

# God Loves Sex

*Online Video Series*



## Workbook for Video Series



The Allender Center  
at The Seattle School



This workbook can be printed and utilized as a place to write your responses and reflections for the God Loves Sex - 4 episode video series.

Dan Allender's book, *God Loves Sex*, is an optional text to consider reading during or after you complete the video series.



# Episode One

## Summary:

Episode One invites us to address the question: Why is it so difficult to be vulnerable with someone I love? What we often don't address in current relationships is how our personal history, especially our sexual past, affects our ability to be open and vulnerable with our partner. Present circumstances and dynamics often trigger sexual shame, and we fail to have a framework to understand what is happening to us. When we feel ambivalent—we want to move toward someone and simultaneously fear doing so—it is crucial to be able to name what we want, what we fear, and how we work to minimize the tension we feel.

## Questions:

- 1 When do I feel the most conflicted as I pursue my partner? How do I tend to lower the tension I feel in those moments?

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What is the fear at the root of those moments of ambivalence?

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What is the history of that fear in other relationships?

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# Episode Two

## Summary:

Episode Two considers the role of our past in our current romantic relationship. Malcolm is smitten by Elizabeth, who is tender, playful, and strong. She is beautiful and compelling and elicits both arousal and fear. Malcolm is caught in the web of ambivalence and feels confused and stymied by his internal war. He has not considered the role of his past sexual abuse, flirtation of a teacher, and the complex inappropriate intimacy of his mother as part of his struggle with Elizabeth. He insists several times: “I don’t get how the past could be affecting my relationship with her.” Malcolm has an immense amount of sexual shame that is causing his desire for Elizabeth to be disrupted. No one is free of sexual shame—it is simply part of growing up in a fallen world. Until we engage the past, we are bound to repeat it.

## Questions:

- 1 What work have you done to engage sexual shame in your life? Or what have you done to escape having to look at the role of shame in your sexuality?

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**2** What are the events and people most related to experiences of sexual shame?

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**3** What seems to trigger sexual shame in your life today?

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# Episode Three

## **Summary:**

Malcolm missed the next appointment and then avoided therapy for several months afterwards. The last session got too close to the unaddressed heartache in his life. He ended the relationship with Elizabeth and spiraled into a period of sabotage to ruin any prospect of repair. During that time, he received a voicemail from his mother that dramatically underscored the inappropriate bond she created to bind them together. Triangulation is when a parent binds the heart of a child as a means of meeting the needs that only a spouse should carry. The child becomes a surrogate spouse with whom the parent is more intimate than they are with their actual spouse. This is a set up for envy, erotic and emotional confusion, and intense ambivalence. Triangulation regularly occurs when a marriage lacks intimacy, emotional connectedness, honesty, and integrity. Malcolm's response is nausea, but he fights his way back to create repair. Finally, we are confronted with the question about our need for beauty. We were made to be aroused and drawn to what we find beautiful. Beauty is not merely in the eye of the beholder, because we are all drawn to what is pure, innocent, and full of life.

## **Questions:**

- 1** How were you used in your family to meet the needs of your mother? Your father?  

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2 If you were triangulated by one parent, how did the other treat you? If another sibling was chosen in your family as the surrogate spouse, how did you feel not being chosen?

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3 What did you gain and lose as a result of your role in your family?

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## Episode Four

### Summary:

After the third session, Malcolm pursued Elizabeth, apologized, and engaged what had provoked his flight from her. He opened the door to his abusive past and the convoluted relationship with his mother. He told her about the voicemail and how he had worked to sabotage his relationships with both Dan and her. Elizabeth offered tears and anger for how he had been harmed, and brought her story into the conversation. Malcolm felt young and innocent and wanted to go play, but also felt aroused and wanted to have sex. He was confused about the intensity of both desires, but he knew that he wanted to pursue Elizabeth and didn't want his past to cause him to run or to use her. There is a growing sensibility that his sexual shame will not rule over his life, nor will his past keep him from creating the relationship that he desires.

### Questions:

- 1 Who knows your story to the depths of the internal war of shame and ambivalence? And if the answer is no one, then what is keeping you from engaging those stories with someone you trust?

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2 What would keep you from letting your partner/spouse walk with you into those stories?

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3 Who has wept for you and been angry on your behalf, and what did it feel like to have both tears and anger for you?

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