

Relationship Goals...Sex and the Christian

9/22/19 – Pastor Randy

Don't you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! And don't you realize that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, "The two are united into one." But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him. Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. - 1 Corinthians 6:15-20

Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery.

- Hebrews 13:4

God's Three-fold Purpose for Sex

1. To glorify God.

In 1 Corinthians Paul call on Christians to honor God with our body. In the immediate context he is clearly communicating that the way we conduct ourselves sexually will either honor or dishonor God. In Hebrews we are told to honor marriage. The reason is because it is God's institution. To honor what God has established is to honor God. The way Christians are to honor God is to limit sexual conduct to the marriage covenant.

Every aspect of the Christians life, even his/her sex life, is to be lived for the glory of God. This can be said to be the primary and ultimate reason for sex, just as it is the primary and ultimate reason for everything! The real question is "How?" "How does sex glorify God?" The answer is when it fulfills God's secondary purposes for it.

2. To express love between a husband and wife. God designed sex to effect a spiritual, emotional, psychological, and physical bond between a man and a woman. This loving bond is enhanced by due to the intensity of sexual passion pleasure. In the Song of Solomon, love is used repeatedly as a synonym for the sexual union, revealing God's intention for sex to be an expression of love. When sex functions as it should, strengthening the bond

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of love in a marriage, it glorifies God because the ultimate purpose of marriage is to reflect the loving bond between Christ and His church.

3. To be the means of procreation. Sexual intimacy, as it enhances the bond between husband and wife, helps to foster the ideal environment for children to be brought into this world, nurtured and raised. Children fare best when they are raised by a father and mother who have a deep physical, psychological, and emotional bond with each other, and with the children born of their union. The purpose of marriage is to provide a healthy environment for the creation, nurturing, and training of children to become mature image bearers of God. It is no accident that this bond-forming act becomes the means by which new life is created.

Our society worships at the twin altars of sexual pleasure and romantic excitement. Our problem is when we turn what is good into a god. How do you know when you have done that? When the good is placed above God!

Fallacies about sexual morality

Myth #1. Sexual morality is determined merely by consent. This myth is based on the lie that as long as there is consent, rather than coercion, among adult participants, no one gets hurt. The great fallacy lies in assuming that just because no one is harmed immediately and directly, the behavior is not harmful. In reality, a lot of harm results from consensual sexual conduct. Sometimes it is immediate and direct but most of the time the harm is delayed and indirect.

A. Perfectly consensual adult sexual relationships have resulted in an epidemic of STD's. *"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released data today showing that STDs hit record highs in the U.S. for the fourth year in a row. Approximately 2.3 million cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis were diagnosed in 2017, an increase of more than 200,000 cases compared to 2016 and a more than 30 percent increase in the last five years. These entirely preventable, life-threatening infections cost the health care system more than \$16 billion a year."* (Aug. 28, 2018 ncsddc.org)

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B. Perfectly consensual sex leads to out-of-wedlock pregnancies which account for a great % of the almost one million abortions performed each year. That accounts for a lot of victims whose voice is never heard. In addition to this are the emotional and social costs that children bear when they do not have a committed mother and father raising them. This is not a condemnation of single parents!! God's grace is sufficient!

C. Many spouses deceive themselves into believing their secretive adulterous relationships are victimless, until their spouse finds out and marriages and families are broken up.

These are not just statistics or hypotheticals for me. I have listened to the pain-filled voice and looked into the pain-filled eyes of someone whose spouse began a "consensual sexual relationship" with another person. The husband contracted an STD as a result of this "consensual affair" which he passed along to his spouse. During the initial stage of the affair, there was no apparent victim. By the end there was a whole family of victims.

Myth #2. Waiting for marriage, and fidelity within marriage is unrealistic.

The Truth: A lot of people are doing it. No one is saying it is easy, but it can be achieved. However, it will never be achieved until individuals determine that it ought to be done.

I don't think it is realistic to date for 3, 5, 10 years before marriage. The problem is not sex before marriage as much as it is NOT putting marriage before sex. What?!?! The problem is delaying marriage. We need to renew our whole mindset on the understanding that sex is designed by God to unite a man and woman into one. The two becoming one has more to do with more than just sex, but not less!! What God has designed as holy we have made casual and trivial.

Myth #3. Limiting sex to the confines of marriage is repressive and oppressive.

Walter Wink, a liberal theologian who died a few years ago, is just one representative of a growing number of people who argue that the prohibition on sexual activity outside marriage is oppressive. He described the act of calling Christians to exercise fidelity within marriage and abstinence outside

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as “a cruel religious abuse of power”. His reasoning? It is cruel to “sexually starve people”. The sad thing about this statement, from a professed Christian leader, is that it lays the greatest guilt for this supposed “cruel abuse of religious power” at the feet of Jesus. Jesus taught that not only should sexual conduct be confined to marriage, but sexual cravings must be as well. People are not oppressed by sexual boundaries, but by the elimination of those boundaries. I have already presented just a few examples of the oppression caused by removing God’s ordained boundaries.

