

SEX, DRUGS AND SAUSAGE ROLLS

Discussion Notes

FIGHTING CHANCE

Leaders Note: Relationships and sexual history are always sensitive subjects. The key is for you to lead the way with vulnerability, give people the chance to be heard, keep things positive and be gracious and patient. (See our Leadership Lesson on this from last Monday. <https://cdn.filestackcontent.com/SXwtGhboQBKpY9N6yPog>)

A key thought throughout this series is: "if you want what everyone is getting, do what everyone else is doing."

- Do we want the marriage everyone else is getting?
- What does marriage or long-term relationships look like today?
- What characterises these relationships?

Read Luke 6:4-49 together.

- Phillip explained that this parable teaches us that it's 'actions not intentions' that determine what we get. When has there been a difference in our relationships between our intentions and our actions?
- How can we make sure we are living with actions that build solid foundations, not just intentions that wish for a healthy relationship?
- Are you building foundations for tomorrow? What does it look like to build these foundations if you are single?

Read Matthew 19:5-6. This is a key passage repeated 3 times in Scripture; in Genesis and then quoted by both Paul and Jesus. Here Jesus is asked what can we do to have a fighting chance at a great marriage. He provides three key principles for good foundations:

LEAVE AND CLEAVE: **External** is better than **Internal**

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife".

- Research shows that couples who cohabit have a much higher chance of that relationship ending in divorce and also experience lower levels of satisfaction. Does this surprise you?
- The key principle here is that: "external is better than internal." What does this mean?
- Have you experienced external factors having an impact on a relationship?
- Phillip explained that one of the issues we face is that if you let external factors do the heavy lifting to bind a couple together, you don't work the muscles of the internal factors and they don't develop strongly. Have you experienced this yourself?
- How can we work on the internal?

ONE FLESH: **Exclusive** is better than **Experience**.

"and the two will become one flesh". So they are no longer two, but one flesh".

- We can often say "what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas'. However, Philip suggested that this isn't true. Instead, sexual relationships leave us with baggage going into the next relationship. Do you agree? Would your friends agree?
- What sort of baggage might this be?
- Philip also shared that there is a grace for all of us to lose the baggage we have. How can we do this? What steps can we take?

GOD JOINED: **Calling in Love** is better than **Falling in Love**

Philip explained how important it is for a couple to start the relationship heading in the same direction, with the same 'calling' and same values.

- The statistics show that couples who have different religious views are more likely to get divorced. Does this surprise you?
- Does the difference between 'chemistry', 'connection' and 'calling' make you think about how we date?
- Have you ever considered putting calling ahead of chemistry and connection when thinking about who you date? Is it realistic to do so?

Take time to pray with each other - it might be a good idea to break up into male/female groups. For anyone wanting more help or processing in this area consider the Woodlands Wholeness Course, starting Feb 4th www.woodlandchurch.net/wholeness

Further Reading/Research:

<http://slidingvsdeciding.blogspot.com/2014/07/the-mystery-why-isnt-living-together.html>

<http://slidingvsdeciding.blogspot.com/2015/03/you-can-lower-your-risk-of-divorce.html>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/in-the-name-love/201303/does-cohabitation-lead-more-divorces>

<https://www.artofmanliness.com/articles/how-delaying-intimacy-can-benefit-your-relationship/>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/science-shows-once-a-cheater-always-a-cheater-true-archives-of-sexual-behaviour-princeton-a7890656.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/jul/23/why-sex-is-better-in-a-long-term-relationship>