

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

Pure Pleasure

A Biblical, Historical, and Scientific Approach to Love, Sex, and Dating

A Six-Week Small Group Study

Ivan Griffin

This workbook belongs to

Group / church

A Word Before You Begin

Thank you for picking up this book, and for being willing to do something harder than reading it.

Pure Pleasure was written because most of us were handed either silence or slogans on this subject. Silence left us to figure it out from friends and screens. Slogans left us with rules we could not keep and no idea why they existed. Neither one told us the truth: that God designed sex, that He designed it well, and that His instructions about it are protecting something far better than what we keep trading it for.

This workbook takes the nine chapters of the book and walks a group through them in six sessions. It is not a summary and it will not do the reading for you. It is a place to think honestly, write privately, and answer questions out loud that most of us have never been asked.

A word about how to use it. The pages with lines are yours. No one collects this workbook, no one grades it, and you never have to read aloud what you have written. Some of the most important work in these six weeks happens on the private reflection pages, alone, later in the week.

A word about honesty. This study will go exactly as deep as the group is willing to go, and the group will go exactly as deep as the first person who tells the truth. Somebody has to go first. It might as well be you.

And a word about grace, before you read a single question. The last chapter of the book is about freedom, and it is there on purpose. Nothing in these six weeks is designed to shame you. If you come to a page and realize you are further from where you want to be than you thought, that is not the study failing. That is the study working.

— Ivan Griffin

How to Use This Workbook

- Read the assigned chapters before each session. The list is on the session opening page and again in the weekly reading plan.
- Bring this workbook and a pen every week. You will be writing during the session, not only after it.
- Answer the discussion questions in writing before you arrive if you can. You will speak more freely if you have already thought it through.
- The Private Reflection pages are not group material. Nobody will ask you to share them. Answer those with complete honesty — that is where they earn their keep.
- The Notes pages are for whatever your leader teaches that is not printed here. Every group emphasizes something different.
- Do the weekly commitment. A study you only discuss changes nothing. Each session ends with one specific thing to do before the next one.

WHAT EACH SESSION CONTAINS

Before You Come	The chapters to read and what to watch for while reading.
Big Idea	The one sentence the session is built on.
Key Scriptures	The passages your group will work through.
Opening Question	The warm-up. Short answers.
Session Notes	Ruled space for whatever your leader teaches.
Discussion	The questions your group will actually talk about, with room to write first.
Private Reflection	Yours alone. Nobody will ask you to share these.
This Week	One specific commitment, and the reading for next time.

Our Group Covenant

Read this aloud together in Session 1. Read it again in Session 5. This is what makes an honest conversation possible in a room full of people who have not yet earned each other's trust.

- What is said in the room stays in the room.
- No one is required to share. Silence is an acceptable answer to any question.
- Speak from your own experience. Say “I have struggled with” rather than “people struggle with.”
- No condemnation — toward anyone else, or toward yourself.
- No graphic detail. Confession belongs in the group; specifics belong with an accountability partner or a counselor.
- Do not correct someone else's story in the moment.
- Disagreement is allowed. A group that cannot disagree will not be honest.

I AGREE TO THIS

Signed _____ Date _____

THE PEOPLE IN MY GROUP

Write their names. You are going to be in a room with them for six weeks.

The Six Sessions

	Session	Chapters	Big Idea
1	The Great Mystery	Chapter 1	Sex is a spiritual bond, not just a physical act.
2	The Root Beneath the Fruit	Chapters 2–3	Fornication is the fruit; lust is the root.
3	The Way Out	Chapter 4	A practical, Spirit-dependent plan for freedom.
4	Counting the Cost	Chapters 5–6	The real consequences, and where dating came from.
5	Love, Agapao, and the Waiting	Chapters 6–7	Feelings cannot carry a marriage; agapao can.
6	From Meeting to Marriage — and Freedom	Chapters 8–9	A path to marriage, and the grace to finish.

