

**Group Study on Sexualisation**

*What you will need:*

* A print out of this document
* A Bible

*Read aloud the following excerpt and use your Bible to look up the passages cited in the text*

Modern life is full of photo imagery and advertising. Businesses and big brands are pushing to get every consumer dollar they can. Marketers realise that sex sells.

Now that sexual imagery has infused our public places (and especially our TV shows and computer screens), our culture has been changed. These changes have brought with them new pressures for girls (and to a lesser extent, boys) to be sexy, beautiful and appealing. In the media females become like shiny accessories and objects of desire, while fashion trends embrace ever more daring styles.

It is only human to want to be liked and accepted by our peers, so when we are bombarded with messages that tell us that the way to be accepted is to look a certain way, to dress a certain way, take a photo a certain way – it is no wonder we want to get on board.

We are often tempted to think these things are harmless and have little bearing on our actions, beliefs and values. But such was the concern of the Australian Senate, that it ordered a report into sexualisation of children in the contemporary media in 2008, calling it a “significant cultural challenge”.

Our culture persuades us to ground our identity in our appearance and our appeal and our sexuality. But Christ tells us we are loveable beyond appearance, height, weight, and intelligence – beyond any of that. We are not one-dimensional (for example, “sexy”) figurines, but whole and complex people called to holiness and purity, and to be set apart from the idols of our culture (2 Corinthians 6:16-18). We are *not* to be *‘conformed to this world’* (Romans 12:2) but encouraged by God’s Word to modesty and self-control.

As *‘saints of the light’* (Colossians1:1-12) we are given a new identity in Christ. In baptism we are sons and daughters who are able to call God as ‘Father’ as we are taught in the Lord’s Prayer. This relationship allows us to know who we are aside from media and cultural pressures. This identity in Christ gives us the freedom to see each other as gifts of God rather than as objects to be consumed.

*Discussion questions*

* Sexy and attractive images are everywhere. How do these images make you feel? What do they teach us about what’s important?
* How does it make you feel when people describe you by your physical characteristics before anything else?
* How does knowing that our identity comes from Christ help us view the way we see ourselves?
* What is sexual purity? Look up the following Bible passages and discuss: Psalm 119:9-10, Deuteronomy 5:18, Matthew 5:27-28, Gal 5:16-24.
* What decisions can we make that help us (and those aroud us) to live sexually pure lives?

*Close with prayer*

*Further resources*

* Book: ‘Getting Real – Challenging the Sexualisation of Girls’ by Melinda Tankard Reist. Available to purchase at the following link: <http://melindatankardreist.com/products-page/>
* DVD: ‘Too Sexy Too Soon: How hyper-sexualised messages harm kids and what you can do about it’ by Melinda Tankard Reist. Available to purchase at the following link: <http://melindatankardreist.com/products-page/>
* Book: ‘The Failure of Sex Education in the Church – Mistaken Identity, Compromised Purity’ by Linda Bartlett: <http://titus2-4life.org/>
* Youtube lecture entitled ‘Courtship Matters’ with academics Leon and Amy Kass (1 hour): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDcFtqwNC0w>