SESSION 1: WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

God vs. Satan for the Souls of the People

Life Hike

Think of your life as a hiking trip through the Rocky Mountains. You've got a number of peaks to climb as you go through life and each peak represents opportunities and accomplishments. 2.

The Life Hike cards represent the years of your life.

DISCUSSION

- 1. At what stage will you make the most important decisions of your life?
- 2. How did you come to that conclusion?
- 3. What kind of decisions will you make during this time?
- 4. When you look over the span of a lifetime, how do you think these decisions will affect your entire life?

Psalm Connection

Read Psalm 46 with this theme as your focus: God vs. Satan for the Souls of the People

TALKING POINTS

The very first thing we see in Psalm 46 is the title, "God is Our Fortress."

What is a fortress and what is its purpose?

- 2. Now, picture God as your Fortress. Because God is omniscient (all-knowing), He has always had a plan in place to answer every question you'd ever have, to protect you and guide you through the challenges and temptations of the sinful, fallen world we live in. Jesus. Jesus is the plan. In Him we find out how completely priceless we are to God, our Creator.
- 3. Even when your life is full of trouble, even if the worst things possible were to happen (i.e. the earth gives away like a rug pulled out from underneath you, your mountain-top experiences or successes get washed away or flattened out, when the world around you is roaring and foaming at the mouth and causing you to tremble from the inside out) you need not fear, but rather, look to Jesus. Your Help. Picture yourself over and over again within the walls of Him: The Fortress that surrounds you, protects you, and confirms your identity IN HIM.

What's the Problem?

- Why? Why does God fight so tirelessly for us? Look up Psalm 139 and read it aloud. This is how God, your Truest Protector, sees you; how He looks at you, ___(fill in your name here)___, and how He thinks of you.
- We aren't much as soldiers. Rather, it's Jesus Who does all the fighting on our behalf. However, Ephesians 6:10-18 does tell us to put on the whole armor of God so that we may protect ourselves from the schemes of the devil as the battle is raging.
- 3. In what way does God love us? Look up John 3:16-17. "God SO loved us." That little word "so" could very easily be replaced with the words, "In this way..." Read verses 16-17 once more but swap out the word, "so" for the words, "in this way."

Jesus. God loves us so much that He gave us Jesus. It's tangible love. A love you can point to! I can point to the cross and say, "THAT'S God's love for me." His life, His death, our redemption through Him. Jesus: who rescues you and I from the schemes of Satan.

What Does This Battle of Souls Have to Do with My Sexuality & Dating Relationships?

"This argument for chastity both before marriage and in marriage has as its foundation the conviction that sex, though obviously physical, is also a deeply personal *matter.* For better or worse, it touches and affects me in my very self. It has as much, if not more, to do with my mind than with my body. It affects what I think, how I feel and what grips my imagination. It has, in fact, more to do with my soul, my sense of self, me as a whole person rather than me as a man/woman, guy/girl. Thus, if sex is not properly personalized, it can depersonalize those who engage in it."-Rev. Dr. John Kleinig, The Beauty of Chastity¹

"The Lord of Hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our Fortress." Psalm 46:11

Week One Prayer Challenge

TIME I WILL PRAY EACH DAY

Set aside a specific time each day this week to intentionally pray about the Life Hike you're on. Write down the following thoughts:

What are the mountain top experiences in your life right now? Example: Friends, family, academics, sports, relationships. Thank God for them!

What are the valleys you're facing right now? Example: Stresses, temptations, hurts, doubts, relationships. Bring it to Jesus and His cross! His love FOR you is what produces love IN you. For yourself and for others. His forgiveness of your sins is what produces forgiveness IN you to forgive others. And His wisdom makes you wise to the temptations of the world. Ask your pastor, youth leader or friends to pray with you if your dealing with something heavy or if you just want to learn how to be more comfortable with it.

How does God lift you out of the valleys? Do you have to "do something" for it to happen? Or is His help a free gift of grace?

Next Week: What Do You Want Out of This Life?

