



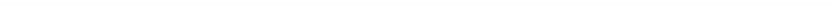
Group Discussion Guide



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Shhh...

Group Discussion Guide

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Series Overview

There are some topics that churches often sweep under the rug. We find it easier to say Shhh... than to speak out on those difficult topics. In this study, we will explore what the Bible says about these shushed topics.

Purpose of This Guide

The primary purpose of this group guide is to reinforce and deepen the lessons of the Grace Church message series: Shhh...

You may choose to use this guide:

- ❖ with your Grace Group.
- ❖ with any group of people interested in knowing what the Bible says about these topics.

1-Sexuality

Scripture: **1Corinthians 6:9-7:9**

Icebreaker: Choose the Metaphor

Think about the metaphor of a human body as a clay vessel or a glove that only moves when God's hand is inside. Which of these metaphors is meaningful to you and why? What other metaphors have you heard to describe a human body?

Discussion Questions

- ❖ How often do you think of your body as a physical extension of God on earth (**1Cor 6:15-18**)? In what ways can sin that involves your body harm you? In what ways can sin that involves your body hinder your ability to be effective in fulfilling God's plans?
- ❖ The purpose for the human body is not sexual expression; it is **divine possession** (**1Cor 6:19-20**). Discuss who owns your body and why that is true. In what ways does knowing this trouble you or reassure you?
- ❖ In the context of marriage, what are the benefits of sex according to the passages in the table?

1Cor 7:1-3
1Cor 7:4-5
1Cor 7:6-9

- ❖ What would be some possible advantages of being single (**1Cor 7:32-35**)?

Dig a Little Deeper

Study these Scriptures.

Gen 1:27 1Cor 11:11	God created sexuality.
Eph 5:31-33	Marriage pictures Christ and the church (sexuality in its proper context).

Application Exercise

Pray, asking God to help you release your body for His divine possession. Make a list of ways that you could be a better steward (manager) of the physical body God has given you.

2-Depression

Scripture: [1Kings 18:46-19:18](#)

Icebreaker: Sad Songs

If you are ever in doubt that many people struggle with depression, think about how many sad songs people write and sing. Make a list of the sad songs you know. What themes or topics do you hear in these songs?

Discussion Questions

- ❖ What are some benefits in recognizing when someone around us is experiencing depression? How can you tell if someone is depressed? Charles Spurgeon spoke of “dungeons beneath the castles of despair.” What do these verses suggest as possible symptoms of depression?

Neh 1:4
1Kgs 19:3
1Kgs 19:4-5

- ❖ What can you do for a person who is depressed? What do these verses suggest?

Verse	What I Can Do	Tip
Jas 5:16		Focus your prayers on their relationship with God.
Rom 12:15		Show compassion.
Pro 17:27		Avoid trying to “fix” a person.
1Cor 8:2		Avoid lecturing.

❖ Discuss how each of the following suggestions can help you during times when you experience depression.

- ▶ **HALT:** Address these issues, Hunger, Anger, Loneliness, Tiredness [**1Kgs 19:5-7**].
- ▶ **Vent:** Let out your feelings directly to God [**1Kgs 19:9-10**].
- ▶ **Listen:** Pay attention to what God is trying to tell you. Go to the place where it's easiest to connect with God [**1Kgs 19:11-13**]. Listen carefully.
- ▶ **Refocus:** Get your focus off yourself and on to serving Him and others [**1Kgs 19:15**].

Dig a Little Deeper

It is dangerous to assume that negative emotions are in themselves sinful. If they are, how do we account for the displays of Christ's emotions? Christ's emotions were at times "very heavy" indicating He felt the weight of the sins of the world.

Consider these passages:

❖ **Mark 14:33**

❖ **Matthew 26:37-42**

Application Exercise

Find a place to be alone with God. Tell Him how you are truly feeling (lonely, thankful, afraid, exuberant, angry, content, sad, confused...). Let Him know why you love Him. Ask Him what He most wants you to do next in your life. Sit quietly and listen to Him.

3-Kids

Scripture: [Pro 23:15-28](#), [Pro 17:21](#), [Pro 30:15-16](#)

Icebreaker: Kids or Not

Brainstorm a list of advantages and disadvantages for having kids or not having kids.

<i>Having Kids</i>		<i>Not Having Kids</i>	
<i>advantages</i>	<i>disadvantages</i>	<i>advantages</i>	<i>disadvantages</i>

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Foolish children are a source of grief to their parents ([Pro 17:21](#)). One challenge for parents is to know the difference between helping a child and enabling a child's bad behavior. Discuss ideas for letting a child bear age-appropriate consequences for their actions. Think of examples for varying ages of children.
- ❖ Peter told the women in the early church that Sarah should be an example for them to do what is right and not fear ([1Pet 3:6](#)). What are some challenges parents might face in doing the right thing and not fearing when it comes to their children? During those challenging times, what can help us remember to:
 - ▶ Pray for our children?
 - ▶ Trust God to protect our children?
 - ▶ Give our children to God for His purposes?

- ❖ To quote what Pastor Howey said in our Evangelism series, “You are either disturbed for others spiritually, or you should be disturbed about yourself.” Until you regularly share the good news of Jesus, the barrenness of your soul will cry out, “give, give” (**Pro 30:15-16**). If God has blessed you with a spiritual child, tell the group about it. As a group,
 - ▶ Pray for God to give you open doors to share the good news of Jesus and to tell your faith story.
 - ▶ Pray that your love for others and God will help you get past your fears and speak with grace and compassion.
 - ▶ Pray for God to grant you the spiritual children you desire.

