



Discussion Guide

for

MORE TO THE STORY

by Jennifer Kvamme

1. AN ETERNAL ECHO

- Was there anything in this chapter that you had never heard before? What did you think of it?
- Read Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:18-25. How many observations can you make from these passages about God's intention for marriage and sex?
- Why is marriage so central to the Bible's story? In what ways does it picture God?
- How does this change how we think about sex?
- If God designed sex to point us to him, and we leave him out of the picture, how will this affect our experience of sex?

2. AN ANCIENT LIE

- Where do you see or experience the world being broken?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your level of confidence in God as the one who can best define and provide what is truly good? Can you say why?
- From God's perspective, what is sin? Why is it a big deal? Read Colossians 3:5 and Hebrews 3:12 to help you answer.
- What commands of God do you hear people questioning most often?
- In what ways are the sins we struggle with (sexual or not) about trust and reliance? About worship?

3. AN ULTIMATE HERO

- Did this chapter change how you think about Jesus? In what way?
- Read John 4:1-42 together. What did Jesus want for this woman? What did he mean when he offered her "living water"?
- Read John 17:20-26. What does Jesus' prayer for all believers reveal about what he most desires for us? How can we experience that more fully?
- What do you think it means to be united with Christ? What do you think it is like as an experience?
- How does someone say yes to Jesus? What does that involve? And what do you think most often keeps people from doing that?

4. BODY

- Read Genesis 1:26-27. What do you think it means to be made in God's image?
- Why is it significant that Jesus came to earth as an embodied human?
- Read Romans 12:1-2. What would it look like to offer both your body and mind to God in worship as a "living sacrifice"?
- Do you tend to focus more on your heart or your outward actions? What does Scripture say about the importance of each?
- To what degree do you think it is ok to attempt to change our bodies? (Hair dye? Piercings or tattoos? Corrective surgery? Plastic surgery? Gender affirmation surgery?) Where do we draw the line, biblically, and why? Does it depend on our motivations for these changes?

5. IDENTITY

- What do people around you tend to find their identity in? Have you seen someone's identity crumble when that part of them changed?
- Of the identities that God speaks over his followers (re-read the list of "second-layer identities" on page 58), which one speaks to you the most?
- Truth and reality are steady and dependable things separate from our feelings. How is this idea freeing?
- Read Psalm 139. How does it make you feel to think that God knows you better than you know yourself?

- If you had a friend who believed something about their identity that you thought was at odds with God's view of them—maybe about their weight or gender or value—how could you love them unconditionally without necessarily accepting their view of themselves?

6. DESIRE

- What is the good purpose of our sexual desires? What would God have us do with these desires while we're single?
- Read James 1:12-18 and 1 Peter 2:11. At what point does temptation become sin? Where does desire fit in? What promises and encouragements do these passages give us regarding temptations?
- How have you experienced God providing a way out from temptation? How can we help each other in this battle?
- What are some common temptations teens face? What's the original good desire beneath them, and how does Jesus want to satisfy those desires?
- How would you answer a friend who asks, "Doesn't God want me to be happy?"

7. GENDER

- How did this chapter change the way you think about gender? Was there anything you disagreed with?
- Read Genesis 1:27. How is our gender part of being made in the image of God?
- What is gender? What is its purpose?
- We read, *“Our culture talks about gender in terms of identity and expression—both individualistic categories, based on your inward feelings or on how you want to be seen by others. Biblically, though, our gender has been created by God in our bodies, and it’s meant to be pointed outward and life-giving.”* Without being a spouse or parent, how can someone’s gender be a blessing to others? How can it be a reflection of God?
- What pronouns would you use for a trans friend? How did the questions on the previous page challenge you to make this decision more thoughtfully? Would you have a different answer in different situations? (Consider in person versus online, one-on-one settings versus publicly, or with a close friend versus a stranger.) What if it were legally required that you use a person’s preferred pronouns?

