

Study Guide to Young Womanhood

NOTE TO LEADERS

Thank you so much for your desire to help teen girls develop a biblical view of their bodies and the joy and purpose God has for them.

There is a great need for discipleship about this topic. Girls are inundated with all kinds of damaging lies about their bodies. They permeate popular culture, spread through influencers, and arise from their own sinful hearts. Some lies are fueled by well-meaning friends and family, and sometimes they're even perpetuated in the church. But there is no need to panic—this is not a new problem. Ever since the fall, God's people have struggled to think rightly about their bodies. Even the New Testament church fell into serious errors. Yet we are not without hope! Jesus is faithful to purify and beautify his bride.

My prayer is that God uses you to help teen girls unravel the lies they may have internalized about their bodies and instead cling to the glorious truths of Scripture: Their bodies are not bad—they were created good. Their bodies are not irrelevant—they are essential to who they are and how they live for Christ.

As you lead, remember that some girls might need help tracking with you. Be ready to pause, invite questions, and provide clarifications. Sometimes the confusion they feel about their bodies doesn't stem from sin's deceit but from simply misunderstanding Scripture. For example, the way Scripture speaks about "the flesh" can leave girls confused. Help them see that in these instances, "the flesh" refers to our *sinful* nature and desires—not to our physical bodies. Throughout these meetings, keep pointing them back to the truth that God intentionally created their bodies good *so that* they might know, love, and enjoy him more.

You will likely encounter girls with very different experiences and struggles. Before each meeting, take time to pray for the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom as you lead. This resource is meant to help guide your discussion, but it's not exhaustive and leaves room for flexibility. God knows the needs of *your* individual group. Listen well, ask thoughtful follow-up questions, and be willing to veer off course when necessary to care for the specific struggles in your group.

Each section assumes that the group has already read the chapter. It includes a brief note to you, Scripture passages to read aloud together (some stand alone, some are followed by brief comments to help you apply them to the conversation), and reflection questions from the book to discuss. I recommend familiarizing yourself with all the material *before* meeting so that you can most effectively lead and adapt to the needs of your group.

Thank you for caring for our younger sisters in Christ! May God strengthen you to "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58).

In Christ,
Amy DiMarcangelo

Introduction and Chapter 1

GOD CREATED YOUR BODY GOOD

LEADER'S NOTE

The girls in your group may have never heard someone clearly say that their bodies are good. Even if they've grown up in the church and can identify some false cultural messages about the body, they may have unknowingly absorbed the dualistic idea that their hearts and spirits are all that matter and that their bodies aren't important. This is your opportunity to offer them something so much better!

Most of this discussion should focus on the *goodness* of our bodies. We can't rightly understand the effects of the fall—or the hope of redemption—apart from a firm foundation in the goodness of creation. The goodness of our bodies is rooted not in our appearance or abilities but in the fact that God created us as *embodied* image bearers and called his creation good. Our bodies are so intrinsic to who we are that God's redemption encompasses our whole selves: body and soul. Because God so loved us, the Son of God took on flesh, died, and rose again, and through him we too are promised a bodily resurrection.

OPENING QUESTION

What questions do you have about your body? (*This isn't the time to answer these questions but to gauge what types of questions your group is wrestling with.*)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Genesis 1:26–28, 31

Make sure to point out that *man* in verse 26 is a generic term that refers to humankind. You may also need to give a quick explanation of what it means to be made in God's image. One important distinction to make is that our human capacities for creativity, rationality, love, and moral awareness are *expressions* of being made in God's image, not the basis of it. This distinction is important because rooting the image of God in human capacities unintentionally diminishes the dignity of those whose capacities are limited due to age, cognitive abilities, and so on. Every human being bears God's image simply because God—in his sovereign wisdom and generosity—chose to create them in his image and bestowed that dignity upon them. This is a crucial foundation for the girls to understand!

Luke 24:1–7, 36–43

Note all the “physical” details mentioned that emphasize Jesus’s bodily—not just spiritual—resurrection.

Romans 8:11

This is a promise for all who have faith in Christ!

1 Corinthians 15:21–40—Optional expansion

This passage is more abstract, so consider the maturity of your group. How does the illustration of a seed help you understand your own future resurrection? How does the promise of a resurrected body—not just spirit—help you understand how God values your physical self?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you think about your body, what words come to mind? Was *good* one of them? Why or why not?
2. What’s the biblical basis for calling your body good? (*Hint: Think through some of the passages we’ve read!*)
3. How did this chapter change your perspective on your body?

