

Christian View Of Human Sexuality

Relevance !!

- If the Church refuses to address the sexual issues of the day, not only does it become irrelevant, it leaves the conversation open to others who feel free to do so.
- We make three mistakes when it comes to human sexuality: We don't talk about it; we don't value it; we don't model it.
- By not talking about sexuality, we let the world — rather than God's Word — set the agenda for how we understand and practice our sexuality.
- By not valuing it — or, rather, by preaching only against sex outside of marriage and not for sex within marriage — we let the world caricature us as killjoys and pleasure haters and contribute to the global misrepresentation of God glorious creation of humanity.
- And by not practicing sexuality as God intends within the lifelong relationship between a husband and a wife, we fail to show the world what a blessing marriage is and how it contributes to human flourishing.

Topics

- **Theology of Human Sexuality.**

- The bible and human sexuality.
- Jesus' interpretation of human sexuality.
- Unity-in-Difference

- **Human Sexuality and the Image of God.**

- Communication
- Celebration.
- Creation.

- **Spirituality of Sexuality.**

- **Conclusion.**

Theology of Human Sexuality

- The Bible tells stories about the creation of humanity as male and female, as well as about how men and women have used and abused their sexuality.
- It regulates sexual behavior through moral commandments and social laws
- It utilizes proverbs and poems to celebrate marital sexuality and warn against adultery
- And it presents human sexuality as a parable of the relationship between God and humanity

- The Church has taught that lifelong marriage between a man and a woman is morally normative.
- It is a “one flesh” relationship that “God has joined together” (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4–6).
- Therefore, sexual behaviors outside that morally normative relationship are sinful and under God’s judgment (e.g., 1 Corinthians 6:9–20).

- Today, however, some revisionists argue that many forms of sexual relationship —not just marriage — are morally acceptable.
- Given this diversity of biblical teaching, revisionists argue that traditionalists are wrong to assert that marriage (i.e., the lifelong union of one man and one woman) is morally normative based on biblical teaching.

- On one occasion, some Pharisees approached Jesus “to test Him” about the lawfulness of divorce.
- *“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?” And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”* (Matthew 19:1–12; Mark 10:1–12).

- Unlike many of the Pharisees who permitted divorce for almost any reason, Jesus prohibited divorce “except for marital unfaithfulness” (Matthew 19:9).
- Jesus’ explanation for this prohibition emerges from His narrative interpretation of the Bible, one that is based on the movements of creation, fall, and redemption.

- **First**, Jesus roots marriage in *creation*.
- He argues in response to the Pharisees — whose lax views of divorce disproportionately harmed women:
- **“At the beginning” ‘the Creator “made them male and female” and said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” ’ ’**
(Matthew 19:4–6, Genesis 1:27 and 2:24).

- **Second**, Jesus explained divorce in terms of the Fall. “**Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning**” (Matthew 19:8).

- **Third**, *redemption* makes it possible for people to conform their sexuality to the moral norm God revealed in creation.
- **St John Chrystosom**: (4th Century Saint and doctor of the church)
- “God restored in Cana what was broken in Eden”
- Upon Redemption: **“We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” (Ephesians 5)**

- Jesus' disciples, reflecting a misogynist view of women, complained about His prohibition of divorce for any reason except marital unfaithfulness: **“If this is the case between a husband and a wife, it is better not to marry.”**
- Jesus replied: **“Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given”** (verses 10,11).

- The Bible begins with two narratives about the creation of the world (Genesis 1:1–2:3) and its human inhabitants (2:4–25).
- **1) “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (1:27).**
- **2) “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (2:18).**
- **3) “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (2:24).**

- **“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (1:27).**
- The Bible expresses the unity of God’s image using the Hebrew word *adam* (“man” or “humanity”), and expresses the difference using the Hebrew words *zakar* (“male”) and *neqevah* (“female”).
- United in their sexual difference, male and female constitute humanity, which God created in His image.
- This truth has enormous implications for our theology of human sexuality.

- God creates Adam first but declares:
- **“It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (2:18).**
- So God creates a “helper suitable for [Adam]” (2:18,20).
- The Hebrew phrase is “*ezer kenigdo*”

- Our sexual differences point us toward unity with one another.
- **“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (2:24).**
- Anatomically and biologically, male and female complement — are suitable to — one another.
- Their relationship is generative. God blesses the unity-in-difference of the male and female and commands them, **“Be fruitful and increase in number” (Genesis 1:28).**

Human Sexuality and the Image of God.

