as you would your own sisters" should frame a young man's mind when viewing girls. How would you view, care for, protect, and advocate for your sister?]

What does this verse teach girls and women about the proper way in which boys and men should treat them?

[Women and girls should be treated with respect and care. Girls should use this as a litmus test: If a boy (or man) treats you with any less care, respect, gentleness, and purity than a protective and caring older brother would, he's not for you!]

Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself." —Matthew 22:37-39

How does the "Great Commandment" affect the way we treat one another?

[We are to love God with all our hearts and all that is in us. This will affect the way we view and treat others. The second part of the Great Commandment passage mandates that we are to love others (all others) as we love ourselves.]

Why do you think our culture thinks it's all right to make lewd jokes about other's bodies or how they are used or desired?

[Encourage group to share their personal thoughts in this matter.]

What would you do if you heard comments towards someone calling another person names based on their sexuality or perceived worth as a sex object?

[Suggestions: Stand up for the one being put down, talk to a trusted adult, refuse to take part in any conversations that disrespect another person.]

How does it relate to this issue?

[Allow them to ponder.]

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. —Romans 8:5-6

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. —Philippians 4:8

What do these verses say to those who would objectify women? To those who would be buyers of a prostituted woman/girl? To us, as children of God?

[Anyone who objectifies women is not acting in a godly manner. When our thoughts are in alignment with how God thinks of us, we see the value in others and are able to love them as God loves us.]

Think about some television commercials or movies and measure it against these things in Phil. 4:8 When you see certain things, how does it affect your thoughts? Talk about how you jeopardize your thoughts and how can you protect your thoughts by what you allow yourself to see?

[Allow group to muse. This is very similar to the idea of guarding our hearts in previous weeks. Fixing our affection on God and on godly things is a sure way to please Him and is a preventive measure where tripping into temptation is concerned.]

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.
—1 Corinthians 10:13

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. —1 John 1:9

What do you think might be your way out of a tempting situation?

[Allow group to come up with their own answers.]

What can you do when you see a friend falling into sin? Will your actions towards them help them find a way out, or make them feel shamed?

When we recognize that sin is common to everyone, how does that help us help others? How can you humbly help another person who is in sinful failure?

[First of all, you're not alone. Others have (and are) wrestling with these things too. And others have (and are) finding victory and deliverance from them. The second part of the first verse promises that God makes a way for escape. And the second verse promises remedy and redemption when we mess up—and we all mess up at times. God is in the business of healing, reconciliation, and renewal.]

"Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me."
—King David, in Psalm 51:10

We've all heard of David's great sin with Bathsheba, yet God says he's a man after his own heart—what could that mean?

How might it relate to what we've studied these last few weeks? When have you thought of this type of prayer and begged God to clean up your own heart?

[Allow group to ponder. That's a great prayer request for every day!]

+ APPLICATION—PUTTING OUR FAITH IN ACTION

This is a song King David wrote after confessing his sin—giving in to taking Bathsheba for his own even though she was married to another man, and all its terrible consequences.

Oh, what joy for those

whose disobedience is forgiven,

whose sin is put out of sight!

Yes, what joy for those

whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt,

whose lives are lived in complete honesty!

When I refused to confess my sin,

my body wasted away,

and I groaned all day long.

Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me.

My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.

Finally, I confessed all my sins to you

and stopped trying to hide my guilt.

I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord."

And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

+ LET'S WRAP IT UP—FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some of your takeaways from our study?
- Were there any things you read or that were shared that were new to you or surprised you?
- How might the things we've studied impact you or be applied to your life?

Closing prayer—Confession and Commitment

ACTION ITEMS FOR YOUTH

Some of my friends mistakenly believe trafficking only happens overseas.

- Show them *Chosen*.
- Hold a *Chosen* awareness night at a local high school, church, or youth group.

What can I do to help defend my friends?

- Learn the signs of sex trafficking and how to report it. Go to [sharedhope.org](https://www.sharedhope.org) for how to recognize and report if you see signs of trafficking.

Spread the word!

- Talk to your friends about what it means to be safe.
- Decide which adults you trust and would confide in if there was a problem.

Start an anti-trafficking club on your campus. Dedicate yourselves to learning more about trafficking and educate your school, church, and community using the books and videos from Shared Hope International.

Host a fundraiser! Give the proceeds to an anti-trafficking organization or shelter.

- Host a car wash (Make signs that say, "Kids are not for Sale" or "Help bring her home" or "It could be your daughter").
- Host a 5K walk/bike/run. Invite organizations that focus on youth.
- Host a talent show with all-student entertainment. Sell tickets to teachers, church, parents, etc.
- Sponsor a billboard in your city with an anti-trafficking message.

Read books, such as *Renting Lacy*, and watch films, like *Chosen*, about human trafficking so you can be more informed.