Chapter 2

GOD MADE YOU A GIRL (AND THAT'S GOOD!)

LEADER'S NOTE

It may be hard to be a girl, but God makes it very clear in Scripture that it is *good* to be made a girl. Today, highlight God's wisdom and intentionality in creating women distinct from men. Because our bodies are part of God's revelation in creation, we are uniquely designed to reflect truths about God.

Depending on your context, this conversation could go in many directions! There are a few dangers to watch out for: minimizing *or* overemphasizing our created differences or celebrating womanhood in a way that bashes men. Just as women shouldn't be disparaged, neither should men. All people are made in God's image—not only sharing in dignity and worth but sharing a need for salvation and dependence on the Spirit to conform to the image of Christ. Furthermore, men and women need each other (not just in marriage but in the church!) to more fully reflect and glorify God.

OPENING QUESTION

When you think of the words *girl* and *woman*, what comes to mind?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Genesis 2:18-23

God said it wasn't good that Adam was alone. But Adam didn't need the company of another man—he needed a woman. The differences between men and women were intentionally designed by God, so that together we can fulfill the creation mandate (Gen. 1:28), and strengthen the church to grow and flourish!

Isaiah 49:15

God refers to a distinctly female bodily experience to illustrate his love for his children.

John 4:4–26,28–30, 39

You can read this passage or offer the following summary: In John 4, Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at a well. After he reveals himself to her as the Messiah, she goes and tells others about him. The result? “Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony” (v. 39). The Samaritan woman fulfilled her life-giving design by helping others find life in Christ.

Romans 16:1–16

In this greeting, Paul speaks of ten women: Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, Junia, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus’ mother, Julia, and Neriuss’s sister. Highlight each name or reference and tell the girls to note what he says about them. God worked through these women (among many others!) to help build the early church.

That’s only a small sample! Throughout all of history, God has worked through both women and men to accomplish his redemptive plan!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What challenges or pressures have made it hard to be a girl?
2. What does Genesis 1–2 teach you about God’s value of women? How did learning about the word *ezer* reshape your understanding of being called a “helper”?
3. What are some practical ways you can point others to our life-giving God this week?

Chapter 3

GOD CREATED YOUR BODY WITH PURPOSE

LEADER'S NOTE

As you discuss this chapter, point out that the purposes of dependence, work, pleasure, and love all balance one another. We tend to embrace some purposes at the expense of others. The workaholic embraces the value of work, but she tends to neglect relationships, strive for self-sufficiency, and miss out on the pleasures of God's gifts. The pleasure-seeker sees the value of pleasure, but she can be lazy, self-centered, and self-indulgent. By God's design, we are protected from these errors and flourish most when we embrace all four purposes.

Another thing to watch out for: We live in a utilitarian culture in which people are valued based on what they produce. This can lead us to diminish the value of those who are especially dependent on others (due to age, disabilities, or other circumstances). Remind the girls that God's love for us isn't based on what we produce. While work *is* part of his good design for his image bearers, the fall has deeply impacted how this functions. Moreover, our greatest purpose is to "glorify God and enjoy him forever"—a calling we can all fulfill, regardless of our abilities or circumstances.

OPENING QUESTION

What happens when something isn't used the way it was designed? (*Invite or share funny examples, too!*) Do you think that same idea could apply to us?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Ask the girls to note the purposes they see in each of the following passages:

Psalms 145:15–16 (*dependence*)

Ecclesiastes 3:12–13 (*work/pleasure*)

1 John 3:16–18 (*love*)

Ephesians 2:8–10 (*work/love*)

Verse 10 is most relevant to this chapter, but it's important to understand it in relation to verses 8–9. These verses remind us that we aren't saved *by* our works, while verse 10 shows us that, in Christ, we are created *for* good works.

Romans 12:1 (*love through worship*)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What physical limitations frustrate you the most? How might those limits point you to the sufficiency of God?
2. Of the four purposes mentioned—dependence, work, pleasure, and love—did anything surprise you? What was the most helpful thing you learned?
3. How can you use your body to show love to God and others today?