Here is a popular lie in today’s culture: “If I have sexual desires I did not choose, then God must have given them to me, and they must be legitimate desires to fulfill. If God didn’t intend for me to fulfill these desires he wouldn’t have given them to me.” But life is full of appetites that must be resisted. You have to restrain your urge to be lazy, you have to restrain your urges to give in to impulses of anger and greed. All healthy, productive living is an exercise in self-restraint. If I did everything I felt like doing, I would have destroyed my life and family by now. Do you know how to tell when a child is maturing? When the child begins to say NO to himself rather than needing to be told NO by his parents. Let me say one more thing. For all of us that have resisted the temptation to engage in sexually immoral behavior, it is only by the grace of God. The moment we start patting ourselves on the back is the moment we set ourselves up to fall into the Devil’s trap.

The foundational principle at the heart of the issue for the Christian is found in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? ***You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.***

That last statement settles the issue for the Christian. We are not our own, we belong to God, and our lives are to be lived to glorify Him in response to His grace that has been poured out in our lives.

However, because sexual passion is such an intense aspect of fallen selfish humanity, it has a potentially destructive side as well. The Bible speaks of sexual passion as analogous to “fire”. (i.e. “Burning with lust). Like fire, this passion can be beneficial but also highly destructive. Fire can provide light

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and warmth. It can be used to sanitize objects and the food we eat. But it must always be in a contained environment. When cooking, the fire is good under the pot, but when the fire is in the pot...not so much. For most of the past 26 years we have lived in a home with either a fireplace or a wood burning stove. We love to build fires in our house but in the winter of 2010-11 we couldn't because we were in an apt. with no fireplace. Its not a good idea to build a fire in your house without a fireplace! When it is in the fireplace it brings beauty and warmth to the entire family. When it spreads outside the fireplace the whole house is in danger! The sexual relationship enhances the loving bond between a husband and wife which in turn creates a stable loving atmosphere in the home that is essential to the well being of the children generated from that union. This powerful passion needs to be placed in the container of committed love.

When it is motivated by pleasure without love, it leads to degrading and dehumanizing other people. When Jesus spoke critically of men who gaze lustfully after women he wasn't just concerned with the fact that lust often leads to acts of physical immorality. He was concerned with lust itself!

Lust tends to objectify people, and in doing so it dehumanizes them. Lust leads to viewing another person as an object, not as a person created in God's image. This is one huge problem with pornography. It turns people into objects for personal consumption. It dehumanizes and degrades. Chris Rock, and Terry Crews, two of several famous celebrities speaking out about the destructive impact of pornography, have publically confessed that pornography use ruined their marriages and messed up their minds.

Even though some celebrities are speaking out, those who warn about the dangers are fighting an uphill battle in a culture that has normalized treating the human body as an object to be exploited for personal gratification and commercial gain – commercial gain to the tune of about \$15 billion. We have become a society which no longer experiences any shame with watching other people engage in explicit sexual behavior. Freedom begins – not ends, begins – with addressing the elephant in the room.

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The power of pornography addiction lies in its ability to deceive consumers into thinking that it is a private, secret activity. Can I fill you in on something? Porn involves real people. The digital electronic medium is only a medium. The people involved are no less real people. How is it different than looking in our neighbor's window?!?! You say, "Pastor, that is sick!" That's my point exactly!! We might as well be looking in their window. Better yet, we might as well be sitting in the bedroom watching!!! If it is inappropriate for me to watch someone in person, then it is no less inappropriate if I am watching via an electronic medium!!

The pursuit of purity begins with renewing our minds so that we begin to look at people as our God looks at them, and to love them as God loves them. The pursuit of purity also requires us to establish boundaries and make decisions which mitigate against the temptation. The scripture counsels us to "flee" from temptation. Most affairs begin with the forming of emotional attachments. You rarely reap adulterous behavior without the seeds of suggestive and seductive conversation. This why in our text Paul warns us to put away sexually crude joking and talk. Guard your conversations. Guard your thoughts. Guard your eyes.

David said, "I will set no worthless thing before my eyes." Paul wrote to the Colossians, "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth". He then went on to explain what he meant by the "things of earth": They included sexual immorality & impure passions. You can't control the thoughts that come knocking on your door, but you can control which ones you welcome into your home...and we certainly have no excuse for setting a place at the table for them.

Pray: "Lord I will make every effort to walk in purity."

You need the help of others too. Men and women, give your wives access to your devices. If necessary subscribe to 'Covenant Eyes, a program that creates accountability partners for those struggling with internet pornography.

But you and I can't do this on our own. We also need to pray:
"Lord, I need your help!!!"

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