Students will work to define the desires they have for their futures and then hold them up next to God's desires for them. Main theme: There's no such thing as safe sex outside the confines of marriage. We are not just physical bodies with physical consequences and benefits, as our culture would have us focus on. We are physical, spiritual, mental, emotional, and social people, intricately and uniquely crafted to accomplish great things in this life, vocations that God is calling us into, for the purpose of furthering His Kingdom.

SESSION 2: "WHAT DO YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE?"

Build Your House Upon the Rock

Psalm Connection

Read Psalm 46 with this theme as your focus: Build Your House Upon the Rock

TALKING POINTS

- The theme, "Build Your House Upon the Rock," comes from a Scripture passage in Matthew 7:24-27 where Jesus says that everyone who hears His words and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And when the rains fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat on the house, it didn't fall because it had been founded on the rock. He then goes on to say that the opposite is true, as well. Everyone who hears His words and does not do them, will be like the foolish man who built his house on the sand. When the storms came and the winds blew, that house fell and it fell hard.
- 2. As you reflect on our theme for this week's study, how many of you think God is referring to an actual, literal house? How many of you believe the house is symbolic for something else? What might it be symbolic of?
- 3. Think about what it takes to become a good contractor. (A person who designs and builds houses.) What might be some qualities of a good contractor?
- 4. A lot of students stress about these kinds of things, what and who they'll be in life. Let me ask you this: If you could be anywhere, doing anything with your future, where would you be and what would you be doing? Write it down.

The Value of The Whole, Entire Person: Physical, Spiritual, Emotional, Mental, and Social

This study on sexuality and marriage comes from a different perspective than most sexual education classes you might have had in school. For these two distinct reasons:

- You are not just a physical body that has physical needs, as the culture would like us to buy into. We are whole bodies made up of mental, emotional, social, and spiritual elements as well as the physical. Public sex education curriculums, when they're taught, focus primarily on a "safe sex" approach for equipping young people to make healthy choices. Because we can all agree that we are much more than just a physical body, zombie-walking the earth, we can also say with confidence that there can be no such thing as "safe sex" outside the boundaries of marriage either. *We'll dig deeper into that statement, don't worry!
- 2. Every human life has incredible value to God. When we recognize our own intrinsic value, we can see that same value in others. That's a wildly important part of the entire discussion on sex, relationships, dating, and maneuvering through your teen and young adult years. But it's almost never talked about. Especially in sex education or health classes. So, we're going to spend a lot of time talking about those two important concepts as we go through this study together. First though, take a few minutes to brainstorm together.

TRY THIS!

What might someone you know be experiencing in each of these areas when they choose to engage in a casual sex lifestyle? Although physical concerns receive a lot of attention (teen pregnancy and disease) they are not the only consequences of casual sex and sexual activity outside of marriage. I would actually argue that there are threats far greater to your faith and salvation than even those. Consider the potential negative effects of casual sex for each of the categories in the grid below. In addition to the physical effects, fill in the mental, emotional, spiritual, and social consequences of sex outside of marriage as well. Here's an example to get you started.

Physical	Mental (what you're thinking)	Emotional (what you're feeling)	Spiritual	Social
Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:
Unplanned Pregnancy	Regret	Scared	Ashamed to go to church/youth group	Judgment from others

Discuss for a moment the way Jesus' love and sacrifice for you, His bride, transforms each of the threats you've listed above. How does it also impact the way we approach our sexuality as those He "gave Himself up for?"

Sinking Sand and The Security of the

"This argument for chastity both before marriage and in marriage has as its foundation the conviction that sex, though obviously physical, is also a deeply personal matter. For better or worse, it touches and affects me in my very self. It has as much, if not more, to do with my mind than with my body. It affects what I think, how I feel and what grips my imagination. It has, in fact, more to do with my soul, my sense of self, me as a whole person rather than me as a man/woman, guy/girl. Thus, if sex is not properly personalized, it can depersonalize those who engage in it."-Reverend Dr. John Kleinig, The Beauty of Chastity

"I was actually offended when I found out the truth about how powerful sex is. Nobody ever told me this before! Why not? I was offended that Satan thought he could mess with me like that. I was offended that everybody around me seemed to be focused on the wrong information! And then I realized that the devil was messing with them, too. I know now that sex has way more to do with me as a whole person in Christ than it does with making sure I know how to have "safe sex." I know that I am smarter than Satan because Jesus gives me His Spirit that shows me God's truth when I'm surrounded by lies." -Sammie, a High School Student

Next Week: What's It Going to Take to Get There?