Chapter 4

THE FALL . . . AND THE GREAT REVERSAL

LEADER'S NOTE

This chapter primarily focuses on the ravaging effects of sin. It will feel heavy, but the purpose is not to discourage. It's important for girls to understand the damage sin has done because it helps make sense of all that's wrong with the world. It also highlights an important contrast: God is good and created everything good, and sin introduced pain, shame, and death.

Acknowledging the fallenness of the world—and of ourselves—shows us how deeply we need redemption. Don't rush too quickly past sin, but be sure to end by highlighting the hope of the gospel! Jesus took our sin so that we could be freed from shame, condemnation, and punishment, and his resurrection guarantees that one day every effect of the curse will be undone.

OPENING QUESTION

If sin had never entered the picture, how do you think our experiences of our bodies would be different?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Genesis 1:29–31

Genesis 2:16–17, 25

Highlight how God made everything good (verse 25 also highlights lack of shame prior to sin). He generously gave Adam and Eve a great deal of freedom and everything they needed to flourish. He gave them only one prohibition—and he clearly warned what would happen if they disobeyed. Even this warning reflects his protective love!

Genesis 3:1–19

Ask for observations. What good things were affected and broken by sin? Amid this judgment, ask if anyone can identify the first glimpse of a redemptive promise. (If needed, hint that it's in 3:15! This verse points to Eve having offspring who would crush the head of the serpent.)

Romans 8:18–25

This might feel more abstract, so help the girls focus on the big picture: All of creation is groaning under the effects of sin but not without hope. Like the pain of childbirth leads to new life, our present suffering points to the glorious future God has promised. Because of Christ, the story doesn't end with a curse but with the hope of redemption.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How have you felt the effects of the fall on your body?
2. What influences have distorted your view of your body?
3. How might remembering Christ's redemptive work guard you from shame?

Chapter 5

EVEN WHEN IT HURTS

LEADER'S NOTE

It's crucial to uphold the goodness of our bodies regardless of our physical condition. It's equally crucial to acknowledge how very painful our physical experiences can be. The effects of the fall on our bodies are real and sometimes devastating. We should not gloss over this or rush through struggles to chase a superficial "positivity."

Scripture shows us that sorrow and rejoicing, lament and worship, questions and trust coexist among the faithful. Longing for the resurrection and the redemption of our bodies is a *right* response to suffering. And yet we can entrust ourselves to our Creator and his purposes for us. Remind your group that Jesus accomplished our greatest good through his own suffering on the cross. This truth can encourage those who might already experience chronic illness or disabilities—their bodies will not thwart God's purposes but are intended to fulfill them.

OPENING QUESTION

Have you ever had to miss out on something because your body got sick or hurt or because of a chronic condition or disability? What was it? How did that affect your view of your body?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

James 1:2–4

James doesn't tell us to take joy in the trials themselves—he says to consider it a great joy when experiencing trials because of what they produce. This is an important distinction to make. We should never call the effects of the fall good—they're not good! But the fact that God uses trials to produce endurance and maturity highlights his sovereign and redemptive power over the curse.

2 Corinthians 1:3–4

Our Father is able to comfort us in *all* our affliction—your struggles are never “too much” for him!

1 Peter 1:6-7

Trials usually don't feel like they last "a little while"—it's hope in the promise of eternal life that helps keep the timeline of our suffering in perspective.

Psalm 73:26**2 Corinthians 4:16-17****Romans 8:28**

Consider sharing personal stories of how you've experienced God work painful things for good. . . . Be careful not to just share stories with obvious "happy endings." Consider examples that helped you grow more like Christ or know God in a deeper way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. This chapter looked at three common purposes in physical suffering: greater endurance, deeper comfort, and a stronger witness. What do you think about that?
2. Is there anyone in your life you've seen suffer well? What about their example is compelling to you?
3. Pick one of the Scripture passages from this chapter. How did it impact you? Consider memorizing it to keep in mind during times of suffering!

Chapter 6

EVEN IF YOU SUFFER MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY

LEADER'S NOTE

This can be a really difficult discussion to navigate. There are two errors we can make: (1) over-spiritualizing the discussion (as if there are never physical components to mental suffering) or (2) over-pathologizing it (treating every painful emotion as a disorder or acting as if we're solely at the mercy of our brain chemistry, with no spiritual dimensions to consider). Seek to discern where your group may be prone to err so that you can lead a balanced discussion.

