

## Leaders' Notes

Dear Growth Group Leader:

Today I want to write about something that *I* need to hear. Maybe some of you do as well. That is: confrontation. I'm not very good at it and I suspect that most people aren't. But it is an essential part of any group that wants to get past the surface in relationships. It's all pleasant and easy to talk about things we all agree about but there are times when it is important to call someone to a higher walk with God and a greater level of righteousness and Christian maturity. We are probably reluctant to do this because there are dangers to confronting and we want to avoid those. So, according to *Making Small Groups Work*, what are the steps to helpful confrontation?

1. Make confrontation and truth-telling normal and expected. Talk about it. Explain that when people love each other they need to tell the truth to help each other get better.
2. Address patterns rather than events. We don't need to jump all over someone the first time they make a mistake. They may just be having one bad day. When it becomes a habit, we need to confront.
3. No equivocation or condemnation. The Bible says to confront gently but it never says that we should back off and tell less than the truth. We need to remember that we have no right to condemn sin in others since we ourselves are sinners.
4. Invitation to redemption. Even as we confront a pattern of sin in someone's life, we need to let them know that there is a path to redemption. It's not enough to say, "You're bad," and leave them with just condemnation.
5. Containment. In cases where a member will not change or seek redemption, the group may need to decide how to set boundaries on their side. In extreme cases, this might even include removing someone's membership from the group (if they are hurting others or causing serious division in the group, for examples).

Blessings,

Pastor David

## Freedom of purity

*Exodus 20:14*

### The problem of adultery

Percentage of Americans who believe adultery is wrong: 80%.

*Focus on the Family*

Fraction who commit adultery: 1/4 women, 1/3 men.

*Focus on the Family*

### How to guard your heart

The Bible agrees with Barney Fife, "Nip it in the bud."

*Ephesians 5:3-7*

Adultery is the end result of a series of sinful decisions.

*Matthew 5:27-28, James 1:13-15*

Purity is the end result of a series of godly decisions.

Watch out for the warning signs:

An attraction to someone other than your spouse.

Sharing marital confidences with an outsider.

Fantasizing about an affair.

Maintain healthy relationships.

### Purity is freedom

Remember that the perfect law gives freedom.

*Proverbs 5*

Each relationship you have affects every other one.

*Malachi 2:13-16*

# Home Bible Study

## Freedom of purity

### Getting started

1. Did any part of the sermon make you think? Was there anything with which you strongly agreed or disagreed? Was there anything that was new to you?

### Going deeper

2. Read Hebrews 13:4. Many people who haven't read the Bible think that God is opposed to all sexual expression. What does this passage teach about that? What does it mean to "honor marriage" and to "keep the marriage bed pure"?

This passage teaches that sex between married couples is God-approved. After all, he designed the whole thing. Last week we studied how Christians, even with their view of the sinfulness of humanity, have a higher view of human life than materialists. We also have a higher view of sex. It's not that Christians view it as bad and shameful and materialists view it as natural. It's that the Bible teaches that sex is a sacred gift and should not be misused and thereby polluted. We honor marriage and keep the marriage bed pure by remaining faithful to our spouse.

3. Read Romans 1:18-32. What truth were people suppressing according to this passage?

They were suppressing the truth, especially the truth about God.

4. What was the result of that suppression?

The result is that God gave them over to a depraved mind. Philosophers have long said that without some giver of truth (i.e., God) all moral absolutes dissolve into opinion. For example, I want to live and so if you kill me to take my money, then I think that is wrong. But you might think that you want to buy a motorcycle so getting my money is a good thing. Everyone may have an opinion of who is right and wrong but who judges between the opinions? This might seem very theoretical and of very little importance to real life but it isn't. Today's moral relativism is the direct result of our

culture's ignorance of God. Just enter a discussion today and say that anything is right or wrong. Someone will say that it depends on whom you ask. See? Everything is just opinion without God. Is abortion right or wrong? Is euthanasia? How about stem cell research? Homosexuality? Premarital sex? We have lots of opinions today but no authority and therefore no conclusion.

5. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. What type of people are excluded from inheriting the Kingdom of God according to this passage?

The wicked, sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexual offenders, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, slanderers, or swindlers.

6. Where is grace in this passage? Is there hope for the sexually immoral and the other groups mentioned here?

This is not saying that these sins are worse than all others or that these sins are unforgivable. Even those of us who preach and believe in the grace that the Bible offers know that one has to accept grace. If you are still living the same life of sin, then obviously you have not accepted the grace of Jesus Christ. Paul went on to say that the Corinthians had been doing *those very things* but that they had been washed and cleansed. Some people say that God hates homosexuals. Not at all. And Christians shouldn't either. We should pray that they would go to God for repentance and restorations just as we ourselves once did.

### Putting it into practice

7. Is it hard to maintain God's standard for purity in today's world? If it is, what are the influences that make it hard for you?

Television. Co-workers. Movies. Old flames. The Internet. These would be some examples.

8. What can you do to counter those influences?

My suggestions were in the sermon. What are yours?