Identifying and discussing the challenges (Satan's weapons) that are all around us. Pornography, social media, vanity and the diminishing value of human life.

SESSION 3: "WHAT'S IT GOING TO TAKE TO GET THERE?"

Vitality Vs. Decay

Psalm Connection

Read Psalm 46 with this theme as your focus: Vitality vs. Decay.

TALKING POINTS

- This lesson will strike the contrast between "vitality" and "decay." The Bible is full of contrasts: life and death.... righteousness and sin...light and darkness. When we look at how sin, death, and the devil attack our bodies, it's to cause "decay": the destruction and wasting away of our bodily existence that ends when our bodies are put into the ground. Our "Real. Present. God." who has created us, redeemed us, and loves us undoes "decay" and brings forth "vitality." Vitality is decay's antithesis: God gives us "abundant life" in Jesus Christ (John 10:10).
- 2. Psalm 46:1 gives us evidence that both decay and vitality exist in the life of God's people. Can you identify the contrast?
 - How does Psalm 46 point to a life that is being destroyed, wasting away, deteriorating? How does it give evidence of "decay?" How also does Psalm 46 hold forth the things that are full of life and fulfillment and promise? How does it show "vitality?"
 - Give some other examples of vitality and decay from Psalm 46 and from your own life experiences as well.
- 3. Consider for a moment that vitality is the presence of Jesus and decay is the presence of sin. How does this new element transform the conversation of vitality and decay? Apply Jesus and sin to the examples you've just spoken about instead of vitality and decay.
- 4. Okay, now open up your Bibles to Galatians Chapter 5:16-24 and read what God's blueprint for your life says about vitality and decay. Vitality encourages and brings forth life. On the contrary, decay is something that deters and takes life away, it's deadly. Vitality and decay.
 - What or who might be forms of idolatry in our lives today?
- 5. Is sexual immorality/impurity only a sin if it's acted upon? Or can the mere thoughts of it cause death and decay in our hearts and minds as well? Check out Matthew 5:27-28.

- 6. Psalm 46: 5-6 says that, "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts."
- Let's head back into the book of Galatians again and take a closer look at the fruit of the Spirit. You see, this entire passage is about opposites. Opposing sides of a battle for the souls of people. God's plan to get you through this life has Jesus Christ and our vitality in Him, as the foundation of every decision we make. So, as you read through Galatians 5:22-24, the fruit of the Spirit is a product of our faith in Him.

Can you think of someone you know who is leading a destructive life of decay? Incurring wound after wound from things like drug abuse, promiscuity, recklessness, lying, stealing, gossip? Satan is the source, the epicenter, of such things.

What's It Going to Take to Get There?

Write three goals or lifestyle changes that will help you focus your eyes on that love and value as you live your daily

- 1. Ex. If you could be anything, do anything in your future, what would it be? God has created you with specific talents and abilities. You are a very specific and special piece of His big, beautiful puzzle. How might you honor Him in your future profession? *It's important to picture yourself in the future, accomplishing your goals and dreams. Do it often. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13
- Ex. What will it take to get there? Would you be able to do eighty push-ups for a million dollars? What would it take? List it out. Now, shift all of those things towards your goal for your future. Persistence, determination, capability, strength... how does God, in Christ, call you to live as His child?
- 3. Ex. How can you start preparing now? When you put "yuck" in, "yuck" comes out. Fill your whole self with the life-sustaining good things of God. Physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and especially, spiritually. Write down what some of those good things are for each aspect of your whole self.

