

Sex – God’s way!

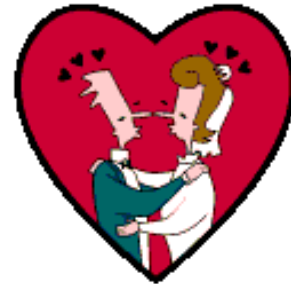
*For this reason a man will leave his mother and his father,
and be united to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”*
(Genesis 2:24)

God invented Sex!

Not Hollywood; not Andrea Bocelli or Pablo Neruda; not even Satan! *God invented sex!*

In this lesson we learn... .

- ***That God has a purpose for sex***
- ***That the sexual relationship forms a spiritual bond***
- ***Some distortions of human sexuality***
- ***That God is merciful with sexual brokenness and struggle***
- ***Biblical counsel for...***
 - *Singles*
 - *Married people*



In this lesson we seek to answer the following questions:

- *What is the appropriate context for sexual relations?*
- *Is it possible to become spiritually contaminated through sexual activity?*
- *Is it a sin to use pornography?*
- *Is it acceptable to live together before marriage?*
- *Is it wise to be intimate with a person before marrying in order to confirm compatibility?*
- *What are the Biblical reasons for divorce?*
 - *Is it “ok” to divorce if one no longer feels love in a marriage?*
 - *Is it “ok” to divorce if I fall deeply in love with another person?*
- *Is it acceptable for a Christian to marry or date an unbeliever?*
- *Is it “ok” to be emotionally intimate with a member of the opposite sex, as long as the relationship does not become explicitly romantic or physical?*
- *Should I cease to attend church if I continue to struggle with sexual sin?*

Sex and Marriage

God made us to be sexual beings

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.” (Genesis 1:27-28a)



This text teaches that...

- God created us as sexual beings – with innate differences
- The concept of gender – male and female – is not merely a social construct
- Together, male and female reflect the image and likeness of God
- We are blessed by God in our sexuality
- That God created sexuality *before* sin entered into human experience

God instituted Marriage



Read Genesis 2:18-25

The Lord formed the woman from the man's rib. Why do you think God chose to make the woman in this way? What the symbolism can we observe in the fact that woman was made from man's rib?

What expression does scripture use to describe the sexual relationship between man and woman? (Genesis 2:24)

“And they were both naked, the man and the woman, and they were not ashamed.”
(Gen. 2:25)

Why this detail? What does it teach us about the nature of their relationship? How did things change drastically after sin entered the picture?

Sex is good, holy, and meant to be enjoyed!



Read Song of Solomon 1:2-4; 4:1-7; 7:1-9; 8:6-7

Song of Solomon contains vivid love poetry – celebrating eroticism in the marital relationship. While it has been read as an allegory for our spiritual intimacy with Christ, its original context has to do with literal sexuality.



Mention four references in these texts to erotic admiration and pleasure.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Marriage: The exclusive context for Biblical Sexuality



*Drink water from your own cistern,
running water from your own well.*

¹⁶ *Should your springs overflow in the streets,
your streams of water in the public squares?*

¹⁷ *Let them be yours alone,
never to be shared with strangers.*

¹⁸ *May your fountain be blessed,
and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.*

¹⁹ *A loving doe, a graceful deer—
may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you ever be intoxicated with her love. Prov. 5:15-19*



Read 1 Corinthians 7:1-5

According to this text, why does God command us to be sexually active in marriage?

Mention an acceptable reason for temporary abstinence.

The Nature of the Sexual Act – Physical and Spiritual Union

“For this reason a man will leave his mother and his father and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24)

The sexual act is different from any other. It establishes a physical *and spiritual* union between two people. For this reason, the Bible uses the term “*to know*” to refer to the sexual relationship (Luke 1:24), not as a euphemism, but because sex forms a spiritual connection between two people unlike any other physical action.



Our body is Sacred

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

What is our body, according to 1 Corinthians 6:15 and 6:19?

1. _____.
2. _____.

According to 1 Corinthians 6:18, how does sexual sin differ from any other?