"Because we are whole persons—body and soul—our mental anguish is never just in our head or just in our heart. It's in our whole being. Instead of trying to divvy it up, I think it's sufficient to say this: As embodied people living in a fallen world, our brains are impacted by both sin and suffering" (*Young Womanhood*, pg. 75). The world will offer many false comforts to girls who struggle in this way—but you can point them to their truest source of comfort and help! Jesus suffered anguish on our behalf, so that we might know the nearness of God when we are brokenhearted and crushed in spirit.

OPENING QUESTION

When you feel upset, what practical things help you calm down or bring you comfort?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Matthew 26:37–39; Luke 22:44

Jesus *willingly* sacrificed himself in our place—but his willingness didn't ease the emotional agony he experienced. He truly sympathizes with us. More importantly, his sacrifice assures us that we'll never be forsaken—he will care for us now, and someday he will restore us to complete wholeness.

Lamentations 3:17–24

Point out the arc of despair to hope—we might *feel* that our hope has perished, but we can remind ourselves that our hope rests securely in the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord.

Psalm 34: 17-18

Psalm 56:8

The Lord is attentive to his children's tears!

Revelation 21:4

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you tend to deal with “unseen pain”?
2. It's easy to feel alone in our struggles (especially if diagnosed with a mental disorder), but Jesus sees and understands all our pain. How does that encourage you?
3. This chapter gave five practical ways to care for your mental and emotional health. What things are you already doing? What ways would be helpful to grow?

Chapter 7

EVEN IF YOU DON'T LIKE HOW IT LOOKS

LEADER'S NOTE

Discontent over our appearance is a pretty universal experience, especially for teens. But it might feel too vulnerable for them to share specific ways they wished they looked different (especially if they struggle with comparing themselves to other girls in the group!) So it will be helpful for *you* to be forthcoming about ways you struggled as a teen and have experienced God's help since. This gives them something concrete to remember and apply to their own struggles, while allowing the rest of the conversation to stay broad and focused on the big picture.

OPENING QUESTION

When you were a little girl, was there someone you wanted to look like? (*This can even be something silly, like a cartoon princess!*)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Genesis 29:16–17

Explain that Jacob ended up married to both women. (If your group is tripped up about the polygamy, remind them that Scripture doesn't endorse everything it describes!) But Leah—who was less loved and probably struggled with comparison—is the one through whom the Messianic line continues. This shows how God sees and honors those others overlook.

Isaiah 53:2–3; John 1:14; Hebrews 1:3

All these verses describe Jesus. Ask them what is notable about the contrasts?

Psalms 34:3–5

1 Peter 3:3–4

This doesn't mean we shouldn't braid our hair or wear jewelry or cute clothes. Rather, it emphasizes that our truest beauty is reflected in our Christlikeness. Outward beauty fades, but inner beauty increases as we grow more like Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What beauty standards do you feel most pressured to meet? What influences have been unhelpful to you (provoking insecurity, comparison, vanity, and so on)?
2. Has your appearance ever caused you pain? If so, how has that impacted your relationship with God?
3. How can you pursue imperishable beauty (1 Peter 3:3–4)?

Chapter 8

EVEN IF YOU STRUGGLE WITH YOUR GENDER

LEADER'S NOTE

Even if nobody in your group struggles with their gender, this discussion is very relevant for them! As transgender ideology gains influence in our culture (even deceiving the church), it's important for Christians to think and communicate with biblical clarity and compassion.

As you navigate this discussion, be mindful that a girl might be secretly struggling with her gender. This makes the tone of the discussion crucial. If the tone drifts into cultural outrage, mockery, or fear, she will feel pushed to hide in shame, keep her struggles a secret, and consequently lose the opportunity for other Christians to remind her of the love, hope, peace, and comfort available to her through Christ. But if the tone is gentle and loving, perhaps she will be emboldened to share her burdens to those equipped to help her shoulder them. You will also be setting an example that can strengthen these girls in how they speak to one another—and interact with the world—about these struggles.

OPENING QUESTION

What's a stereotype about girls that bothers you?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Genesis 1:27

We've already considered this verse when it comes to dignity and equality, but we shouldn't miss that it also speaks to God creating *two* sexes.

Psalms 139:13–14

Ask, "What do you think God intends to communicate by saying that he 'knit us' together?" Knitting implies careful intention, not haphazard chance. That is significant when we think about biological facts, like our sex.

Isaiah 64:8

Another verse that shows God's hand and intention in our creation.