Sexual Propaganda

TRY THIS!

Take a look at your five senses and make a list of commercials, song lyrics, news and social media articles, photos, books, food and fashion companies, etc... that are using sex to sell you something. Brainstorm together. *Here's a hint: Your sense of smell? That's the smell of money. Sex sells this we know. Consumerism! Marketing companies discovered this trick almost 100 years ago and have been fine-tuning it ever since. Sex sells their products because it taps into the addictive parts of the human brain.

The Destination

God's kind of love, the love He's intended between a husband and wife, encourages life and vitality in all areas of the person. Each physicality that we, as uniquely male and female humans possess, were created first to lend themselves to sustaining a life together, not just a momentary "feel-good." Sexual activity stimulates addictive chemical responses in the human brain. Here's a major news bulletin: sex was God's idea! He created sex so husbands and wives would continue to bond throughout the course of their marriage and create families together. Sure, masturbation and fooling around or having sex with your boyfriend/girlfriend, feels good for a little while, that's why it's tempting. That's how Satan hooks us. He's all about living in the moment, with no interest in the future of the person. Are we surprised that something God created for good, Satan has sickly twisted into something perverse that causes good people to fall into a never-ending cycle of sin, guilt, shame, remorse, and isolation? "And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians: 11:14)

God, on the other hand, has designed our lives with full knowledge that this life is short compared to all of eternity, which He wants us to spend with Him in heaven. God is all about stability, constancy, absolutes, and long-terms. His design for sex between a husband and wife feels good forever because it produces all good things. He knew it'd take more than ongoing physical attraction for two people to build and maintain a strong, healthy family. Mentally, emotionally, spiritually, socially, and yes, physically as well. Hear this, though, God created our whole bodies to work in harmony with one another. When one or more of those physiological wheels overpowers another, we have an imbalance that throws the entire person out of sync. This is important for us to understand because as we look at issues such as pornography, sensuality and vanity, and casual sexual propaganda as Christians, we can still see not only the beauty but the power behind why God created sex in the first place.

As we look deeper into the inner workings of the whole created person, we see how easy it is to get thrown out of sync, especially when we're surrounded by sexual propaganda that is influencing us, very often, at subliminal levels. Sexual propaganda makes it very easy for the physical to take over the mental, emotional, social, and spiritual when images and lyrics, advertisements, and even other people's opinions, are all focused around sex and lust as the "be all, end all."

So how should we approach this culture that devalues human life, your human life and others, with shallow, fake lust in disguise of the true love of God? With our eyes wide open. Be aware of the great spiritual battle that is taking place against Jesus Christ Himself, through you.

Next Week: Christian Dating and True Love

How will I know I've met the right person? Is being in a homosexual relationship really such a big deal? How far is too far? Every successful organization has a General Operating System that comprises three main parts: The Operations Manual, the Mission Statement, and the Standards of Procedure. Figuring out how to date with biblical integrity can be a challenge. That's why The General Operating System will put your mind at ease and give you a guide as to what to look for and what to stay away from.

SESSION 4: "WHAT SHOULD DATING AND TRUE LOVE LOOK LIKE?"

Identity

Psalm Connection

Read Psalm 46 with this theme as your focus: Identity.

TALKING POINTS

- 1. In Whom do we find our identity?
- 2. Why do we find our identity in Him?
- 3. If you're the sort of person who is receiving God's gifts over and over again, what do you think will flow out from you?
- 4. The God of all creation certainly does not need us to tell Him what kind of God He is. He doesn't give us our own personal Jesus, a Jesus that fits the mold we make for Him. He gives us a Jesus who makes Himself personal to us. God establishes right from the beginning in Exodus 3:14 that He is "I AM that I AM." He didn't say I am whomever you want me to be or whomever makes you feel better about your life or your circumstances or your choices. He is GOD. The only true God. He tells us. He gives to us.
 - Discuss how that makes you feel. Does that bring you comfort or opposition? Or possibly both? Why? Are there friends, family, teachers, in your life who would disagree with that statement? What might be some of the reasons they would disagree?
- 5. At first the realization that God tells us and gives to us the Law that He knows we need, may be hard to accept. But there is incredible comfort in knowing that my God has all the control and all the wisdom and all the know-how that I lack in order to get me safely through on my journey to heaven and eternal life.