Transference of spirits in the sexual act: “The two will become one flesh”

Ancient Paganism utilized cultic sexuality – the combination of sexuality with spiritism

The sexual union establishes a spiritual connection between two people, for good or ill. For this reason, much ancient paganism incorporated ritual sexuality and “sacred” prostitution into its spirituality. It was believed that by engaging in sexual relations in the temple of the god or goddess, spiritual power was released to make the land fruitful. This combination of sex with idolatry recognized that spiritual contamination could be transferred and unleashed through the sexual union. (See Numbers 25:1-9; Deuteronomy 23:17; 1 Kings 14:23).

Spiritual Contamination – Jesus cast 7 demons out of Mary Magdalene

Perhaps on account of this spiritual contamination contracted through the sexual act, it was necessary for Jesus to cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene, a former prostitute. (Mark 16:9 and Luke 8:2).

God calls us to Sexual Purity

The Biblical warnings are strong!



Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

According to these instructions of the Apostle Paul to new believers, why is it so important to separate ourselves from sexual immorality?



Read Ephesians 5:3-8

According to these instructions to the Ephesians, why should fornication not even be mentioned among the saints?

“.....Flee also youthful passions... ” 2 Timothy 2:22

What is Paul’s advice to the young pastor, Timothy? _____.

Varieties of Sexual Distortions

- **“Pornea”** The most common Word in the New Testament for sexual immorality.” *It encompasses a variety of sinful practices and attitudes.*

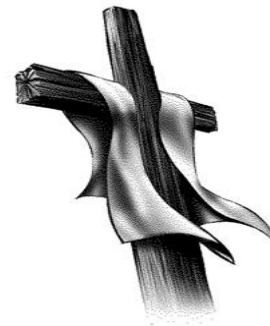
¹⁹ *“The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery...” Galatians 5:19*

²⁷ *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ^{’[a]} ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ Matthew 5:27*

- **Fornication** – Sexual relations between unmarried persons
- **Adultery** – Sexual behavior, when one or both participants are married to others.
- **Lewdness; Lust;** - Sexual activities and attitudes outside of the marital relationship. (Pornography; flirtations...etc.)
- **Incest** – Sexual contact between relatives. (Lev. 18:6-18)
- **Homosexuality** – Sexual contact between two people of the same gender. (Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9)

Mercy – There is no condemnation in Christ!

Whenever we deal with issues of sexual purity, we must always emphasize that Jesus desires to heal us and set us free, *not condemn us!*



Jesus showed grace toward many sexually broken people

The woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11)

“Let him who is without sin cast the first stone...”

After “catching” an adulterous woman in the act, the religious zealots of the day wanted to execute her by stoning, but Jesus taught them the importance of mercy – and self awareness. We ought not to condemn others, but rather concern ourselves with our own sins and failings.

Jesus did not reject anyone due to his or her “past” – The “sinful woman” (Luke 7:36-50)

“...The one who has been forgiven much, loves much.”

In one particularly shocking narrative, a woman of ill-repute barged into a gathering at a religious leader’s home, determined to worship Jesus. She not only touched him, but bathed his feet in her tears and dried them with her hair. Not surprisingly, the religious leaders were scandalized by this impropriety, but Jesus rebuked them and defended the woman’s act of adoration. We ought never to think that Jesus will reject sincerely repentant worshipers because of their chequered past.

.... But Grace is not License!

We should not abuse the grace of God

“What should we say, then? Should we continue in sin, so that grace might abound? Absolutely not! We have died to sin, so how can we live in it any longer?” (Romans 6:1-2)



The Corinthian Example -- Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

What sin did the Corinthians tolerate among them? What should they have done?

The Church is a Hospital

*... a refuge for those who are struggling, but not...
A hiding place for those who seek to rationalize a double life of sin!*

The church is a hospital for sinners, established by God to heal those who suffer its torture. If a repentant, sincere believer continues to struggle while seeking the power to change, they should feel welcome in the church as a refuge in which to find help and guidance. However, God never intended the church to be a hideaway for the insincere individual who seeks to rationalize immorality and continue to live a double life.

Counsel for Married People

Stay married!

