

KAT HARRIS



# SEXLESS

*in the city*

A SOMETIMES SASSY, SOMETIMES  
PAINFUL, ALWAYS HONEST LOOK  
AT DATING, DESIRE, AND SEX

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

ZONDERVAN BOOKS

*Sexless in the City*

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In *Sexless in the City*, podcaster, founder of *The Refined Woman*, and Texan turned New Yorker Kat Harris shares her messy, honest, and unlikely journey to discovering God’s heart for singleness, sexuality, desire, and our purpose within it all”— Provided by publisher.

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## *Chapter One*

# MY BREAKING POINT

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. What did you learn about sex from your parents, school, peers, and any sort of church or religious institutions you were affiliated with?
2. Up until this point, what are the beliefs you have held about dating, desire, and sex? When and why did you start adhering to these beliefs?
3. What do you hope to learn throughout this book?

## *Chapter Two*

# MODEST IS HOTTEST

### TAKE IT FURTHER

1. When you were growing up, what were some of the messages, explicit or implicit, that you learned about the female and male bodies?
2. What narratives were you taught about modesty? How have these beliefs shaped the way you view yourself, your body, sexuality, and desire? How have they shaped your view of men?
3. Reflect on whether certain aspects of modesty are still valuable to you and why.

## *Chapter Three*

# **GUYS DON'T LIKE GIRLS LIKE ME**

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. Which women in your family inspire you, and what have they taught you?
2. What are some of the messages you've internalized from the church and culture about being a woman?
3. Have you ever felt like your femininity is a liability? How so?

## *Chapter Four*

# THE TIME I BECAME A FEMINIST

### TAKE IT FURTHER

1. Which woman from Scripture do you resonate with most, and why?
2. Can you describe a specific situation in your life in which your femininity was an asset?
3. Up until this point, what have been your thoughts on feminism? Have they shifted at all? How so?

## *Chapter Five*

# **SUBMIT TO MY HUSBAND . . . WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?**

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. Up until this point, what have you been taught about gender roles within marriage?
2. Did anything surprise you or resonate with you about the Ephesians 5 teaching? Was there anything new that you hadn't thought of before?
3. What does it feel like to know that your sexuality belongs to you and that God honors your personal agency?

## *Chapter Six*

# **STAY OUT TILL YOU MAKE OUT**

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. What are some problems you have experienced with instant gratification?
2. How would you describe the cultural narrative you hear surrounding your sexual desire?
3. In what ways have you sought to rush intimacy in your life? What cost(s) have you paid for this?

## *Chapter Seven*

# A REAL-LIFE PRUDE UNICORN

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. What are some of the messages you've internalized from the church in regard to your sexual desire?
2. How have these internalized messages shaped your view of yourself?
3. If we aren't what culture says, "You are your desire," and shouldn't do what the church says, "Shut it down," then what role does sexual desire play in our lives?

## *Chapter Eight*

# STEPPING INTO THE GRAY

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. If Jesus scandalously and provocatively fought for the dignity of women in a time when women had no voice or rights in church or culture, what things do you think He would fight for today?
2. Have you ever considered that the creation story might have an erotic rhythm or language? What thoughts are stirred when you consider that?
3. How and in what ways do you think the conversation around sexuality shifts when we change the access point to being a child of God as opposed to either being your desire or the absence of it?

## *Chapter Nine*

# **TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN**

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. How would you describe the God-narrative of who you are?
2. What are your thoughts on the more expansive definition of sexuality? How would you define sexuality?
3. What would change for you if you believed your sexuality and desire were God designed and good?

## Chapter Ten

# TURNED ON

### TAKE IT FURTHER

1. Spend some time journaling and praying. Ask God to speak to you about your sexual desire.
2. Up until now, how have you treated your sexual desire? Have you shut it down? How can you move forward in acknowledging, honoring, and accepting it? One thing you can do is to write a letter to your sexual desire. Thank God for it, accept it, bless it, and pray for it.
3. If you feel any shame about your desire, be honest with God about it. God wants to know you, and your heart is completely and utterly safe with Him!

## Chapter Eleven

# SEXUAL HEALING

### TAKE IT FURTHER

1. What is one way you can implement sensuality in your life today? Extra credit: What are three things you can do this week to practice presence?
2. Make a list of things you want to do and experience. Grab your calendar, and schedule a solo date for this month.
3. Go to a quiet place, get comfortable, pick a relaxing song, set a timer for five minutes, and practice boxed breathing. If you need an anchoring thought, “Be still, and know that I am God” is a great place to start. Inhale *be*, exhale *still*. When you’re done, journal about your experience.

## *Chapter Twelve*

# MY DIRTY LITTLE SECRET

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. What has been your relationship with masturbation throughout your life?
2. Between the scientific research on orgasms to C. S. Lewis's "harem within" to Paul's New Testament teaching, what stood out to you most about the different angles of masturbation, and why?
3. Based on the content of this chapter, has your mindset about masturbation shifted at all? If so, how? What questions do you still have?

## *Chapter Thirteen*

# LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. Which Bible love story stands out to you most? Adam and Eve or King Solomon and his bride? Why?
2. Why do you think the Bible says to abstain from sex outside of marriage? What are your personal thoughts about sex and pre-marital sex? What questions about sex do you still have?
3. In your opinion, does sex point toward the greater God story? Why, or why not?

