**DESCRIPTION**

**AWKWARD**

This is a series about…well, sexuality. Sex is everywhere in our culture and much of what we are being told by culture is, at best confused and at worst, deceitful. We have a lot to talk about and I promise it won’t be boring. But, be warned. It will be awkward.

**AWKWARD 1 | NORMAL**

Normal has a funny way of moving. What we once considered outrageous or scandalous can quickly become mundane and normal. This phenomenon is especially true with sexuality. What is normal when it comes to sexuality? Who decides? Is being normal even the goal?

**Grab the Room** by introducing the “Awkward” series

**Create tension** by explaining how normal moves

**Engage the Text**: Genesis 39, Genesis 2:24 and Proverbs 14:12

The **Bottom Line** of this teaching is this: Asking what did God intend is better than asking what’s normal.

**Clearly Apply**: Encourage your students to create or recreate boundaries.

**OUTLINE**

1. **AWKWARD**

Introduce the awkward series. Be funny. Talking about sex is awkward so go ahead and be a little awkward.

1. **NORMAL MOVES**

Introduce tension by asking this question: “Have you ever noticed that normal moves?” Talk about how styles have changed over time. Transition to issues of sexuality by saying, “It’s not just styles that move is it?” Nothing has influenced how normal moves more than TV and movies. Give examples of how sexual boundaries have been blurred over the last 50 years by TV and movies

1. **TENSION**

Ask these question, “So, in terms of sexuality, what is normal? How do you know? Is this even the right question?” These are the questions we want to explore tonight. We’ll find some great answers in a story about a guy who was moved against his will and found himself in a very interesting situation.

1. **BACKGROUND ON JOSEPH**

Ask, “Have you ever gotten into a fight with a brother or sister? Did the fight get so bad that your siblings sold you into slavery? Yeah me either.” Joseph found himself in this exact situation, he was moved against his will into totally different culture. Highlight the differences between ancient Jewish culture and Egyptian culture.

1. **POTIPHER’S WIFE**

Most teenage guys dream of this scenario. She is older and more experienced. She probably wasn’t exactly hard on the eyes. She wants you with no strings attached. It’s a no-brainer.

1. **NEW COUNTRY, NEW RULES**

Sure, Joseph grew up with rules and boundaries, but things have changed. He’s in a totally different culture that plays by different rules. This sort of thing is totally normal here. I know very few people who wouldn’t go for this.

1. **THE GOLDEN QUESTION**

“How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God.” Joseph brings God into the conversation. To Joseph, it isn’t just about him, this woman and what is normal. It’s about what God intended for sex in the first place.

1. **WHAT DOES GOD WANT?**
2. **WHAT HAS MOVED?**

For Joseph, normal moved when he was transported to Egypt. How has normal moved for us?

1. **PAYING THE PRICE**

It didn’t turn out so well for Joseph. He was thrown into jail for a very long time, for doing the right thing. We must understand that our culture will often penalize us for following God’s design.

1. **IS IT WORTH IT?**

So, follow God’s design and everything will suck? Sounds great? Well, God did bless Joseph in incredible ways later in his life. It is the same with our sexuality. If we follow God’s design, we will experience incredible blessing later.

1. **AGAINST THE FLOW**

Each of us has to make a difficult decision. Who makes the rules? Are you going to play by what’s normal or are you going to play by God’s design?

1. **THE WAY THAT LEADS TO DEATH**

Let’s land this teaching with a famous Proverb. Read Proverbs 14:12

1. **BOUNDARIES**

Challenge students to commit to God’s design and encourage those who have fallen for “normal” to return to God’s design. It’s never too late. You’re never too far gone.

1. **SMALL GROUPS**

**SCRIPT**

**AWKWARD**

I want to tell you about the most awkward conversation of my life. I was sitting at the kitchen table with my dad. He was visibly very nervous. He kept sort of mumbling and doing things with his hands that nervous people do. It was weird because my dad is basically the most confident and manly person I know.

Sitting there at the table, he started to talk about the birds and the bees. Why is it that we can’t just say the word? It’s so awkward to talk about that we invent different words to refer to it. That’s exactly what my dad did. He started talking about body parts using words that didn’t make any sense and referring things that people do using words that made even less sense. It was…well, awkward.

So, that’s why we’re calling this series the “Awkward” series because it’s awkward to talk about sex! But, we’re going to talk about it anyway because it’s a hugely important topic. I firmly believe that sex is one of the most powerful things in the universe. It’s simultaneously incredible and terribly dangerous. We have to understand what sex is all about if we want to live happy and fulfilling lives.

**NORMAL MOVES**

As we get started, I have a question for you. “Have you ever noticed that normal moves?” I mean, we don’t wear the same thing that people wore in the 70s right? As an example, I want to show you a variety of styles that were “normal” throughout history. Keep in mind that these were the “you don’t want to be seen dead without” styles.

Normal moves. What was normal 20 years ago is not normal now and what is normal now won’t be normal in a few short years.