READING PLAN

Read before the session, not after. The discussion assumes you have.

Before Session 1	Chapter 1 — The Great Mystery
Before Session 2	Chapter 2 — Why All the Fuss About Lust; Chapter 3 — Artificial Stimulation. Also read Psalm 51 slowly on three different days.
Before Session 3	Chapter 4 — The Way Out, in full. It is the longest and most practical chapter in the book. Come with your top three trigger situations already written down.
Before Session 4	Chapter 5 — The Aftermath; Chapter 6 — The Evolution of Dating. Session 4 deals directly with sexually transmitted infection and abortion.
Before Session 5	Re-read the Seasons of Loneliness section of Chapter 6, and read Chapter 7 — What's Love Got to Do With It?
Before Session 6	Chapter 8 — From Meeting to Marriage; Chapter 9 — Freedom. Come ready to describe, in one paragraph, what your own process for finding a spouse will look like from here.

1

SESSION ONE

The Great Mystery

Chapter 1 — The Great Mystery

BIG IDEA

Sex was designed to create an unbreakable bond that pictures Christ and His church. Once you see what it is for, purity stops being a rule you keep and becomes a treasure you protect.

BEFORE YOU COME — WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- The one-flesh bond is spiritual before it is physical — Mark 10:6–9 does not say the two act like one or feel like one.
- Why Paul calls marriage a great mystery, and what a husband and wife are picturing without realizing it.
- The Hebrew word yada' — to know — and what it means that the same word describes knowing God.
- The neurochemistry of bonding, and why it is evidence of design rather than an argument against it.
- The rationalizations we use, and the difference between remorse and repentance.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Mark 10:6–9; Ephesians 5:22–33; 1 Corinthians 6:16–17; Genesis 4:1; Psalm 51; Matthew 5:6; 1 Corinthians 10:13

Which of these do you want to sit with this week? Write it here and why.

Session 1 – Opening

In one sentence: what did you learn about sex growing up, and where did you learn it — home, church, friends, or a screen?

SESSION NOTES

Write what your leader teaches that is not printed in this workbook.

Session 1 — Discussion

ROUND ONE

1. Why is sex outside of the covenant of marriage such a big deal? Push past “because the Bible says so” to the bond itself.

2. Before this session, had you thought of sex as a spiritual event or a physical one? What changes if it is both?

3. The chapter argues that the neurochemistry is God’s design, not an accident. What does that tell you about how He views this?

4. If someone said, “I don’t experience any spiritual connection — for me it’s just sex,” how would you respond?

Session 1 — Discussion, Round Two

1. In what ways have you rationalized sexual sin?

2. What is the difference between feeling bad about sin and repenting of it? Which one describes your last few years?

3. Do you actually believe you could be happier and more satisfied living this God's way? Be honest — most of us say yes and live no.

4. If you have not resolved to live a sexually pure life, what is keeping you from deciding today?

Session 1 — Private Reflection

These pages are yours. No one will ask you to read them aloud. Answer them later in the week, alone, and answer them honestly — that is the only thing that makes them worth anything.

Write down one rationalization you have personally used. Then, underneath it, write one sentence naming what it actually is.

Read Psalm 51 slowly. Which verse in it describes where you are right now, and why that one?

What is the treasure you would be protecting if purity stopped being a rule to you? Name it in your own words.

THIS WEEK

Write down one rationalization you have used and one sentence naming what it actually is. Do not show it to anyone. Bring it with you next week.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. — Psalm 51:10

2

SESSION TWO

The Root Beneath the Fruit

Chapters 2–3 — Why All the Fuss About Lust / Artificial Stimulation

BIG IDEA

Fornication is the fruit; lust is the root. God’s standard of not even a hint is not an unreachable rule — it is a claim on the whole heart, and it exposes masturbation and pornography as lust in private rather than harmless outlets.