“To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband..” (1 Cor. 7:10)

The marriage vow, whether made before a pastor, a justice of the peace, or a sea-captain, has meaning before God. When we take a “vow” we make a promise not just to the other person, but to God. We stay married not only to be faithful to our spouse, but to Him.

Practice Sexuality!

¹⁸ *“May your fountain be blessed,
and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.
¹⁹ A loving doe, a graceful deer—
may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you ever be intoxicated with her love. (Prov. 5:18-19)*

³ *The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband...Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Corinthians 7:3,5)*

Sexual intimacy must be cultivated in marriage. Satan has undermined marital sexuality in many ways, not least of which through idealized portrayals in the media. Sexual intimacy, like any other, involves a consistent investment of time and attention.

Question: *What if my wife is injured in a car accident during the honeymoon and cannot be sexually active? Is that a basis for divorce?*

The marriage vow explicitly promises “in sickness and in health.” Physical intimacy can be cultivated in a couple even when more “normal” manners of sexuality may not be possible.

Cultivate Intimacy

Discover your spouse's "love language." Gary Chapman has written a modern masterpiece about the variety of ways in which we experience affection and love from others. While love is a commitment not based on feelings, the emotional component of intimacy can and should be cultivated intentionally. We "feel loved" in different ways. For some, physical touch communicates love, while for others a gift, words of affirmation, quality time, or an act of service can make a person feel truly valued. A spouse should intentionally seek ways to make his or her partner feel cherished.⁷

Avoid intimate friendships with members of the opposite sex

Infidelity can be emotional as well as sexual. Intimate sharing with a member of the opposite sex undermines the marital relationship and creates an extremely dangerous opportunity for sexual infidelity.

Divorce only in extreme situations

God said, *"I hate divorce."* (Malachi) Not only does it violate the laws on which God created humanity, but also tears deeply at the emotional fabric of individuals and families. Yet Scripture also teaches that divorce can be justified in certain extreme cases. We list some of them below.

1. Sexual infidelity - Mateo 19:9

"⁹ I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

2. Abandonment - 1 Cor.7:15-16

¹⁵ "But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. ¹⁶ How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?"

3. Physical Abuse - (implicitly, but not explicitly stated)

²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church. Eph. 5:28-29

Again, we emphasize that even in these cases we should seek reconciliation and healing. We glorify God best when violations when we forgive and experience reconciliation. What a testimony when an abusive or unfaithful husband repents and the marriage can be restored! In the absence of such positive resolution, however, divorce can at times be necessary and appropriate.

⁷ The Five Love Languages. Gary Chapman.

Illegitimate reasons for Divorce

1. I am no longer “in love” with my spouse

Love is a *decision*, not a feeling. While affection and passion can and should be cultivated, matrimonial love is a commitment not based on changeable feelings, but on eternal vows.

2. I made a mistake by marrying

God calls us to be faithful to our marriage vows, even if we did not choose a spouse wisely. After making such vows, God wills us to remain faithful to them. Because of our human imperfection, any spouse in any marriage could wonder if a he or she made “a mistake” because of our idealized expectations. We need to adjust our expectations to the realities of human life! However, even if we did err in marrying, *breaking our vow would be an even greater mistake!*

3. I have fallen in love with another person

Feelings and impulses can be profoundly deceptive. As Christians we need not follow every impulse, feeling, or emotional drive. Many, many feelings in life should be denied on a regular basis:

We feel like killing our boss

We feel like eating ice cream for breakfast

We feel like staying in bed rather than getting up for work...etc.

Likewise with our feelings of attraction towards people other than our spouse. We ought not, and need not indulge them!

Question: *What do I do if I am a believer, and my husband is not?*

If he wants to stay together – do not throw in the towel!

¹² *To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her.* ¹³ *And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him.* (1 Cor. 7:12-13)

¹ *Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,* ² *when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.* (1 Pe 3:1-2)

Review: List three Biblical justifications for divorce.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____.

Advice for Singles

You are not a second class citizen!

While churches rightly emphasize the sacredness of marriage and the importance of helping couples to be healthy and faithful, we can sometimes give the wrong message to single adults. A single man or woman is not “half” a person, but entirely complete in the eyes of God!

God calls many to singleness for part or all of their lives.

