

01 God's Lovestory

LEADER GUIDE

BIG IDEA:

Students need to understand that it doesn't matter who they are, what they've done, what they think they've done, or what they will do. God loves every student in your youth ministry. He is not a distant father; he is a loving father waiting and desiring to embrace your students. There is nothing they can say that would surprise God or make him love them any less.

Tips for Conversation:

God's love for us is foundational. All our obedience, all our sexual integrity, is a response to God's prior love for us. Your students need to understand this truth.

Remember, for this series we use the term *sexual integrity* rather than *sexual purity*. Unfortunately, the term *sexual purity* comes with a lot of baggage—baggage most youth won't even be aware of. For too long this term has been associated with behavior modification or sin management rather than the transformational work of Christ in our lives. Some people have been told in the name of sexual purity that “Christian sex” simply means choosing to wait for sex until marriage. This narrative assumes that Christians *will* get married at some point and *will* have great marital sex—but *only if* they wait. To be clear, the Bible makes no such promises. The Bible certainly instructs us to not have sex unless we are married, but it never promises marriage and great sex for those who “wait” or remain “pure.” The purity movement rightly taught that God desires us to have sex only if we're married; however, we must recognize that marriage is never promised, and neither is superb sex within marriage.

Sexual integrity is about having a holistic view of sex. It's more than just physical. It is emotional, social, and spiritual. It requires more than just self-willed behavior; it requires turning to the Lord with all our hearts and being empowered by the Holy Spirit to obey. It's about saying "YES!" to living a faithful, flourishing life as a sexual being according to God's design.

Sexual integrity also means saying "YES!" to a much larger story about our heavenly father's love for his children. It's about discovering this love and allowing it to make you, and our youth, more committed to Jesus than self-willed behavior ever could.

Questions for Small Group:

1. Do you see God as a loving father, or as a distant father who simply wants to punish us when we mess up? Where do you think you formed this view of God?
2. What implications does our view of God have on how we practice (or don't practice) sexual integrity?
3. What do you think of this statement: "Outside of a relationship with Jesus, we are all controlled"?
4. If you could have God speak words of affirmation over you right now, what would they be?

Additional Resources:

VIDEO: Full-length interview of Jackie Hill Perry

TOOL: Weekly devotional