BEFORE YOU COME — WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- The difference between temptation, an involuntary thought, and the sin of lust.
- Where lust actually comes from — and why James 1:14–15 puts the source closer to home than most of us would like.
- What “not even a hint” in Ephesians 5:3 is really asking for.
- The characteristics of lust: never satisfied, objectifying, and at root a rebellion.
- The spiritual and neurological case against pornography and masturbation, made without shame.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 5:28; Ephesians 5:3; James 1:14–15; Proverbs 4:23; Revelation 3:15–16; Job 31:1; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Song of Solomon 2:7

Which of these do you want to sit with this week? Write it here and why.

Session 2 – Opening

Finish this sentence: "The thing most likely to catch my eye or my attention in a given week is _____."

SESSION NOTES

Write what your leader teaches that is not printed in this workbook.

Session 2 — Discussion

ROUND ONE

1. If you are thinking inappropriate thoughts but no physical act has taken place, why does it matter?

2. Where is the line for you personally between noticing someone and lusting after them? Be specific about what happens in the seconds after you notice.

3. The chapter says the source of lust is our own hearts — not the devil, and not the other person. How does that change who is responsible?

4. Which characteristic of lust hits closest to home: that it is never satisfied, that it objectifies people, or that it is rebellion?

Session 2 — Discussion, Round Two

1. What constitutes just a hint of sexual immorality in your actual life this month?

2. What is the spiritual impact of masturbation, according to the chapter? Do you agree with the argument?

3. What problems can be caused by viewing pornography — spiritually, relationally, and neurologically?

4. What type of physical intimacy does God say is appropriate for dating couples, and in what ways do you need to adjust how you physically express affection?

Session 2 — Private Reflection

These pages are yours. No one will ask you to read them aloud. Answer them later in the week, alone, and answer them honestly — that is the only thing that makes them worth anything.

Make a covenant with your eyes, in writing. One sentence, in your own words. Date it and sign it. Job 31:1 is the model.

List the three situations most likely to lead you into lust. Be specific about place, time of day, and device. You will need this list next week.

What have you been calling harmless that this chapter names as something else? Write it plainly, and write what you intend to do about it.

THIS WEEK

Write your covenant with your eyes — one sentence, dated and signed by you. Then identify your top three trigger situations in writing and bring them to Session 3.

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality. — Ephesians 5:3

3

SESSION THREE

The Way Out

Chapter 4 — The Way Out

BIG IDEA

There is a practical, seven-step plan for freedom — but every step is our half of a partnership. The steps keep the heart tender; the Holy Spirit does what we cannot.

BEFORE YOU COME — WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Step one, and why nothing else in the chapter works without it: you have to want to be free.
- The red lizard, and the ghost who kept saying “not yet” while complaining about the thing on his shoulder.
- The remaining six steps: flee temptation, take every thought captive, make a covenant with your eyes, do not feed lust, plant hedges of protection, and get an accountability partner.
- Why the power of temptation lies in timing, and why the decision has to be made before the moment arrives.
- That these steps are cooperation with God, not self-deliverance. They keep the heart from hardening; He does the delivering.

KEY SCRIPTURES

1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Timothy 2:22; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:8; Job 31:1; Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16; Proverbs 27:17; James 5:16

Which of these do you want to sit with this week? Write it here and why.

Session 3 – Opening

What is one thing you have already tried in order to stop, and how did it work?

SESSION NOTES

Write what your leader teaches that is not printed in this workbook.

Session 3 — Discussion

ROUND ONE

1. Be honest with yourself before you answer out loud: are you actually ready for your red lizard to die, or are you still saying not yet?

2. What is your version of the lizard's last pitch — the argument your own mind makes for keeping this?

3. The chapter says we hold on because we do not trust that God has something better. Where does your trust actually break down?

4. What would have to be true for your hunger for righteousness to outweigh your hunger for lust?

Session 3 — Build Your Plan

You will fill this out during the session. Be specific enough that someone else could verify it. A principle is not a plan.