Ask the adults in your life to become a Shared Hope Ambassador of Hope or Defender. Visit [sharedhope.org](https://www.sharedhope.org) for more information.

Donate clothes you no longer need to shelters for survivors.

Write a letter to your favorite celebrity or athlete asking them to join the cause.

Create a petition for your church, school, and community demanding stronger laws against trafficking. Plan a class trip to visit your legislator. Tell him/her why you care about sex trafficking and ask him/her to sponsor bills related to juvenile sex trafficking.

"Like" Shared Hope on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

- Repost all of the articles and stories we share to raise awareness with your friends and network.
- Use social media outlets to share the 2-minute *Chosen* trailer (Facebook: [facebook.com/sharedhopeinternational](https://www.facebook.com/sharedhopeinternational) or Twitter: [@sharedhope](https://twitter.com/sharedhope)).

Ask family and friends to donate to Shared Hope International instead of purchasing a present for Christmas or your birthday—[sharedhope.org/donate](https://www.sharedhope.org/donate).

Your friends use words like 'ho,' 'bitch,' 'skank,' 'slut,' even in a joking manner, not intended to harm anyone. How can you change that culture?

- Explain how those terms make women objects instead of viewing them as individuals with value. Those terms in general create a disrespectful attitude towards all women.
- Even girls who may be selling their bodies don't deserve those labels. Statistically, they have been sexually abused, were manipulated into the trade or out of desperation and are looking for a way out. They deserve our compassion and support, not to be called names.
- How can we hold others accountable and model it ourselves, that we will no longer call anyone a name or label them?

Using the term "pimp" as something cool, or "tricked out" for bling is affirming to something that is, in reality, selling youngsters to be raped for money. Help your friends to understand what those terms really mean, and that it isn't acceptable language.

- By changing the language, you begin to shape perception and bring victims of trafficking into a compassionate light, someone who deserves help and grace, not judgement and ridicule.

When you find out your friends are watching porn, how can you start the conversation to help them understand that those in the film are not necessarily doing it by choice but often are under manipulation, force or threat?

- More than half are also minor children, which causes lifelong damage to them. Porn is not victimless.
- Watching porn contributes to the underground sex trade by supporting those who make and sell it. Simply clicking on a link puts money into someone's pocket.

How can you help you friend find their way out of the porn addiction?

- Be sympathetic and offer them help, recognizing the shame attached to it. Offer to go with them to a Celebrate Recovery or Pure Desire Recovery group to break the cycle.
- Listen to them and be a safe place for them to share how they became ensnared, and help them find a way out.

If a friend is considering working as a bikini barista, how could you talk to them about the dangers?

- Let them know that those baristas are being targeted by sex traffickers and are vulnerable to their recruiting tactics and suggestions of side work and making more money by offering more 'services.'

A friend of yours frequently purchases their morning coffee at a bikini barista stand on the corner. How do you discuss this with them?

- Without lecturing them, ask why they go to that location for their coffee.
- Discuss how girls who work in bikini stands, stripping, exotic dancing, or as Hooters waitresses are more vulnerable to the tactics of traffickers because they have let down some of their boundaries already, making it easier to suggest the next step which leads them into danger.

How can you be a true friend to someone you care about if you find out they are hiding an older friend who buys them things and takes them places they can't afford on their own?

- A true friend will tell you if you're in danger, or doing something stupid even if they know it could make you mad or upset you.
- A true friend doesn't keep dangerous secrets but will bring it to the light and get help from a trusted adult if they suspect you're going to get hurt.
- A true friend will risk the friendship in order to show true care and to keep their friend out of danger.

Everyone has something they are ashamed of that has happened to them in their life, a part of their past or present that they don't want anyone to know about. How can you bring your hurts into the light so others can support and help you?

- Find an adult you know is compassionate and supportive that you can confide in and begin to build a relationship with them until you are comfortable enough to confide your secrets.
- Recognize there is no shame in making mistakes and that everyone has done something they wish they hadn't. There's no judgement against doing dumb things, especially as young people.
- Secrets keep us isolated and alone, which makes us even more vulnerable to dangerous situations. Once we share in a safe situation, we form an alliance and supportive network around ourselves that enables us to find healthy alternatives and solutions.
- If church youth groups form tight cliques that judge others, disqualify them from belonging, or for not being "good enough" it separates kids who are caught in these things (porn, addictions, sexual promiscuity, risky behaviors, partying) and leaves them more vulnerable.
- Start a dialogue about things you've been caught in that you hid because you were afraid of being judged.
- Open up conversation about solutions or supportive options for various scenarios—"How to be a good friend" or what kind of friend do you need when you're caught in something and feel alone?



Shared Hope International | P.O. Box 65337 | Vancouver, WA 98665

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