Psalm 100:3**Psalm 145:9, 17–18**

Point out how these verses can comfort someone who struggles with how they were made.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

Some struggles over gender arise from rigid and extrabiblical ideas of femininity. This passage emphasizes that God has given his people various gifts and various ways to build his church! He doesn't intend for us to all be the same.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *I would not advise discussing question 1 from this chapter in a group context. Instead, I suggest saying something like “If anyone wants to talk with me privately about question 1—or has any questions they’re uncomfortable asking here—let me know afterward, and we can arrange a time to talk.” This leaves an open door to follow up with anyone who might need it.*
2. Why is it important to let physical truth—not just feelings—shape how we understand ourselves?
3. What comes to mind when you hear the term *biblical femininity*—does it feel tied to a stereotype? Review the paragraph about godly women in the Bible on page 97. How do their differences encourage you regarding God's design for women?

Chapter 9

GOD'S GENEROUS GIFTS

LEADER'S NOTE

This is a short chapter, but it covers an important truth that deeply impacts our view of God and how we enjoy his gifts. If girls view his rules and boundaries apart from his goodness and love, obedience will never feel more than obligatory. Legalists can obey, but they cannot find joy in the Lord through obedience. It's only when we have a deep belief in God's loving generosity that we can see the goodness of his boundaries and delight in obedience.

OPENING QUESTION

What's the best gift you've ever received? Who gave it to you?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Deuteronomy 10:12–13

Notice that the call to faithful obedience is for our good!

Psalms 16:2, 5–6, 11

John 3:16

When we're tempted to question God's love or generosity, we must remember that he gave the greatest gift possible—his own Son—so that we could gain eternal life!

John 10:10

John 15:9-11

Satan tempts us to believe that God demands obedience to deprive us of joy. But what does this verse show us?

1 Timothy 6:17

Setting our hope in wealth or material things is a shaky—and ultimately unsatisfying—source of happiness. When we set our hope on God, he richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. James 1:17 says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.” What gifts have you enjoyed from God this week?
2. How we react to God’s boundaries often exposes what we believe about his nature. Are there any ways you’ve been thinking wrongly about God? How does remembering his goodness, wisdom, generosity, and love challenge that thinking?
3. How have you felt the cost of following Jesus? How have you found greater joy because of following him?

Chapter 10

THE GIFT AND GIVER OF FOOD

LEADER'S NOTE

Bring some snacks tonight! There is so much pressure around food and diets, which makes this a great opportunity to model godly enjoyment of this good gift. As you lead discussion, frame the conversation around God's generosity. Even when discussing food-related sins and struggles, emphasize that rightly receiving God's good gifts ultimately leads to more joy, not less. The goal is not simply to avoid overindulgence or unnecessary restriction but to be freed from the grip of idols—whether idols of food or appearance or control—so that we can more fully enjoy God's provision. Not only will this help nourish our bodies, but it will ultimately point us to find our deepest satisfaction in Christ.

NOTE: If someone discloses an eating disorder (either in the group discussion, or privately to you), it's important to make sure a parent or guardian is brought into the loop. Pray about how to handle that tenderly!

OPENING QUESTION

What's the best meal you've ever had?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Genesis 1:29

One of the first gifts from God was good food!

Psalms 104:14–15

Isaiah 25:6

This chapter in Isaiah anticipates the new heavens and the new earth. Among many glorious things described, we are given a picture of a great feast!

Isaiah 55:1–2

The Lord uses food as a metaphor here, inviting us to bring our longing to him so that we might be satisfied. The satisfaction he offers is a free gift that can be found nowhere else!

Matthew 15:32–38

This miracle showed Jesus's practical care by feeding the hungry so they would not faint, and it demonstrated his divine power over creation and the abundance of life in him.

John 6:35

The goodness of food is meant to point to something greater: the satisfaction we receive in Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. This chapter included questions to evaluate your relationship with food. What did your answers reveal?
2. How can you better enjoy food as the good gift it's meant to be?
3. How might food help you find joy in Christ?

Chapter II

THE GIFT AND GIVER OF REST

LEADER'S NOTE

Pay special attention to the performers and perfectionists in your group. Their struggle to neglect rest can be hidden beneath many good qualities, such as diligence, perseverance, and the pursuit of excellence. Girls who are hardworking and achievement-oriented *especially* need to be reminded of their need to receive rest as a good gift from God.