My first trigger situation — a place, a time of day, a device, or a person	
The hedge I will plant for it this week (a change someone else could verify)	
My second trigger situation	
The hedge I will plant for it this week	
My plan for the first ten seconds after temptation comes	
The same-sex person I will ask to be my accountability partner	
The day I will ask them	

The seven steps of Chapter 4, for reference: want to • flee temptation • take every thought captive • make a covenant with your eyes • do not feed lust • plant hedges of protection • get an accountability partner.

Session 3 — Private Reflection

These pages are yours. No one will ask you to read them aloud. Answer them later in the week, alone, and answer them honestly — that is the only thing that makes them worth anything.

Write your why in one sentence, beginning with the words “I want to stop because...” This sentence is your anchor. You will need it at eleven o’clock at night when nobody would know.

What will you do the first time you fail? Decide now, in writing, before it happens.

Which of the seven steps have you been skipping, and which one have you been substituting for it?

THIS WEEK

Ask your accountability partner this week. Not next month. Put the conversation on the calendar before you leave the session.

Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. — Galatians 5:16

4

SESSION FOUR

Counting the Cost

Chapters 5–6 — The Aftermath / The Evolution of Dating

BIG IDEA

Sexual sin has consequences the church rarely names out loud, and the dating system we inherited is barely a century old — it quietly replaced the honor of marriage with a rehearsal for it.

Please read before this session

This session deals directly with sexually transmitted infection and abortion. Some people in your group carry that history. There is no condemnation here. Help-line numbers are printed at the back of this workbook — take one, or take one for someone else.

BEFORE YOU COME — WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- The physical aftermath, and why “safe sex” is not the same claim it sounds like.
- The biblical case that the unborn are human beings — Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1:41 — and the fact that men share full responsibility.
- The emotional aftermath that follows people for years, and the resources that exist for it.
- Where exclusive dating actually came from historically, and how recent it is.
- The Jewish wedding customs, and what they show about how Christ pursues His church.
- What it means for marriage to be held in honor by everyone — Hebrews 13:4.

KEY SCRIPTURES

1 Corinthians 6:19–20; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:41; Deuteronomy 19:10; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 7:2–4; Ruth 3:1; 1 Corinthians 10:23

Which of these do you want to sit with this week? Write it here and why.

Session 4 – Opening

What is one consequence of sexual sin that you think the church talks about too little?

SESSION NOTES

Write what your leader teaches that is not printed in this workbook.

Session 4 — Discussion

ROUND ONE

1. How will you protect yourself from infection, pregnancy, and sexual sin — in that order, or a different one?

2. What does the Bible tell us about abortion, based on what you read this week?

3. If someone you know is considering an abortion, what would you actually say and do to support carrying to term? Be concrete — housing, money, time.

4. Where has the church in your experience been silent on these things, and what did that silence cost?

Session 4 — Discussion, Round Two

1. What does it mean, practically, for marriage to be held in honor?

2. Prior to marriage, what rights does God give you regarding a romantic interest? At what point does He recognize a person as yours?

3. What does the Jewish wedding custom tell you about God's design for marriage — and about how Christ pursues His church?

4. Do you agree that exclusive dating is unwise even though it is not sin? Argue the other side if you disagree.

Session 4 — Private Reflection

These pages are yours. No one will ask you to read them aloud. Answer them later in the week, alone, and answer them honestly — that is the only thing that makes them worth anything.

Are you in need of healing from something in this chapter? This question is not for the group. Answer it here, and then decide who you will tell.

What would it look like this month to treat marriage as something set apart rather than something you are already rehearsing?

Is there a person you owe an apology to — not a confession to the group, but an apology to them? Write the name here only if you intend to do it.

THIS WEEK

Write one sentence answering this: what would it look like this month for me to treat marriage as something set apart rather than something I am already rehearsing?