This phenomenon isn’t just about fashion either. What is normal, morally speaking, also moves. In the 1950, TV was so proper that Lucy and her husband slept in separate beds even though they were married on the “I Love Lucy Show.” Now, you can see all kinds of nasty on TV and in movies. 50 years ago, almost everyone got married in their early 20s and sex before marriage is MAJORALLY out of bounds. It was normal to wait until you were married. Now, culture encourages teenagers to have sex as soon as they are old enough. Normal moves. Even 20 years ago, it was considered culturally shameful in most parts of our country to come out of the closet. Most homosexuals kept their same-sex attraction a secret. Now, homosexuality is celebrated in our culture. Many states have even legalized self-sex marriage. Normal moves.

**TENSION**

So, in terms of sexuality, what is normal? If normal moves, is how we should behave constantly changing? How do we know how to act? Do we just do what’s normal—just do what everyone else is doing? Are these even the right questions?

These are the questions I want to explore tonight. We’ll find some great answers in an ancient biblical story about a guy who was moved against his will and found himself in a very interesting situation.

**BACKGROUND ON JOSEPH**

“Have you ever gotten into a fight with a brother or sister? Who hasn’t right? Did the fight get so bad that your siblings sold you into slavery? Yeah me either.”

Joseph found himself in this exact situation. He and his brothers never really got along. His brothers got so sick of him that they literally sold him into slavery. Can you imagine?!?

So, Joseph was transported from Canaan, where he grew up, to Egypt. These two cultures couldn’t have been more different. He grew up in a strict home, with a dad who was very serious about following the One true God. Egypt was a totally different place, with many gods and vastly different culture practices. Joseph’s normal move…big time.

Eventually, Joseph, now a slave, is bought by a prominent man named Potipher.

The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. 3When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, 4Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. 5From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. 6So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph’s care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate. (Genesis 39:2-6)

Joseph is a pretty smart guy and a very hard worker and he progresses through the ranks of Potipher’s household. Eventually, he’s running the entire house. Even though he is a slave, Potipher trusts Jospeh with everything that belongs to him. And, that’s when things get very interesting.

**POTIPHER’S WIFE**

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, 7and after a while his master’s wife took notice of Joseph and said, “Come to bed with me!”

Most teenage guys dream of this scenario. She is older and more experienced. She probably wasn’t exactly hard on the eyes. She wants you with no strings attached. Technically she’s your boss so you really have to obey. It’s a no-brainer.

**NEW COUNTRY, NEW RULES**

Joseph is in a new country with a different culture. Sure, he grew up in a strict, God-fearing home, but this isn’t his father’s household anymore. Normal has moved. This is something that happened on a regular basis in Egyptian culture. It’s totally normal. So, what is Joseph going to do?

**THE GOLDEN QUESTION**

Listen to how Joseph answers Potipher’s wife: Well, you are my boss… Actually, no, check it out:

But he refused. “With me in charge,” he told her, “my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. 9No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” 10And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

(Genesis 39:8-10)

Joseph is like, “Look Potipher put me in charge of everything…except for you. And then, he brings God into the conversation. To Joseph, it isn’t just about him, this woman and what is normal. It’s about what God intended for sex in the first place. He asks, “What does God want me to do?”

**WHAT DOES GOD WANT?**

God invented sex. Have you ever thought about that? God thought it up. He thought it would be awesome and He gave sex to us as a gift. He designed it and so maybe a better question than “what’s normal” is “what did God intend for sex in the first place?” What is sex for?

Let’s go back to the beginning, when God created everything and listen to how He talked about sex:

24This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. (Genesis 2:24)

Do you know what an innuendo is? It’s like when someone is talking about sex but they aren’t talking about sex. It’s that moment when your friend is like, “Get it?” and starts elbowing you in the ribs? Well, this phrase “joined” is like that. It’s a way of saying sex without saying sex. “Get it?” The idea here is that God designed sex to make a husband and a wife one. Older versions of the Bible say, “One flesh.”

God’s intention for sex is that it would physically, emotionally and spiritually unite two people together for all of life. Last year, we did a teaching called “The Law of Glue” and we talked about how sex is like super glue. When you have sex with someone you are united is a incredibly powerful and irreversible way.

The truth is that God’s design doesn’t change. God’s design doesn’t give a rip about what’s normal. Just because people say sleeping with whoever you want is normal doesn’t change the fact that sex will glue you to the person you sleep with. This is why I said, at the beginning, that sex is simultaneously incredible and terribly dangerous.

So, asking, “what’s normal” is the wrong question. Following along with what everyone else is doing is dangerous. The better question is, “What did God intent for sex in the first place.” I don’t know about you, but I think that the one who invented sex understands sex better than my friends.

**PAYING THE PRICE**

Let’s jump back into the Joseph story. I want to show you something important.

10She kept putting pressure on Joseph day after day, but he refused to sleep with her, and he kept out of her way as much as possible. 11One day, however, no one else was around when he went in to do his work. 12She came and grabbed him by his cloak, demanding, “Come on, sleep with me!” Joseph tore himself away, but he left his cloak in her hand as he ran from the house.

