

## **Bible Study Guide: Intimacy for Sale – Self(less) Love**

*Proverbs 30:18-20 (Reformed, Christ-Centered, Baptist Framework)*

### **Hook (Icebreaker – 5-8 minutes)**

Ask the group:

**“What’s something in everyday life that still fills you with a sense of wonder or mystery—like something you can explain scientifically but it still leaves you in awe?”** (Examples: a soaring eagle, a starry night, a perfectly timed song, or the birth of a child.)

Follow up: “Why do you think our culture has lost much of that wonder when it comes to marriage and physical intimacy? Have you felt that loss yourself?”

*This gets people talking personally without jumping straight into vulnerability.*

### **Brief Outline & Summary of the Main Passage**

#### **Proverbs 30:18-20 (ESV)**

18 Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand:

19 the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a virgin.

20 This is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth and says, “I have done no wrong.”

#### **Summary:**

Agur, an ancient Israelite sage, uses poetic Hebrew parallelism (the “three...four” structure) to express awe at four mysterious “ways” or journeys. He highlights the fourth—the intimate union of a man and a virgin—as especially wondrous and humbling. He then sharply contrasts this with the adulteress who treats intimacy like a casual snack: no awe, no commitment, no guilt.

The passage is not a how-to manual but a meditative poem calling God’s people to recapture the God-given wonder of marital intimacy, which our culture has cheapened into something ordinary and selfish. In a Reformed, Christ-centered view, this wonder is a good gift from the Creator (Genesis 2:24) that ultimately points us to our greater Bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

#### **Main Teaching Points** (from the sermon):

1. **Intimacy is a Humbling Mystery**—but we've made it casual and ordinary.
2. **Intimacy is a Graceful Journey**—but we've made it selfish and solitary.
3. **Intimacy Points to the Ultimate Wonder**—stirring an ache only Christ can satisfy.

## Discussion Questions (Choose 3-4 based on time and group)

1. **Content Question:** Agur compares marital intimacy to an eagle riding the wind, a serpent gliding on rock, and a ship on the seas. What do these images teach us about the nature of godly intimacy? How does the adulteress in verse 20 stand in stark contrast? (Focus on wonder vs. casual consumption.)
2. **Application Question:** In what ways has our culture (dating apps, media, hook-up culture) tried to make intimacy "just another appetite," like eating a snack? Share (without graphic details) how this mindset has affected your own heart, your family, or your church community. What would it look like to recapture biblical awe and humility instead?
3. **Application Question:** The sermon describes marriage as a "graceful journey" of becoming one flesh (Genesis 2:24). For those who are married: Are there areas where you and your spouse have drifted into solitary living rather than a shared journey? For singles and students: How can you resist the cultural pressure to "find yourself first" and instead prepare your heart for a covenant partnership under Christ?
4. **Christ-Centered Application:** Even the best human marriages leave us with an ache that no spouse can fully satisfy. How does Proverbs 30 point us to Jesus as the ultimate Bridegroom? How does the gospel offer hope and healing to those who are single, disappointed in marriage, or wounded by sexual sin?

## Hints for Adult Neighborhood Group Leaders

- **Tone:** Keep the discussion honest but guarded—model gospel humility rather than oversharing graphic details. Redirect any crude humor back to Scripture.
- **Pastoral Care:** Be ready for people carrying shame from past sin or current struggles. Remind the group that Christ cleanses and restores (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Offer to pray privately with individuals afterward.
- **Reformed Emphasis:** Stress that marriage and sexuality are good gifts of common grace, corrupted by the Fall, but redeemed and elevated by union with Christ.
- **Time Management:** Use the hook + passage reading (5 min), teaching summary (10 min), questions (25-35 min), prayer (10 min). Close by singing or reading a

hymn stanza about Christ's faithful love (e.g., "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" or "How Deep the Father's Love").

## Hints for Middle & High School Sunday School Teachers

- **Age-Appropriate Language:** Use words like "physical closeness in marriage," "God's good gift of marriage," and "treating God's gifts casually." Avoid graphic descriptions. Focus more on wonder, commitment, and waiting with purpose.
- **Engagement:** Start with relatable teen experiences (social media pressure, dating culture, feeling "behind" if single). Use the eagle/ship illustrations—they love visuals of wonder.
- **Gospel Focus:** Teens need hope. Emphasize that Jesus is the faithful companion who never leaves, whether they marry or not. Frame purity as joy-filled pursuit of Christ, not mere rule-keeping.
- **Practical Helps:** Consider a short video clip of an eagle soaring or a sailboat (if available). End with clear application: "Prepare your heart now for whatever God has—singleness for His glory or covenant marriage that pictures Christ and the Church." Pray specifically for protection from cultural lies.
- **Parental Tie-In:** Encourage students to talk with parents about these things at home.

**Closing Prayer Focus:** Thank God for the gift of marriage as a signpost to Christ. Ask for renewed wonder, grace for the journey, and satisfaction in Jesus above all human loves.

May this study reawaken awe in God's good design and drive us all to our perfect Bridegroom, Jesus Christ.