Let marriage be held in honor among all. — Hebrews 13:4

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SESSION FIVE

Love, Agapao, and the Waiting

Seasons of Loneliness (Chapter 6) and Chapter 7 — What's Love Got to Do With It?

BIG IDEA

Feelings cannot carry a marriage; agapao can. And the season of singleness is not dead time before real life — it holds a gift that no other season offers.

BEFORE YOU COME — WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Agapao as a decision and an action rather than a feeling — and why Ephesians 5:25 is a command, which feelings cannot be.
- Luke 6:27–36, where we are told to love people who have not earned it.
- What Jesus was actually asking Peter three times in John 21, and why the word matters.
- The gift in the season of singleness that 1 Corinthians 7:35 names — undistracted devotion.
- Contentment that does not depend on circumstances, and why Paul says he had to learn it.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Ephesians 5:25; Luke 6:27–36; Romans 13:8; John 21:15–17; 1 Corinthians 7:35; Philippians 4:11–13; Ecclesiastes 3:1; Revelation 2:4; Colossians 1:11

Which of these do you want to sit with this week? Write it here and why.

Session 5 – Opening

Name a couple you admire who have been married a long time. What is the one thing you notice about how they treat each other?

SESSION NOTES

Write what your leader teaches that is not printed in this workbook.

Session 5 — Discussion

ROUND ONE

1. What are the differences between love and agapao, in your own words?

2. We all want a marriage full of both. Which do you actually value more day to day, and why?

3. How well are you doing at agapao right now? Then the harder half: how would the people closest to you answer that about you?

4. Name one relationship — spouse, ex, family member, coworker — where you owe agapao and are withholding it. You do not have to say the name out loud.

Session 5 — Discussion, Round Two

1. What role should romantic love play in choosing a mate — and what happens when it plays a larger role than that?

2. If you are single and in a season of loneliness, what might God want you to gain in this season that you could not gain in another?

3. If you are married: what do you know now about waiting, or about not waiting, that you wish someone had told you then?

4. Is there something you are gripping the way Laura Bagby gripped her Isaac? What would laying it down look like this week?

Session 5 — Private Reflection

These pages are yours. No one will ask you to read them aloud. Answer them later in the week, alone, and answer them honestly — that is the only thing that makes them worth anything.

Write the name from question four of the first round here, where nobody will see it. Then write the one specific act of agapao you owe that person.

If you are single: name one gift available to you in this season that would not be available to you married. Then name what you are doing with it.

Where has contentment become conditional for you — “I will be content when...”? Finish that sentence honestly, and then sit with what you wrote.

THIS WEEK

Do one concrete act of agapao this week for someone who has not earned it, and tell no one you did it.

I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. — Philippians 4:11

6

SESSION SIX

From Meeting to Marriage — and Freedom

Chapters 8–9 — From Meeting to Marriage / Freedom

BIG IDEA

There is a workable path from meeting to marriage that keeps purity intact: character, friendship, boundaries, counsel, decision. And when you fail along the way, grace is not a loophole — it is the only way anyone finishes.

BEFORE YOU COME — WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- What to look for in character before feelings get a vote — and the warning in 2 Corinthians 6:14–15.
- Friendship first, and what you can learn about a person that you cannot learn any other way.
- Boundaries decided in advance: where, when, and with whom.
- The role of outside counsel — Proverbs 15:22 — and why the people who love you see what you cannot.
- Repentance that is more than remorse, and Romans 8:1: there is now no condemnation.
- Psalm 103:12, and the fact that the series ends here on purpose.

KEY SCRIPTURES

2 Corinthians 6:14–15; Titus 2:4; Proverbs 31:11–12; 1 Timothy 5:1–2; Proverbs 15:22; Song of Solomon 8:4; Romans 8:1; 1 John 1:9; John 8:11; Galatians 6:1; Psalm 103:8–12

Which of these do you want to sit with this week? Write it here and why.

