

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Suggested Discussion Starters

Recommended Reading

How to Prepare

Marriage in the Bible

A Discussion Among Friends

SAMPLE



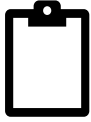
General Reminders Throughout

Anytime someone is feeling uncomfortable it might be helpful to remind them that we are merely going for “the mark of an educated mind” (referenced in the Introduction video). We do not have to agree with everything we hear, read, or watch. New information, especially in this realm, often challenges deeply held convictions, so it is quite understandable to be uncomfortable, at times. But we might be surprised by how much more complex things are in the Bible and with the people around us if we can be open to hearing these new perspectives. It can even make a person’s faith deeper and more genuine!

Please remember that I am not ever trying to make anyone uncomfortable. I do think that many of the topics that we are most hesitant to discuss openly are the best ones for us to try to do so, safely and respectfully. I have not yet had someone die, on the spot, for having considered a new idea or from being a part of a vulnerable and honest conversation about any of these delicate topics.

Especially when discussing passages from the Hebrew Bible, people tend to want to read Newer Testament ideas, or even just later developments within the biblical narrative or Christian tradition, into them. Do what you can to **have people stick to the passage at hand** and read it on its own terms. I am not trying to tell someone they cannot read however they wish, intertextually – we are all free to do so. But those practices often turn out to be ways to keep from sitting with the passage at hand and to try to “make it all okay.”

HOW TO PREPARE



I don't want to throw anyone with this: in my introduction I will refer to myself as "cisgender," among other things. If you think this might make some people in your group a bit uncomfortable, I suggest that you bring it up ahead of time, and perhaps discuss how relevant this factor is for any of us, not to mention to this particular discussion.

Cisgender: of, relating to, or being a person, whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth. ([merriam-webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cisgender))

Me being clear about who I am and where I am coming from is not meant to make anyone uncomfortable. ~



Is anyone thrown by Dr. Bird's preferences: Hebrew Bible & Newer Testament? Discuss how they differ from Old Testament & New Testament.

Have you ever discussed how the genres used in the Bible might affect the way we think about what to expect when we read it? (myths, genealogies, ancient biographies, etc.)

Please make sure to have everyone fill out the "Personal Inventory." Asking them to share/discuss their responses in small groups and then with you can be valuable.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION STARTERS

RECOMMENDED SCHOLARSHIP



Bird, *Permission Granted: Take the Bible into Your Own Hands***

Crossan, *How to Read the Bible and Still be a Christian*

Ehrman, *Jesus Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (And Why We Don't Know About Them)*

Ehrman, *The Bible: A Historical and Literary Introduction*

NPR TED Radio Hour, May 8, 2020 Episode: "[Biology of Sex.](#)"

** Introduction – Chapter 3 are highly relevant, here

HOW TO PREPARE



I will, essentially, be challenging the use of “husband” or “wife” anywhere in the Bible in this video. This might seem odd or confusing for some, but it is based on what is happening in the Greek and Hebrew.

It might be helpful to have a brief discussion about what we mean when we say that some of the biblical material is mythic. I will discuss parts of Genesis 1-11. *Perhaps we honor scripture more* if we respect this element of it instead of trying to read it all as literal history or words directly from God’s mouth.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION STARTERS



What do you think of Dr. Bird’s claims about myths and how to read them?

What was your reaction to the suggestion that we *not* read Genesis 1:26, “let us,” through the lens of the Trinity?

Genesis 1:28 is not talking about marriage, and people didn’t *need* to be told to procreate!

People ignore ethics to champion Genesis 1:28 and ignore Genesis 1:29 altogether.

If procreation *must* be connected to marriage, does that make the marriages of couples without children illegitimate?

RECOMMENDED SCHOLARSHIP



Bird, *Permission Granted: Take the Bible into Your Own Hands* (chap. 2)

Candida Moss & Joel Baden, *Reconceiving Infertility: Biblical Perspectives on Procreation and Childlessness*.

Matriarchs, Patriarchs, Laws & Adultery Video

HOW TO PREPARE



We are going for an understanding of the nature of these relationships in this video. *We are not trying to find all the ways that we do things differently, today.* This is an important distinction to make as they prepare for this content.

I would recommend that you all read Exodus 20-23 and Leviticus 18 & 20 ahead of time.

Please encourage everyone to focus on connecting with the way these actions and situations are talked about, how they are “regulated,” and what a chapter like Leviticus 18 tells us about sex and “marriage” at the time. Try not to simply rehearse what you have always thought these passages were talking about. What *new* insights can you gather in relation to these conversations?

Often, today, people read for “what applies to us.” In doing so, they actively dismiss the context, since it is outdated, believing that there is a nugget in the passage that remains for us today. I get this way of thinking about it all. **But this approach isn’t as honest as it could be.** Just because Christians have Jesus and the Newer Testament doesn’t mean that they are no longer being impacted by the world view of the Hebrew Bible and its passages.

Also, I will be touching on *many* rather complex stories and laws, passages that we would normally want some time to carefully unpack and discuss. I’m sure you will hear lots of comments from people about their “favorite” bits that they like to challenge. **Try to stay focused on getting a sense for the nature of these relationships.**

Matriarchs, Patriarchs, Laws & Adultery Video

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION STARTERS



Are there any elements of the Patriarchs & Matriarchs' marriages that set good examples for us, today?

Which parts of these passages have you simply looked past, since you want to see the Bible as something good?

Was the Pharaoh actually cursing Abram & Sarai? Is *that* why God sends the plagues in Genesis 12?

Why do the dynamics of the partnerships of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others not count when defining marriage in the Bible?

Were you aware of why adultery was a "problem," biblically speaking?

Biblically speaking, sex is something that men do to women.

What are we to do with the fact that, in the Bible (both testaments), it seems that the main concern between the man and woman was sex, not having a sacred relationship?

Have you ever noticed that Leviticus 18 & 20 set boundaries for with whom a man can have sex, "outside of marriage"? What is your response to this bit?

RECOMMENDED READING



Biblical Passages:

Genesis 12, 16, 22, Abraham et. al.

Genesis 24, 26-7, Isaac et. al.

Genesis 29-30, Jacob & Leah, Rachal, Bilhah & Zilpah

Genesis 38, levirate marriage (& why masturbation is "wrong")

Judges 14-16, Samson

1 Samuel 18-19, David & Michal; 2 Samuel 11-12, 1 Kings 1-2 for David & Bathsheba

Deuteronomy 22 for laws about what to do with women