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session 1: GOD'S STORY, YOUR STORY

This study isn't primarily about issues related to sex, purity, and romance. Primarily, it is about helping you understand those things in light of God's eternal, bigger story. Only when you are able to see your role in that story will you know what God wants to do with you and through you.

SESSION 1 SEQUENCE:

- 1) Session Introduction
- 2) Video Recap
- 3) Session Interview 
- 4) Group Discussion
- 5) The Cost of Ownership 

1) Session Introduction (APPROXIMATELY FIVE MINUTES)

Begin the first session by welcoming students and thanking them for being a part of the *True Love Project*. If there are any new students who have joined since the Intro Session, be sure to provide them with a student book.

Once everyone has settled in, begin a discussion with students based on the following questions:

- + What are your top five favorite books and/or movies? How did these get to the top of your list? Why do you find them so compelling?

After spending a few minutes discussing these questions, explain to them that often what people find most compelling in a movie or a book is the story that is being told—and the better the story, the more we find ourselves being drawn into it.

2) Video Recap (APPROXIMATELY FIVE MINUTES)

To transition to the session interview, remind students that the first teaching segment laid the groundwork for a gospel foundation so that we can begin to think about the issues of sex, romance, and purity in light of God's story. We looked at God's original intention for these issues (creation), what went wrong (the fall), and His plan to make all things new through Christ (redemption and restoration). In the end, this lesson helps us understand how our stories fit into His bigger story, thus giving us purpose, clarity, and direction when it comes to understanding our own sexuality.

Main Thought:

An understanding of sex and purity begins with an understanding of God's story and your role in it.

3) Session Interview (APPROXIMATELY 10 MINUTES)

After the recap/summary, play the session interview with Mark Batterson. Direct students to the group discussion page in their student books (p. 12). Point out the space provided for notes on the interview. Record some of your personal reflections below to discuss during Group Discussion.

4) Group Discussion (APPROXIMATELY 25 MINUTES)

- + Briefly discuss highlights from the interview.
- + Review the Video Guide and Video Feedback from Session 1 in the leader guide (pp. 12-13).
- + Use the following questions to enhance your discussion.

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Remember, whenever you see content with this background, it indicates it is also located in the student book.

- Why is it important to begin this study by focusing on God rather than on the topic at hand?
- Why do the topics of sex and purity make more sense in the context of God's larger story? Why is it important to know that our lives are part of something much bigger than ourselves?
- What is the difference between the third and fourth act of God's story?
- What does Clayton mean when he talks about understanding your individual story in light of God's bigger story?
- What has God been restoring in your life?

- + Direct students to complete the Highlights section of the Group Discussion page in their student books (p. 12). Allow time to answer and discuss these as a group.
- + **ASK:** What actions do you need to take in response to what you have learned? Encourage students to list their answers under the Action Points. Below is a sample to prompt students.

Action Points

- + Begin looking at people of the opposite sex as image bearers of God, and not merely as objects of attraction.
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- +

Session 1: GOD'S STORY, YOUR STORY

This may sound strange, but we are going to begin our study on purity, sex, and romance by not talking about purity, sex, or romance. There's no doubt that the things we talk about in this lesson are directly related to issues of physical intimacy, but in order to correctly tackle the issues surrounding sex and purity, it is essential that we first begin with the One who created these things. By understanding God's story, we will gain a better understanding of ourselves and how our individual stories fit into His larger story.

video guide:

CREATION

God made us because He wanted to.

You were fashioned and designed to look like God.

FALL

We see in Adam and Eve a reflection of our own selves. We think we know better than Him.

We believe He is withholding something from us that would make us happier.

REDEMPTION

The word that best describes this process of being rescued from sin and destruction is "redemption."

In essence, it refers to the fact that Jesus lived the perfect life we could never live.

RESTORATION

Part of this restoration means He wants to restore us to the place He originally intended us to be.

Restoration touches every part of your life, repairing your perspective on love and relationships.

video feedback:

- + Why would it be important to begin a study on purity and sex with a discussion about God's story?
- + What does Clayton mean when he talks about understanding your individual story in light of God's bigger story?
- + How does each of the story elements (creation, fall, redemption, restoration) speak directly to issues of relationships, sexuality, purity, etc.?

CREATION:

FALL:

REDEMPTION:

RESTORATION:

- + What do these story elements communicate about God's character and intention for people?

Develop and post a personal tweet or Facebook status related to this session using the hashtag **#trueloveproject**

5) The Cost of Ownership (APPROXIMATELY 15 MINUTES)

Once group discussion has ended, watch the DVD segment *The Cost of Ownership*. Instruct students to turn to page 14 in their student books to follow along. After the session, help students complete their video guides if they missed any points.

After the video, encourage students to complete both the Video Feedback and Reflect sections in Session 2 of the student book before the next time you meet. Explain that these sections will be used in group discussion during the next session. Close your time together in prayer.

Leader Notes

From Clayton's teaching and your personal reflection, what are some highlights you intend to discuss during group time?