13When she saw that she was holding his cloak and he had fled, 14she called out to her servants. Soon all the men came running. “Look!” she said. “My husband has brought this Hebrew slave here to make fools of us! He came into my room to rape me, but I screamed. 15When he heard me scream, he ran outside and got away, but he left his cloak behind with me.”

16She kept the cloak with her until her husband came home. 17Then she told him her story. “That Hebrew slave you’ve brought into our house tried to come in and fool around with me,” she said. 18“But when I screamed, he ran outside, leaving his cloak with me!”

19Potiphar was furious when he heard his wife’s story about how Joseph had treated her. 20So he took Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king’s prisoners were held, and there he remained. (Genesis 39:10-20)

Joseph did the right thing. He honored God’s design even though he had the ultimate opportunity to secretly pursue an affair with Potipher’s wife. How did it turn out for Joseph? Not great. He was thrown into jail for a very long time, for doing the right thing. We must understand that our culture will often penalize us for following God’s design.

People won’t think you’re cool if you decide to save sex for marriage. It’s not cool to have never even been to 2nd base when the guys are talking in the locker room. You might get laughed at. You might get mocked. But again, who knows what they are talking about? The One who invented sex or your friends who exaggerate their experiences so they can sound cool? I’m going with the One who invented sex.

**IS IT WORTH IT?**

So, you’re asking me to follow God’s design but you can only promise that it will be difficult, that people will probably laugh at me and that I’ll miss out on a lot of fun that my friends are having? Sounds great.

Let me take you to the end of Joseph’s story. Yes, he spent quite a while in jail. Yes, it was terrible, but in the end, God blessed him in incredible ways. In the end, Josesph was released from jail and became the second most powerful person in all of Egypt. In that position, God used him to save millions of people from famine and starvation—including his own family. In fact, in the end, God restored him to his family and they experienced reconciliation. Because Joseph was faithful, God blessed him in incredible ways…later.

The parallels between this story and our sexuality are profound. If you choose to follow God’s design now, it will be difficult. It won’t be fun. People will probably think you are weird. But, I’m telling you that if you save your sexuality for marriage, God will bless you! Sex in marriage is amazing and God will use His gift in powerful ways within that relationship.

In addition, you will experience the blessings of freedom—freedom from so much of the baggage that comes from misusing sex. So many people carry around shame and emotional scars from misusing sex. If you follow God’s design, you will save yourself from all of that pain.

**AGAINST THE FLOW**

Each of us has to make a difficult decision. What rules are you going to play by? We either roll with what everyone else is doing—what’s normal. Or we decide to go against the flow of culture and follow God’s design. We all have to make this decision. God is calling us to a higher standard, not because He doesn’t want us to have any fun, not because He wants us to miss out and live boring lives, but because sex is like glue. And God knows that when you sleep with someone, you are forever bonded with that person in powerful and irreversible ways.

**THE WAY THAT LEADS TO DEATH**

As we close tonight, I want to end with a famous verse from the book of Proverbs. Perhaps you’ve heard it before. It goes like this:

There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death. (Proverbs 14:12)

There is a way that seems o so right! There is a way that everyone is living that looks so enticing. There is a way that sounds so good. But, in the end this way leads to death. In other words, it doesn’t deliver what it promises. It leads to heartache and pain. It leads to regret.

Trust the One who designed sex.

**BOUNDARIES**

As we transition to small groups, I want to have a conversation about boundaries. What are your sexual boundaries? Maybe you’ve never thought of this question. I would encourage you to consider God’s design and set up boundaries. What should those boundaries be? For me, it’s all about asking this question: “Will I be embarrassed to tell my future wife about this?” Will you dread having to tell your future husband about this?” I’ll be crystal clear for you. Anything beyond kissing is really out of bounds. Trust me when I tell you that everything beyond that is really part of what sex is.

So, figure out your boundaries and then tell people you trust who can keep you accountable. Explain your boundaries to every person you get involved with romantically. It’s a lot easier to explain your boundaries over coffee a few weeks into a relationship than during a make out session. “Oh by the way…uh, never mind.”

And, some of you ***had*** boundaries. At some point, you were serious about following God’s design but somehow, those boundaries were crossed. You’ve gone places you regret. You understand, all too well, that sex is like glue and now you are living with the consequences.

I want to encourage you that it’s never too late to return to God’s design. You’re never too far gone to be restored by grace. God’s not angry with you. If you were to read the Gospel stories about Jesus, you would find that in every situation that Jesus encounters a person who made bad decisions morally He responds with grace and love. Even when talking to prostitutes and people who made an absolute mess of their lives, Jesus always responds with gentleness and grace. Please understand that God loves you and it’s never too late to return to Him and return to sexual boundaries.

**SMALL GROUPS**

1. Have a conversation about defining your boundaries
2. If you need to talk to a leader, do it!