What Should Dating and True Love Look Like?

Can you think of people, maybe even friends, who have made their boyfriend/girlfriend, themselves, or having sex the dot that their main focus and every other relationship flows out of? What is the evidence? Vitality or decay?

The General Operating System

YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

We have established that there's a general operating system that determines how we live our lives: being a Christian.

Within that system, we have an operations manual that tells us how we were created to live that life: the Bible.

Next, we have to craft our mission statement. Your mission statement sets the intentions for your life and encompasses every area of importance.

This statement then becomes our identity at a glance. In a few concise and powerful words, I am reminded of what I'm all about, who I am in Christ. And as you get older and are searching for answers to hard questions, you will always have this to guide you back to your Operations Manual, your Bible. When there's conflict or division or confusion in our lives, we can come back to that mission statement and view our actions right alongside those words for comparison.

Your mission statement will remind you of your identity in Christ. It doesn't take the place of the Bible; it serves as a mental note that connects you to all you know the Bible to say and be. It helps keep you on track and also shows you how to get back on track if you ever lose your way.

STANDARDS OF PROCEDURE

The standards of procedure allow for continuity and accountability. You've thought things through, intentionally, for the purpose of knowing where you stand on important decisions. This allows you to show up to a relationship prepared and also able to communicate your expectations to your partner. And as a side note, if you wanted to share your SOP with your closest friends, your parents, people you have comradery with, they will act as great accountability partners for you and hopefully you can be that for them as well.

TRY THIS OUT!

Mission Statement: 1-2 sentences that becomes your identity in Christ at a glance.

Draft your own Mission Statement and Standards of Procedure using the information you've learned in these studies so far. You can do it as a group and act as each other's accountability partners or as individuals. Study your standards of procedure often and hang/place your mission statement in a place(s)

where you will look at it daily. (In your car, locker, wallet, bathroom mirror, etc...)

Standards of Procedure: A list of expectations for dating relationships. i.e. What type of person will he/she need to be? Why is it important to have someone in your life at this time? What are your expectations in regard to having a physical/ intimate relationship with someone?

The Line in the Sand

1 John 2:16 says, "For all that is in the world- the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions- is not from the Father but is from the world."

And again in Galatians 5:16, Paul says, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."

Lastly and most importantly, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 seals the deal by telling us, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God."

Already had sex? It's never too late for you and you've never been alone (Psalm 46:1). God is waiting and wanting you to bring it to Him. He already knows it's happened. He still loves you. He wants to stop the goose chase now, though, so that your (whole) body doesn't continue being hurt and separated from Him. Physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. It's like crawling up in His lap and whispering your pains in His ear. "I'm sorry, Lord. Please forgive me and restore me." Developing your General Operating System will give you everything you need to start over, but it will be especially important for you to put good boundaries and accountability partners in place. Also, make an appointment with your doctor to get an STI/STD screening done. This is incredibly important because many sexually transmitted infections are asymptomatic. You don't know you've contracted it until it's too late. So make sure your body is healthy and strong as you move forward with getting the rest of you healthy and strong as well. You matter. You are a child of God and He has declared you PRICELESS.

Next Week: A Happy, Healthy Marriage. What's the Big Deal?

We are ignorant to God's intentions for marriage and our sexuality in this culture today. The breakdown of the modern family has led to the breakdown of the individual. And it's not by accident, it has been strategized over and implemented by the Evil Commander-In-Chief from the beginning of time. Two key factors in this study: Passionate love and companionate love.

SESSION 5: "A HAPPY, HEALTHY MARRIAGE: WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?"

Companionate Love, Building A Life Together

Psalm Connection

Read Psalm 46 with this theme as your focus.

