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Leader’s Guide

Episode 14

Abstinence Counseling

Summary

In our “whatever feels good” society, our efforts to guide our patients toward biblical standards of sexual relations can seem archaic and inconvenient. However, the Bible reveals the behavior to which we are called, and it also communicates the source of power by which we can live a God-honoring life. Morality is most powerfully taught in light of a relationship, and the most powerful relationship we have is with Jesus Christ.

Speaker

A person wearing glasses

Description automatically generated with low confidenceDr. Selina Lin is a private practice physician in Katy, Texas (a suburb of Houston). She is on the CMDA Houston Council. She is a board member of Interserve, a mission sending agency. She has been a member of CMDA since medical school. She plays the violin and enjoys meeting and discipling medical and premed students. For more information or to contact Dr. Selina Lin, email her at [selina.lin77@gmail.com](mailto:selina.lin77@gmail.com).

Discussion Questions

1. **What from this video inspired, edified or challenged you?**
2. **How have you been counseling your patients with regard to abstinence? How has it worked? How has it not worked?**

This question is meant to enable group members to gauge their current level of engagement in this area. Admittedly, we don’t always get definitive results regarding the success of our counseling, but God knows, and our efforts are ultimately directed to Him (Colossians 3:23-24).

1. **Do you agree with Dr. Lin’s point that merely trying to scare patients with statistics and moral standards is unlikely to promote abstinence? Why or why not?**

Fear is not an unbiblical motivation to refrain from sin, due to both its temporal and eternal consequences, and there are many scriptural warnings to take God’s holiness seriously (Isaiah 6:1-7, Galatians 6:7, etc.). However, the love of God can inspire us in a greater, more long-lasting way, as we recognize that His acceptance of us came while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8), and that His love for us is perfect (1 John 4:18).

1. **Dr. Lin notes that adolescent patients need to feel love, acceptance and validation. How might Deuteronomy 26:18, Matthew 6:26 and Romans 8:38-39 help us communicate how God views them?**

* Deuteronomy 26:18 – God sees us as a treasured possession.
* Matthew 6:26 – God cares for us more than His other creatures.
* Romans 8:38-39 – We cannot be separated from God’s love, no matter what happens to us.

1. **As we relate to our patients, how can we model for them how Christ has shown love for us? How can we practically show the kind of love demonstrated in Romans 5:8 to adolescent patients?**

Romans 5:8 – As Christ did not withhold His love for us until we deserved it, so we are to respond in kind, seeking to demonstrate love for our patients as a stimulus to bring about godliness. While we are not called to die for our patients, as Jesus did on our behalf, we can give them our time, good listening, compassion and acceptance.

1. **Dr. Lin points to the desire that most adolescent patients have for intimate loving relationships. How might Colossians 3:12, Isaiah 54:10 and Psalms 100:5 apply to their quest?**

All three of these verses describe the deep love of God and the intimacy He desires to have with us.

1. **Both Dr. Sandra Christiansen and Dr. Kathy O’Connell recognize the inability of any human relationship to fulfill us as only Jesus can. How would a relationship built upon the foundation of the gospel be different from one that is indifferent toward Jesus?**

A relationship founded upon the gospel is one in which each person seeks to grow in their relationship with Christ. As each seeks to abide in Christ, their ability to love each other will grow through their reception of the undeserved love of God. Likewise for their ability to forgive, empathize, comfort and support each other. God chose the marital relationship as the primary metaphor to represent the relationship between God and His people—in both the Old and the New Testaments—and a marriage empowered by the foundation of Christ will be a powerful testimony to the world of the veracity of the Christian faith.

1. **Dr. Lin states, “Morality is most powerfully communicated in light of a relationship.” What are examples of loving relationships that can powerfully communicate biblical morality with regard to sexual morality?**

A loving parent-child relationship can decrease a child’s desire to seek intimacy prior to marriage. Also, if a couple commits themselves to abstinence prior to marriage, they can help each other in being true to this pledge when one becomes weak. The most powerful expression of this principle is in the power of the gospel. Knowing that God accepts us through faith in Jesus Christ can enable us to stand against the desires of the flesh. May the love of Christ control us in our battles—and our patients’ battles—against those things for which Christ died (2 Corinthians 5:14).

1. **What is one take-home item from today’s session that you hope to implement?**