Pray for discernment to help girls identify the source of their struggles. Someone who is driven by a prideful desire to impress needs different counsel than someone who is anxiously striving because she feels crushed under the weight of other people's expectations. At the same time, be careful not to assume that a lack of motivation is always reflective of laziness; it may be connected to depression, anxiety, burnout, or another underlying struggle. Listen carefully before drawing conclusions. However the girls in your group struggle, this is a great opportunity to point them to the Savior who offers true rest and to remind them that God's approval is based on Christ's perfect record, not theirs.

OPENING QUESTION

When you hear the word *rest*, what comes to mind?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Exodus 20:8–11

Remember that God established this day for the Israelites, but it still has implications for us now. What does this text reveal about those implications? Make sure the girls in your group notice that it was both to cease from work and to keep it holy—meaning that the Sabbath wasn't about lazy self-indulgence but an opportunity for God-centered refreshment.

Psalms 127:2

Galatians 5:22

Keep this in mind for discussion later: The growth of spiritual fruit helps us discern between godly rest and laziness!

Matthew 11:28–29

Hear his tender invitation!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What activities do you find restful and refreshing? What activities tempt you toward laziness? (If you're unsure, remember to evaluate based on the fruit it produces!)
2. How can you better receive rest as the good gift it's meant to be?
3. How might rest help you find joy in Christ?

Chapter 12

THE GIFT AND GIVER OF EXERCISE

LEADER'S NOTE

You won't find any chapters or verses in Scripture commanding exercise routines (although you will find lots and lots of walking—just think of Jesus, the disciples, and Paul and all the walking they did for ministry!) And yet there is significance in the fact that God designed our bodies for movement. Exercise is a good gift that benefits our physical and mental health in remarkable ways. And since God uses our embodied experiences to help shape and teach us, exercise can benefit us spiritually too. While physical exercise does *not* automatically lead to godliness, the discipline, perseverance, and endurance cultivated through it can be used by the Spirit to help us grow those same spiritual qualities. For example, disciplining my body to go for a run even when I don't feel like it can help me grow in the discipline of studying the Bible even when I don't feel like it, because I'm learning through physical practice that I *need* discipline and can't just live by fleeting motivation.

As you lead, be mindful (and sympathetic) that some girls may have temporary or permanent physical conditions that make exercise especially difficult or inaccessible. Help the girls understand that faithful stewardship of our bodies looks different for each person—and that the goal isn't comparison or performance but using whatever strength God has given us to serve him and others.

OPENING QUESTION

Have you ever heard someone say “Treat your body like a temple?” in reference to fitness? What are some ways that this biblical idea (1 Cor. 6:19) can be misunderstood or misapplied?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

The following passages primarily address spiritual realities, using athletic training and competition as metaphors or illustrations. But that doesn't make them irrelevant to exercise! Help the girls see *why* Scripture uses these specific metaphors. Ask questions like “Why do you think this passage references a race? What qualities developed through physical training are also important in following Christ?”

1 Timothy 4:7–8

Hebrews 12:1–2

1 Corinthians 9:24–26

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you currently have any exercise habits or routines? Why or why not?
2. How can you better use exercise as the good gift it's meant to be?
3. How might exercise help you find joy in Christ?

Chapter 13

THE GIFT AND GIVER OF BEAUTY

LEADER'S NOTE

Today's discussion will be a balancing act! Girls face all kinds of toxic messages and pressures around beauty, and it's important to help them identify and combat these messages. But be careful not to convey that it's wrong to appreciate and pursue beauty. Nobody loves or has cultivated more beauty than God! The more you keep beauty connected to God, the more the girls can enjoy it as the gift it is, without grasping after—or being wounded by—Satan's distortions.

When you discuss modesty, keep the idea of *honor* at the forefront. Modesty is ultimately about honoring God, honoring our own bodies, and honoring each other—it is *not* about covering our bodies because they are shameful or bad. Yet too often this is what is communicated. Seek to help the girls develop a vision of beauty (and modesty!) that is built on celebrating and honoring what God created good.

OPENING QUESTION

Name five very different things you find beautiful. (*Encourage a wide range of answers: curly hair, the color blue, roses, and so on.*)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Psalm 27:4

All true beauty originates with and is ultimately found in God.

Matthew 22:37–39

Love should be at the center of all we do—including how we pursue beauty.

