

02 The Authority of God & Scripture

LEADER GUIDE

BIG IDEA:

There's no point inviting people to follow a Christian sexual ethic if they're not clear on who their authority is. As Christians, our authority is God. And one significant way God has revealed his authority to us is through the Bible. This lesson will drive home the fact that God, as our good creator and designer, has revealed to us his plan for sexual flourishing through the Scriptures.

Tips for Conversation:

Your students are bombarded with subtle yet powerful lies in the music they listen to, the news feeds they engage, and the movies they digest. One of the most pervasive lies they may hear is that indulging your desires brings happiness, while submitting your desires to Christ will steal your joy. But hopefully you know it doesn't work that way; we want our students, too, to know it doesn't work that way.

The Creator knows what brings human flourishing. He also knows what can bring hurt, pain, isolation, and shame. Following Jesus is about living a life of purpose, of meaning, of sacrifice, and of love that will bring true, lasting joy.

About two years into Jesus' ministry, he sat his disciples down and asked them, "Who do people say that I am?" You see, the crowds, the masses, had all kinds of opinions about who Jesus was. But Jesus also wanted to know, "Who do you YOU say that I am?" And Peter, one of his leading disciples, answered, "You are the Messiah, the King, the Son of God."

Jesus doesn't just want a confession. He's not interested in simply having someone say they believe in Jesus. He wants us to follow him—to live in submission to his authority and Lordship. This is crucial for your students to understand.

Students also need to be reminded of what Jesus said immediately after this interaction. Jesus responded to Peter by saying in essence, “Yes, I am indeed the King. But I’m about to be a crucified King. And if you want to follow me, you will be crucified as well.” His words to his disciples two thousand years ago apply equally to his disciples today:

*“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”
(Luke 9:23-25)*

These are hard truths for students to hear, no doubt. But they are needed and important. Remember, our hope for this series is that students will be compelled by the beauty and truth of Jesus. It’s when they understand this that they have the freedom to live in submission to God’s will out of the love they’ve received from their creator. Instead of simply trying to please God with a list of restrictive “no’s,” they can live into a sexual ethic that brings flourishing because they are following Jesus and submitting to his lordship.

Questions for Small Group:

1. What are some influences in your life that, if you’re honest, compete with God’s authority? (Social media, music, shows?)
2. How do you determine what is right or wrong?
3. When you hear, “Submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ,” how does it land for you? Does it make you feel fearful? Does it make you feel loved?
4. How do you think following Jesus is different from knowing Jesus?

Additional Resources:

VIDEO: Full-length interview of Francis Chan

TOOL: Weekly devotional