8. SINGLENESS

- What words come to mind when you think of lifelong singleness? Did this chapter shift your perspective?
- Read 1 Corinthians 7. In what ways is singleness a gift? What makes it a better option than marriage for some?

- In what ways does singleness testify to the gospel? Have you seen that lived out by any single people you know?
- How has God designed the church to be a community, a family? Read Acts 2:42-47 as an example. What are some ways we can grow in being a better reflection of this, to ensure no one among us feels alone?
- In what situations in life is it hardest to be content? How can Jesus bring joy to those places?

9. INTIMACY

- What are some promises that our culture makes around “sexual freedom”? As you watch people around you, have you seen those promises delivered on over the long run?
- How would you explain to a friend why God commands us to reserve sex for marriage? Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. Why does what we do with our bodies matter to God?
- How do you feel hearing that “*choices do not guarantee outcomes*”? In what ways is that sobering? In what ways is it actually good news?
- What hope is there for those who’ve made sexual choices they regret? Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 to help you answer.
- What specific, practical means does Jesus give to us, both as individuals and in community with other believers, to help us draw closer to him and truly experience him as our greatest treasure and joy?

10. ORIENTATION

- What arguments have you heard against the Bible's teaching on sexuality? How does this chapter challenge what you've believed or felt about homosexuality?
- Read Romans 1:16-32. What do we exchange when we pursue homosexuality (or any form of ungodliness)? See also Hebrews 12:14-16.
- In what ways is homosexuality a distortion of God's design for sex? In what ways is it an issue of worship?
- How has the church mishandled this issue at times? What would it look like for your church to live out both love and truth toward the LGBTQ+ community?
- Specifically, what kind of culture and environment must we cultivate in our youth group and our church so that teenagers who are attracted to people of the same sex will find welcome and support as they seek to follow Jesus?

11. SCREENS

- Which of the reasons for avoiding porn did you find most convincing? Why?
- How do you usually hear porn talked about? How can you be a part of changing those conversations?
- Read Matthew 5:27-29. Why does Jesus take lust so seriously? Do you think he wants us to actually gouge out our eyes if they cause us to sin? If not, what does he mean?

- Read Romans 12:1-2 and 9-10. Even though Paul didn't have porn in mind when he penned these verses, how many principles can you find that apply to the topic?
- Do you have people who you can talk with about anything and who help you to follow Jesus? Who are they? How can we create an environment for more of these kinds of relationships in church?

12. **DATING**

- What is love? How would you define it? Read Ephesians 5:1-2. How does this adjust your definition?
- Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8. What goals or guidelines would you want to set up to help ensure a healthy dating relationship?
- How would you tell if a boyfriend or girlfriend is honoring you, causing no harm, and demonstrating self-control and holiness in the relationship?
- Why is it important that Christians date only other believers? Have you seen a Christian date a non-Christian? What did you observe about their relationship? Why do you think people are tempted to do this?
- Whether you're dating or not, what are some ways you can begin cultivating self-control and patience?

13. **ABUSE**

- Read Psalm 10:12-18. Why does God care so deeply about the abused and suffering? What do you notice

about the psalmist's prayer in light of oppression and suffering?

- Do you know how you would you respond if a friend told you that she/he was dealing with abuse or had been assaulted?
- How can we as God's people reflect his heart for victims of abuse? Where could we connect them with real help?
- Read Isaiah 10:1-3. How is it good news that God is Judge and will call the wicked oppressors to account?
- Read Isaiah 61:1-7. What does God promise to his people who have suffered?

ON THE BOOK AS A WHOLE

- Having read the whole book, which chapter stands out to you? What did you learn from it?
- Are there any points from the book that you still disagree with or aren't sure about?
- How do you think your life will be different because of this study? What's one thing you would like to do because of what you learned?
- How would you answer a friend who asks, "What does the Bible say about sex?"
- Read Matthew 13:44. What has following Jesus required you to give up? (Or what would he require you to give up in order to follow him?) What does he offer that makes it worth it?