## Chapter Fourteen

# STOP SHOULDING ALL OVER YOURSELF

### TAKE IT FURTHER

1. What are some of your *should* conversations? How are they holding you back from taking responsibility for what you really want?
2. What is your personal conviction about premarital sex? Take time to unpack your *why*.
3. Up until this point, what have your physical boundaries in dating been? What's working and what's not?

## *Chapter Fifteen*

# **BLURRED LINES**

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. How do you define sex? Why? How, then, do you define abstinence?
2. Up until now, what have your physical boundaries in dating been? Why? Moving forward, are there any changes you want to make? Why or why not?
3. What are some practical things you can do to set yourself up for success in upholding your boundaries in dating?

## *Chapter Sixteen*

# WORK ON YOUR ISH

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. Are there any patterns or conversations in your life that might be blocking you from healthy relationships? (For example, guys only want to be your friend, or the guy you like never likes you back.)
2. Have you noticed any correlations between past trauma and current sources of pain and heartache? Ask God to give you eyes to see the invisible threads from your past that may be holding you back from your future.
3. What's one thing you wouldn't have learned if you hadn't experienced the pain of a past heartache?

# Chapter Seventeen

## THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

Limiting Belief	Rooted in Fear or Freedom?	When Did I Start Believing This?	Flip the Script	Evidence
<i>All the good guys are already taken</i>	Fear	After college when most of my friends got married, and I still seemed to be the single one with no prospects in sight. Whenever I ask to be set up, my friends say they can't think of anyone.	It is possible that God could have an incredible partner for me.	God is the God of abundance and more-than-enoughs. Ephesians 3:20–21 (ESV) says, "To him who is <i>able</i> to do far more abundantly than <i>all</i> that we ask or think . . . to him be glory" (my emphasis).
<i>There aren't enough single men.</i>	Fear	Moving to New York, where single women outnumber single men two to one. The numbers at church are even more lopsided.	It doesn't matter what my circumstances tell me; God is able to bring me an incredible partner.	God is bigger than numbers and statistics. And God is the God who makes a way when there seems to be no way. Isaiah 43:19 (ESV) says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

(cont.)

Limiting Belief	Rooted in Fear or Freedom?	When Did I Start Believing This?	Flip the Script	Evidence
<i>Online dating doesn't work.</i>	Fear	When I went on the online date with the guy who stood me up.	Online dating has worked for millions of people; it's possible that it could work for me too.	These days, 2.6% of couples meet at church, and 40% of couples meet through online dating.* Online dating isn't going anywhere. People meet online and get married all the time. If it's possible for them, it's possible for me too.
<i>I'm always the bridesmaid, never the bride.</i>	Fear	Probably after I was a bridesmaid for the fifteenth time. It felt like everyone else was moving on with their lives, and I was stuck being the faithful best friend.	Why not me? It is possible that God has marriage for me and that I am not destined to be a bridesmaid forever.	God listens to the cries of our hearts, responds, and is active on our behalf. (1 Samuel 1—the story of Hannah; Luke 18:1–8). Instead of seeing someone else's breakthrough as proof that God has forgotten me or left me behind, use it as evidence of what is possible. If it's possible for her, it's possible for me.
<i>I'm mayor of friend-zone city.</i>	Fear	In high school when the guy I liked went for my best friend.	It's more than possible that the person I'm interested in could be interested in me too.	People fall for each other all the time. Why couldn't it happen for me too?

\* Aziz Ansari and Eric Klinenberg, *Modern Romance* (New York: Penguin, 2015), 83.

(cont.)

Limiting Belief	Rooted in Fear or Freedom?	When Did I Start Believing This?	Flip the Script	Evidence
<i>I'll be worthy of love when . . .</i>	Fear	In college when I gained weight, I started to believe I was single because I wasn't thin enough. The girls in my life who were in relationships were smaller sizes than I was.	I am worthy of love as I am today, not some future or past version of myself.	Psalms 139:14 says, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Genesis 1:27, 31 says I am made in the image of God and am very good. God doesn't make mistakes. If He says I'm worthy and enough, I am.
<i>Love only leads to pain.</i>	Fear	When my parents got divorced.	Love leads to freedom, wholeness, connection, and breakthrough.	God is love (1 John 4:8). We experience the tiniest fringes of God's presence and love and are forever transformed (Isaiah 6:1). Romans 5:5 says hope doesn't put us to shame. This doesn't mean I won't ever be hurt, but it does mean love is worth the risk.

## **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. What narratives are shaping your experience when it comes to dating, singleness, and relationships?
2. What could be possible for you if you released them?
3. Make a chart like the one on the previous pages with five columns: the narrative, fear or freedom, when you started believing this, flip the script, and evidence. When you notice a narrative, add it to the chart and go through the columns.

## *Chapter Eighteen*

# **DATING IS A CURB, NOT A CLIFF**

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. Are there any ways you have been part of the problem, like me, in making dating more awkward than it has to be? How so, and what can you do instead to reduce the pressure?
2. This week, make eye contact and smile for three seconds with at least one person you find attractive.
3. What are your top three nonnegotiables in a partner and your top three preferences, and why?

## *Chapter Nineteen*

# **NOW WHAT?**

### **TAKE IT FURTHER**

1. What are three things you are taking away from our time together?
2. What questions do you still have?
3. What might it look like to step fully into “doing the work” and pursuing your purpose?