Communication

God communicates

- The first creation account highlights this fact with, “And God said” (Genesis 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26,29).
- The Bible tells the story of how God resumes face-to-face communication with us through Jesus Christ.
- Drawing inspiration from the first creation narrative, Paul writes: **“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).**
- Even that glorious knowledge is partial in this lifetime. Paul writes, **“Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).**

Communication

God communicates

- God created the male-female relationship after the model of His own form of communication.
- That form of communication involves speech, but it goes beyond speech to personal knowledge, which is nonverbal.
- Genesis 4:1 uses the Hebrew verb *yada* (“know”) to describe Adam and Eve’s union.
- Human sex is a form of communication. It unites husband and wife at the most intimate level. This intimate union is the first purpose of human sexuality.

Celebration.

God celebrates

- God created pleasure. He receives pleasure: **“The Lord takes delight in His people”** (Psalm 149:4).
- And He gives pleasure. Jesus said, **“Your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom”** (Luke 12:32). The Psalmist sang, **“You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand”** (Psalm 16:11).
- It is truly Christian to celebrate life. Paul writes, **“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God”** (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- Writing to Timothy, Paul lists the prohibition of marriage among **“things taught by demons”** (1 Timothy 4:1–3). By contrast, he argues, **“everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer”** (verses 4,5).

Creation.

God *creates*.

- God creates the world, blesses it, and then commands its inhabitants to increase, both its animal inhabitants (Genesis 1:22) and its human inhabitants (1:28). God creates procreative creatures.
- God blessed human sexuality and commanded men and women, **“Be fruitful and increase in number”** (Genesis 1:28)

Recap !!

- In the previous two sections, we outlined the theological foundations of a Christian understanding of human sexuality.
- Male and female reflect the image of God through their unity-in-difference.
- The purposes of their sexual union are intimate communication, celebration of sexual pleasure, and creation of new life.
- In the next section, we offer suggestions about how Christians should daily live out their sexuality.
- Spirituality is “lived theology,” so this section examines the spirituality of sexuality.

Spirituality of Sexuality

Differences

- First, we need to cultivate our differences as men and women.

God created these differences to foster intimacy, pleasure, and procreation in marriage. So, they are good.

- In light of this mutuality, interdependence, and reciprocity, we might say that each spouse is “*ezer kenigdo*” to the other.

Affirmation

- Second, we need to affirm our sexuality rather than be ashamed of it. Ever since the Fall, shame has characterized human sexuality (compare Genesis 2:25 and 3:10).
- Affirmation — even rejoicing — needs to characterize the Christian experience of sexuality, not shame.

Potential

- We need to cultivate the potential for our sexuality. For married couples, that potential includes sexual intimacy and childbearing (Genesis 1:28; 2:24). For singles, it includes serving the Lord as He may lead them.
- Both married and single Christians express their sexuality. For married couples, the expression is explicit.
- Single Christians, however, sublimate their sexuality to serve the Lord with undivided attention.
- The church needs to inform those who desire to marry how to choose a spouse and foster a godly marriage (Ephesians 5:21-33).

Limits

- We need to observe the limits God places on the expressions of our sexuality rather than transgress them.
- The biblical norm is the lifelong marriage of a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4–6).
- God did not create fornication, polygamy, divorce, homosexuality, or any other form of sexual expression. He created marriage.
- When we observe the divinely given boundaries of human sexuality — or any other divinely given boundary on human behavior — we experience God’s blessing.
- Outside those boundaries, however, we may experience momentary pleasure, but in the long term, we experience God’s judgment. (See Psalm 1:1–6; Matthew 7:24–27; Galatians 5:16–26; and Revelation 21:6–8 for contrasting destinies of those who observe and those who transgress the Lord’s commands.)

Mystery

- Our sexuality, created in God's image, always points us back to the Creator. In Ephesians 5:31,32, Paul writes: “**‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church.**”
- How does marriage point us back to our Creator? Notice that the man makes two movements in this passage: *away* from his father and mother and *toward* his wife.
- Jesus' relationship to us defines how we should relate to one another in marriage. Our relationship to our spouses draws a living portrait of what God has done for us in Christ.
- Our spirituality and our sexuality illuminate and reinforce one another.

Conclusion..

- God created us in His image.
- Our human sexuality finds fulfillment through unity-in-difference with our spouse.
- But it always points beyond ourselves to the character of the God who made us this way.
- He designed our sexuality for intimate communication, celebration of sexual pleasure, and creation of new life because He is a God who communicates with, celebrates over, and creates (and recreates) us.
- Our culture is both sexually immoral and spiritually lost.
- Its understanding and practice of human sexuality is darkened and reinforced by its spiritual lostness.
- As we proclaim the gospel, let us invite people into relationship with God through Christ, but let us also teach, value, and model a better way to experience human sexuality