1 Corinthians 12:22–24

This passage is about the church, but the illustration also expresses truth about our bodies. Note the connection between “modesty” and “honor.”

1 Timothy 2:9–10

Remind the girls of the reason behind these instructions: Christian women are called to adorn themselves in such a way that reflects who they are in Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you seek to communicate through your appearance? How does it reflect who you are in Christ?
2. How can you better cultivate beauty as the good gift it's meant to be?
3. How might beauty help you find joy in Christ?

Chapter 14

THE GIFT AND GIVER OF SEX

LEADER'S NOTE

By this point, you have already led several tender and sensitive discussions. As you prepare for this one, remember that you are not only helping the girls process the struggles and experiences they have already faced but also preparing them for struggles they may face in the future. Some girls in your group may already be wrestling with sexual sin, and others will likely face these temptations someday.

This conversation requires both seriousness and grace. We do not want to reinforce the shame and condemnation that often accompany these struggles—but if we are too casual (“oh, it’s just like any other sin”), we fail to protect these girls from the danger sexual sin poses, both physically and spiritually. This doesn’t mean that sexual sin can’t be forgiven or that only especially “bad” people struggle with it. Sexual sin *is* a common temptation. (After all, why else would the New Testament address it so frequently?) Yet because sex is so powerful, sexual sin can cause immense pain, regret, and harm. Your task is to offer a serious, loving warning against sexual sin while also holding out the beautiful, redemptive, and cleansing hope of the gospel. Shame causes us to hide from Christ, but you can help the girls see that there is no sin he will not joyfully forgive. Whatever their past failures or whatever struggles they face in the future, that is the most important takeaway!

OPENING QUESTION

Do you have any questions after reading this chapter?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31–32

The physical union of sex was always meant to be accompanied by the security of lifelong covenant love. That Paul links this union to Christ and the church demonstrates this.

1 Corinthians 6:9–11

Emphasize that this passage is a warning to those who persist in these sins without repentance. Point out that the phrase “and such were some of you” in verse 11 is a powerful turning point.

These sins might be a part of our past (even as Christians), but in Christ we are washed, sanctified, and justified.

1 Corinthians 6:16–20

This also captures why sexual sin is serious: It's not just a sin outside us but a sin against our own bodies, which are the temple of God.

1 Thessalonians 4:3–4, 7–8

Point out how verses 3 and 8 show that this isn't just a sexually repressive message the church absorbed from the culture around them at some point in history: This is the will of God—who is their wise, loving, and protective Father!

Romans 8:1

Sin—especially sexual sin—can often leave us feeling condemned. Encourage them to memorize and regularly meditate on this verse. It is such good news!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Did anything surprise you about God's purposes for sex? How are his purposes designed to bring blessings and protection?
2. How can you better trust God's boundaries for the gift of sex?
3. How might unmet longings—including sexual desires—help you find joy in Christ?

Conclusion

LOOK FORWARD TO WHAT'S TO COME

LEADER'S NOTE

This week ends on a joyous note! The girls in your group have already tasted the struggles and joys that accompany life as embodied image bearers. And most likely they will face hard and confusing experiences in the days ahead. But through Christ and the promise of eternal life, they have an *amazing* future awaiting them. Just as you started this journey focusing on the goodness of their bodies, now you will end focusing on the even greater goodness of their future bodily resurrection. Encourage them to wonder and hope and imagine what that future might be like. Stir their imaginations. Remind them that heaven isn't just filled with floating harps. They will be in the presence of God. They will be able to touch the hands that were scarred for them. They will dwell in his kingdom—a place more real than anything they've ever known.

OPENING QUESTION

What makes you most excited about heaven?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO READ & DISCUSS

Psalm 90:12

Remembering our mortality helps us walk in wisdom now!

2 Corinthians 4:16–18

Philippians 3:20–21

Romans 8:11

Revelation 21:4

LET'S WONDER TOGETHER . . .

There is much we don't know about the new heaven and the new earth. But we do know it will be a real place and that we will have physical bodies. Consider all we've learned about our bodies and God's good gifts in creation. What do you imagine life will be like in the new earth, where there will be no more sin or curse and we will have resurrected bodies and perfect communion with God? If the *good* things we enjoy now are just shadows of what's to come, how can you better receive those gifts in a way that increases your anticipation of heaven? And when you consider the difficulties of embodied life in this fallen world, what do you most long for about the restoration that heaven will bring?