Session 6 – Opening

What is one thing that has actually changed for you in the last five weeks — a habit, a boundary, a conversation, a decision?

SESSION NOTES

Write what your leader teaches that is not printed in this workbook.

Session 6 — Discussion

ROUND ONE

1. Describe what your process for finding a spouse will look like from now on. If you are married: describe what you would tell a younger person to do.

2. Does kissing get you aroused, leave you wanting more, or make it harder to resist temptation? What are you going to do about that?

3. What boundaries are you actually setting — where, when, and with whom?

4. How do you handle conflict? If someone who knows you well answered that question about you, what would they say?

Session 6 — Discussion, Round Two

1. How has sexual sin changed your life? Have you repented and accepted God's forgiveness — both halves of that question?

2. What does true repentance from these sins actually look like in daily practice?

3. How have guilt and condemnation affected your relationship with Christ?

4. Where have you been the person throwing stones rather than restoring gently?

Session 6 — Private Reflection

These pages are yours. No one will ask you to read them aloud. Answer them later in the week, alone, and answer them honestly — that is the only thing that makes them worth anything.

Write your process for pursuing marriage in concrete steps — not principles. What happens first, second, third?

Is there anything you have confessed to God and never actually accepted forgiveness for? Write it here, and then write Romans 8:1 underneath it in your own handwriting.

Six weeks ago you started this study. What is the one sentence you would write to the person you were then?

THIS WEEK

Write the specific commitment you are making as of today on the final page of this workbook. Date it. Keep it where you will see it. Give a copy to your accountability partner, and schedule your first monthly check-in before you leave.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. — Psalm 103:12

Choosing an Accountability Partner

Sexual sin thrives in secrecy and isolation. It grows in the dark. Proverbs 27:17 — iron sharpens iron. James 5:16 — confess your sins to one another.

- Same sex, always. Men understand male perspectives; women understand female ones.
- Like-minded — someone who shares the commitment to pursue righteousness, not someone who will tell you it is not a big deal.
- Both of you agree to ask the hard questions, and both of you agree to answer honestly.
- The role is not counselor. The role is to strengthen (Romans 15:1–2, Ecclesiastes 4:12), support (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10), and encourage (1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 3:13).
- Restore gently, never with condemnation (Galatians 6:1).
- Meet or call on a fixed schedule. Sin that only comes up when someone remembers to ask does not come up.

MY ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

Name	
Phone / email	
The day I asked them	
How often we will talk	
The next check-in on my calendar	

THE QUESTIONS WE WILL ASK EACH OTHER

Write the three or four questions you want asked every time. Decide them now, while you are thinking clearly.

Take one of these numbers for yourself, or take one so you have it when someone else needs it. You do not have to explain to anyone why you wrote it down.

If you are facing current abuse, ongoing coercion, or thoughts of self-harm, this workbook is not the right help. Tell your group leader or your pastor this week, and ask them to connect you with a licensed counselor.

Where This Leaves You

If you have finished these six weeks and you are further along than you were, thank God for it and keep going. Victory today is not an inoculation against tomorrow. The more you resist, the weaker temptation gets — and the moment you decide you are standing firm is the moment to be careful.

If you have finished these six weeks and nothing has changed yet, read this slowly. You are not disqualified. Very often the first thing God gives is not the virtue itself but the power of always trying again. Ask forgiveness, get up, and go again. That is not failure with a nice name on it. That is the process.

Either way, the last word is not a challenge. It is Psalm 103:12. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Read it again in a week. Read it again in a year.

MY COMMITMENT

Write it in one sentence. Date it. Keep it where you will see it, and give a copy to your accountability partner.

Signed _____ Date _____

This workbook accompanies Pure Pleasure: A Biblical, Historical, and Scientific Approach to Love, Sex, and Dating by Ivan Griffin. All chapter content, scripture selections, and the discussion questions drawn from the end of each chapter are taken from that book. Read the chapters — this workbook is a companion to them, not a replacement for them.