

This study guide is intended for the use in personal or small group study of **SEX GOD: EXPLORING THE ENDLESS CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SEXUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY** by Rob Bell. In no way has it been authorized by Mr. Bell or Zondervan books. Feel free to use it, but do not charge any funds for its use.

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1. When you hear the word “sex”, what do you think of? What do you think about when you hear the word “God”? How are the two be related?

2. In the story of Jacob, we are introduced to the concept of an *ebenezer*, or ‘stone of remembrance’ (also referred to as a ‘standing stone’), where someone – in this case, Jacob – put up an altar or a stone to signify a place where God worked in his life. What kinds of heirlooms or keepsakes do you have in your life that symbolize something that happened in your past?

3. Rob Bell introduces a concept of ‘*This* is really about *that*’, where one thing (this), which seems isolated or small, really is symbolic or indicative of something much bigger (that). What kinds of events or people or activities in your life (“this”) do you think might be related to things which are much bigger (“that”)?

3. According to the book of Genesis, man was unique in that God made humans in His own image. What does this mean? What is it that makes us different than anything else in Creation?

4. Bell gives examples of boys 'rating' girls anatomy on a scale from 1 – 10, and of people who rate each other as 'hot or not'. Whether it is sexual or some other way, how do you see people in our society treating other people as objects and not humans? Have you ever objectified another person – or people? How did you feel about doing this? Have you ever felt as if you were being objectified? How did that feel?

5. In the Jewish mind, heaven (the rule of God) and hell (the absence of God's rule) both begin on earth with immediacy – now – and are also imminent eternal destinations. What kinds of things do you do which bring heaven to earth? What kinds of things do you do 'for the hell of it' - which bring hell to earth?

6. As Christians, how do we see people as God sees them? Who are some people (or groups of people) who have very little in common with you – who might be considered enemies of you or your beliefs? How are they just like you – what do you have in common with them? What would be different for you if you were to switch places/circumstances with them? How much are you *really* different from them?

7. Rob Bell tells a story about a sculpture he made for his dad when he was five, which still sits in his father's office. He uses this to introduce the concept that 'how you treat the creation reflects how you feel about the creator'. How does this relate to the way we treat other people? What happens to us when we mistreat other people? What happens to us when we love other people – people who aren't easy to love?

8. In the story about the concentration camp, Bergen-Belsen, a case of lipstick was accidentally sent to the camp after it had been liberated. The diarist called it an 'action of genius, sheer unadulterated brilliance'. Rob Bell summarizes by saying that 'sometimes, the difference between heaven and hell may be a bit of lipstick'. What do you think he means by this?

THIS IS REALLY ABOUT THAT...

In this chapter, what is the “this” that is really about “that”?