Dig a Little Deeper

Consider these points about your children.

- ❖ God cares far more for your child than you ever could.
 - ▶ God has a plan for each of us (**Jer 1:5**).
 - ▶ God is very protective of His children (**Mark 9:42**).
- ❖ God designed the same defenses for you and your child.
 - ▶ Use the three defenses: God, the Word of God, the local church (**Acts 20:29-32**).
 - ▶ Partner with God (**1Cor 3:9**).

Application Exercise

During the coming week, pray each day about your children or lack of children (physical and spiritual).

- ❖ Admit you need God's help (**Luke 22:31-32**).
- ❖ Ask in faith. Commit to do things His way (**Jas 1:6-7**).

4-Addiction

Scripture: [Pro 23:29-35](#), [Eph 5:17-18](#), [Luke 15](#)

Icebreaker: Can't Get No Satisfaction

You've probably heard the Rolling Stones song, "I Can't Get No Satisfaction." As a group, make a list of things people often try that don't satisfy them. (Feel free to sing the song.)

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Considering the questions in [Pro 23:29](#), discuss the woes of a person who is addicted.
 - ▶ List some of the health issues that substance addiction may cause.
 - ▶ List some of the financial issues that addiction to spending, gambling, or substances may cause.
 - ▶ List some of the relationship issues that addiction to television, sports, internet, sex, gambling, spending or substances may cause.

- ❖ Discuss **avoidance** as a strategy to deliver yourself from addiction.
 - ▶ What criteria could you use for choosing companions that are unlikely to draw you into an addictive activity ([Pro 23:20](#))?
 - ▶ What circumstances could you avoid to lessen your likelihood of being drawn into an addictive activity ([Pro 23:31](#))?

- ❖ Discuss **awareness** of lack of satisfaction as a strategy to deliver yourself from addiction.
 - ▶ Can any substance ever satisfy completely ([Ecc 6:7](#) and [Hos 4:10-11](#))?
 - ▶ Can money or possessions ever satisfy completely ([Ecc 5:10](#) and [1Tim 6:9-10](#))?

❖ None of us wishes loved ones to suffer; however, when we rescue them from the consequences of their poor choices, we prevent them from learning what they need to overcome their problems. Look at the following codependent behaviors and discuss ideas for healthier behaviors that could create appropriate boundaries and allow the person opportunities to recover.

<i>Codependent, Unhealthy</i>	<i>Healthier Alternative</i>
Making excuses for the addict's behavior	
Blaming yourself for the addict's problems	
Paying the addict's bills	

Dig a Little Deeper

Some people have a **void** that they try to fill with substances, possessions, sex, gambling, or all-consuming hobbies. Paul advises us in **Ephesians 5:18** that these never satisfy. For satisfaction, we must “be filled” with the Holy Spirit.

If you have Christ as Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit dwells permanently inside you (**1Cor 12:13**). You don't need more of Him; He needs more of you. Your part is to pay attention to His leading and to relinquish control of your life to Him. For this to happen, let the Word of God dwell in you richly (**Col 3:16**).

Application Exercise

Renew your faithfulness and determination to relinquish control of your life to the Holy Spirit. If you've drifted away from your Bible reading plan, get back on track. If you don't have a plan, make one now. See **OWNit365.com** for a choice of plans and supporting tools. Watch the video on Addiction under the Get Help tab.

5-Abuse

Scripture: [Psa 55](#), [Psa 11:4-6](#), [Psa 10](#)

Icebreaker: Free will

Each of us has free will ([Deu 30:19](#)). We choose how we react to circumstances. Discuss who or what people often like to blame for their behavior.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ According to [Psalm 11:4-6](#) and [Psalm 34:16](#) how does God view physical abuse? What should our view be toward physical abuse? Under what circumstances would it be prudent for people to physically remove themselves from a situation ([Pro 22:3](#))?

- ❖ Some people say it doesn't matter what others say about them; however, we are affected by the words of others. David speaks of the voice of the enemy that pains his heart ([Psa 55:3-4](#)). When those closest to us use their words to hurt us, it is abuse. How can the following be forms of abuse?
 - ▶ Pointing out shortcomings without giving credit for good things.
 - ▶ Calling someone derogatory names.
 - ▶ Making fun of a person (hurtful joking).What should we keep in mind when speaking to others ([Eph 4:32](#))?

- ❖ Consider how David responded to verbal abuse. He wanted to run ([Psa 55:6-8](#)). Instead, he chose to lean on God ([Psa 55:16-17](#)). What can help us remember to cry out to God when someone abuses us ([1Pet 5:7](#) and [Psa 18-6](#))?

- ❖ When you hear of someone being abused, should you complain to God? What is the complaint in **Psalm 10:6-8**? After you describe your complaint, what can you ask of God (**Psa 10:12-18**)?

Dig a Little Deeper

- ❖ God created humankind as a little lower than heavenly beings (**Psa 8:5**), not as a little higher than the beasts. Our design is to look upward, not downward. When God is not the center of our lives, we tend to look down and, in turn, become like beasts.
- ❖ For an example of a godly response to abuse, consider **Psalm 11**.

Application Exercise

Consider your key relationships.

- ❖ Have you set appropriate boundaries with others? Are you able to say, “no” to others when they cross your boundaries?
- ❖ Do you know the boundaries of others? Do you honor their boundaries by stopping when they say, “no”?
- ❖ Do you look out for the boundaries of the weak and defenseless in your life?

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