TALKING POINTS

The word "companionate" simply means, to be a companion to someone else. To accompany them. The Lutheran Study Bible footnotes say the following statement about Psalm 46.

"The almighty and Most High God controls nature, safeguards His chosen city against attacking foes, and stands over all nations at war. He is our sure fortress. In mercy, he makes Himself accessible and is, therefore, "God with us." We as individuals, and as the Church, experience many troubles in this life on account of the devil, the world, and our own sinful nature. Yet amid every crisis of body or soul, God is with us in His Son so that we may face every upheaval."

A Happy, Healthy Marriage: What's the

Because you know how the enemy seeks to destroy you, you arm yourself with the love of Jesus that targets every attack of Satan with total precision.

Jesus in your Baptism when He writes His name on you. He says, "You belong to Me," your value is affirmed as His beloved child. The forgiveness of sins is yours. Jesus, in Holy Scripture, which guides and directs you in all your ways. Jesus in Holy Communion, the receiving of His body and blood which cleanses your thoughts, words and deeds. Time after time after time. His body cleanses your body and His blood cleanses your blood, all the sin from inside out. Receive it every chance you can get. Jesus renews, restores, strengthens, and preserves us.

The Modern Family

Grab your Bibles and look up Matthew 18:10-14. Read it aloud.

We are separated from the protection of our Father like the lost sheep that leaves the flock. And in the same way, as the parable goes on, we see that God always seeks to bring us back to Himself. Here's what it comes down to: we cannot serve two gods. He is either Lord of all or Lord of nothing.

2. Look up Matthew 19:4-6 together and read aloud.

Marriage was designed to hem in passionate love with companionate love. Passionate love is what we all feel in the beginning of a relationship. Companionate love is what a couple builds together as they weave through life's ups and downs. It's what sustains a family and establishes a trust that connects them with one another more deeply with every passing year.

TRY THIS OUT!

Building A Solid Home

Discussion:

Which house was the weakest? Strongest?

Why was the house without the glue or duct tape the weakest?

THE FIRST HOUSE

The house without the glue or tape represents a dating relationship. While a commitment is somewhat obvious, both people in the relationship understand that it will either end at some point or result in marriage.

THE SECOND HOUSE

The house with the glue represents a co-habitation relationship. When we have sex with someone, we bond with them, whether we are married or not. The glue represents the bonding power of sex, but still the house is not stable. When people live together without the commitment of marriage and the unity of Christ, it is more likely the couple will not feel secure in their relationship and it will crumble a lot more easily than it would within the confines of marriage, where they have the strength of three to face life's trials: Man, woman, and Jesus Christ. With just the glue (sex) holding the cards together, it can crumble on its own.

THE THIRD HOUSE

The duct tape represents the bonding power of sex as a couple joins together, with Christ, in marriage. Even when a married couple faces struggles in life, Jesus is there, intertwined with them. A three cord strand (Ecclesiastes 4:12), or in this case, like a roll of duct tape! The commitment of a marriage grounded in Christ, helps them stay together. In order to break this card house apart, we must physically tear the duct tape off the cards, separate ourselves from God. It doesn't crumble as easily as the first two houses.

Conclusion

"Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

Ephesians 5:25 "This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church." Ephesians 5:32

In what way is marriage a proclamation of Jesus' love to the world?

Marriage gives us a picture of his love for the church in the uniting of a husband and wife. As the perfect bridegroom, he lays down his life and gives himself as the perfect sacrifice for his bride, the church. And as a bride, the church loves, and cherishes ad honors the one who makes that sacrifice.

Why would we want to proclaim the love of Jesus Christ through our marriage (and our belief in marriage) in a casual sex culture?

Is it intentional that Scripture repeatedly refers to a man "leaving his father and mother" to be with his wife?

Why would that be pertinent to our culture today?

What is the difference between passionate and companionate love?

Do they each hold a specific purpose and intention in God's plan for a long, healthy marriage?

Do companionate love and passionate love both belong in a dating relationship? Discuss.

LUTHER'S MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS

Morning: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Evening: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.