⁹ The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry. ¹¹ Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. ¹² For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.” (Matthew 19:10-13)

Use your freedom to serve God!

The man or woman God calls to singleness (permanently or for a time), enjoys freedom to serve God in a *wholehearted way that married people cannot!* The Apostle Paul was single – *and happy!*

³² I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs—how he can please the Lord. ³³ But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife— ³⁴ and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord’s affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. ³⁵ I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord. (1 Cor. 7:32-35)

Marry if you want to! – 1 Cor. 7:8-9

⁹ But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. (1 Cor. 7:9)

Question: *Is it wise to test out sexual relations with a potential spouse in order to be sure that the couple is sexually compatible?*

!NO!

The Bible calls sex before marriage “*fornication*,” a grave sin. Because of the sacred and deeply emotional nature of the sexual bond, God commands that it be reserved for the marriage relationship.

Question: *How can a dating or engaged couple stay pure?*

1. Agree on “limits” to be mutually observed

The dating or engaged couple which desires to honor God should decide in advance what limits they will observe in their expression of physical affection. If the two do not have the same opinion, the limits of the more conservative person should be respected.

2. Avoid “danger zones”

“Flee fornication...” – 1 Cor. 6:18

Certain situations lend themselves to greater temptation than others. In general, situations of complete privacy or late at night, present an opportunity for sin – *“The wrong place at the wrong time.”* Couples serious about holiness can agree to avoid such situations, and seek to spend time together in less isolated contexts.

3. Seek transparency – share regularly with a trusted friend or mentor.

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them. ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. Ephesians 5:7-8

In order to “walk in the light,” one must embrace transparency and be willing to share personal struggles with a mature and trusted person (of the same gender). This accountability provides a transparency that limits Satan’s tempting schemes in our lives.

If you are single and dating, mention the names of two people (of your gender) whom you can trust to help keep you accountable and provide guidance as you seek to maintain purity in your relationship.

1) _____

2) _____

4. Seek counsel!

Marriage counselors and couples’ groups in Lion of Judah provide guidance and support for couples, whether married, engaged or dating! Why wait for engagement to seek Godly counsel and support!?

Question: Is it ok to date an unbeliever?

¡NO!

The Word commands believers to seek believing spouses.

A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. (1Cor. 7:39)

¹⁴ Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? ¹⁵ What harmony is there between Christ and Belial^[a]? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ?” 2 Cor. 6:14-15

“Unequal yoke” -- This text does not refer directly to the marriage relationship, but to formal relationships in general between Christians and non-Christians – perhaps in business or intimate friendship. One might ask, however, “What relationship between two people can be more formal or intimate than marriage? A believer marrying an unbeliever can be compared to placing the same yoke on two oxen that desire to go in opposite directions. Constant tension results! When a believer dates an unbeliever, it is most likely that the believer will compromise his or her principles...

“Flee fornication...” – 1 Cor. 6:18

***Conclusion – Do not stop coming to church!
The Church is a Hospital for “recovering sinners!”***

What do I do if I am in the habit of some form of immorality, seeking to be free, but still continue to struggle?

- ***Accept the Love of God*** – Romans 8:1 – “*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus...*”
- ***Keep coming!*** - The church is a hospital! (The healthy have no need of a doctor, but those who recognize their spiritual illness!)
- ***Seek a friend to whom you can confess*** your struggles. (James 5:16 y 1 Jn 1:5-10)
- ***Seek counsel*** from a trusted friend or mentor (of the same gender) who has the spiritual maturity to help!
- ***Keep studying the word!*** Repeat level #2 if you feel it is necessary!



Review Questions:

What is the difference between using the church as a refuge of grace and abusing the church as a hideaway for license and a double life?

Imagine you have a friend who wants to date an unbeliever. What counsel and arguments could you use in advising her?

You have another friend whose boyfriend, a church member, pressures her to have sexual relations with him in order to test out their compatibility. What advice can you give?

List some ways to help keep a dating relationship pure.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

What do we say to the person who wants to divorce because “he no longer feels love” for his wife and “has fallen in love” with another?

What do we say to the person who struggles with sexual sin and feels that they should stop coming to church, saying they do not want to be a “hypocrite?”
