

## Image of God, part 4

# Sex

1.29.2017

**BIG Idea: Sex is a gift of God for the good of marriage and human flourishing.**

### INTRODUCTION

- Catch everyone up... quickly, we are in a series called "The Image of God" looking at the basic question of what does it mean to be human and what is the purpose of human life? We are looking at the progressive facets of creation which connect our identity with our purpose.  
Humans -> Male/Female -> Marriage -> Sex -> Cultural Mandate
- Today we are talking about the relationship between the Image of God and sex.
- Q&A after the service– I will be up here at the front after the service. Around 5min after the service is over we will dive into a Q&A time for 15min. Anyone can participate, even if you didn't submit a question. TEXT QUESTIONS to 617-942-0753
- We will upload a series of articles by Tim Keller on the Gospel and Sex on our Facebook page this week along with some other books and resources. I drew on a lot of of stuff to help with this week's message.
- \*\*\* And just to address singles, I will be talking about how the Image of God relates to singleness in our last message in our series in a couple of weeks.

### Predominant Views of Sex across out culture

1. Sex is the result of a **biological urge** that should be satisfied, like hunger is satisfied by food. This was the Greco-Roman view prominent in Jesus' world. Sex is just one human activity among many.
  2. Sex is based on a **lower base instinct** that is inherently tied to our flesh, not to our minds or spirits. Platonism teaches that the body is lesser and that the mind and spirit is higher. Sex is base and therefore only for procreation. We see this view in some churches.
  3. Sex is an **expression of romanticism**. Goodness would be achieved by liberating the basic, primal instincts, which were in themselves pure. Sex as a critical way of self-expression, a way to "be yourself" or "find yourself." Love is the guiding principle here and sex is good to be enjoyed with anyone you love.
- Most people feel like they have to accept one of these but what if there is another option? What if there is something that values the fact that sex is a biological drive, that it is to be an expression of Romantic love, but that it also should have boundaries on it for the good enjoyment of sex.
  - Today, we are going to go back and look at the creation of sex and its purposes. Then we will see some ways sin has ruined sex and how Christ restores. The BIG Idea for today is "Sex is a gift of God for the good of marriage and human flourishing."
  - If you are here and still on a journey exploring Christianity, I hope that you will engage and hear that God is not against sex but actually created it to bring great joy. I encourage you to ask yourself, does God's plan for sex lead to human flourishing?

### 1. Creation –TURN TO GENESIS 1

- Back in week two of our series we saw that God created us male and female to complement each other. This complementary nature is seen in how men and women work along side each other in larger culture and we saw last week that this complementary nature becomes even more clear in marriage. Sex is an extension of that complementary nature as we look at how a husband and wife's body complement each other in sex.

- This is connected back to them being in the image of God and their calling to fulfill the cultural mandate. So then, is the purpose then to only procreate? No. We actually find 4 purposes of sex in Scripture. They really are dimensions since they are interrelated and not mutually exclusive.

#### 4 Dimensions of Sex in Marriage

1. Children - *"And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth...' Genesis 1:28* So Sex is given to a husband and wife as image-bearers of God who were called to multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. The image-bearers were to live for God's glory and have little image-bearers who would grow up to live for God's glory.

2. Oneness - *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."* Genesis 2:24

- But the oneness of sexual union is not merely physical but is connected to the covenant.
- In his book on marriage, *Mingling of Souls*, Matt Chandler writes, "In the Hebrew lexicon, there are multiple words for *love*, but one of my favorites is the word *dod*. Although it is often rendered "love," *dod* refers specifically to sexual love and is better translated as "lovemaking" or "caresses." It carries the meaning, as Paul House [Hebrew scholar] said, of two souls mingling together."
- So there is a unique oneness that happens when a husband and wife in covenant friendship consummate that union with sex. It happens the first time and every time after. Sex in marriage becomes a celebration of oneness.

3. Knowledge - *"Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain..."* Genesis 4:1

4. Pleasure – (See entire book of Song of Solomon) – *"My beloved is mine, and I am his; he grazes among the lilies. Until the day breathes and the shadows flee, turn, my beloved, be like a gazelle or a young stag on cleft mountains."* Song of Solomon 2:16-17 She is not inviting him to go on a hike. She is using metaphors to describe what she would like her husband to do to her. Last two seem to be post fall but I'll bring them in here as well.

- God said sex is good in Genesis 1:31, so, its not dirty. It's not an afterthought. God CLEARLY seems to have designed the male and female bodies for enjoying sexual union together. Because of this, sex is a blessing.
- Matt Chandler describes it this way: "Sex and the families it produces are part of God's blessing. From the initial attraction to the covenant marriage that sanctions sex, from the thrill of the romantic chase to the consummate pleasure of the marriage bed, God designed it all, ordered it all, blessed it all."

**2. Sin** – Mankind's bid to be self-determinative and to be our own God failed. We read in Genesis 3 how Adam and Eve were not content to be made in the image of God and gave in to the temptation to want to be God-like. We've seen in our series that while we are still in God's image, sin corrupts us and makes it impossible for us to rightly live that out now. Sin fractures us as men and women so we don't know what it means to be a man or a woman. Sin corrupts the marriage relationship so now marriage is super hard and divorce happens.

- In the case of sex, Adam and Eve who were one as husband and wife now were ashamed and hid themselves from each other. We see in the rest of Scripture that sin corrupted the biological drive toward sex, its romantic connection, the purpose, and the boundaries of sex.
- Sexual brokenness shows up early and often throughout Scripture. In Genesis lust for one of Jacob's daughters consumed a pagan man. He raped her and then wanted her for his wife.
- When Moses was up on the mountain talking to God and receiving the 10 commandments the people built a golden calf and started worshipping it. But what most people miss in this text is

that the Hebrew is saying that they had a giant orgy around the golden calf. These people had just seen God move in their midst in ways that few human beings have ever seen and yet now you find them worshipping a pagan symbol and engaging in sexual rebellion against their Redeemer God.

- Since Adam and Eve rebelled against their Creator, no human being has ever been born and lived out their days without their sexual desires being tainted by sin. We are all effected by the fall. That doesn't mean we are effected in the same way but on one born has true sexual wellness and wholeness.
- This is something some Christians seem to miss when they refer to LGBT individuals. All of us have sexual sin of some kind –thoughts or actions.
- The truth is that all sexual sin is because of the fall of mankind into sin. Our biological drive is affected so people want sex too much or in some cases too little or we may have same sex attraction. The romantic connection is broken so we don't see the importance of a loving lifelong covenant relationship for sex to happen. The purpose of sex is lost so now people in our culture see sex as serving chiefly for our individual happiness. And then we have lost the boundaries for sex so that we speak about sexual freedom.
- But it hasn't led to true freedom has it? We've already documented some ways sin affects sex in Scripture. Let me highlight just a couple of ways in our culture...
- **Porn** – separates sexual pleasure not just from marriage but from physical union completely. It objectifies the person on the screen and is not about giving yourself to your spouse in loving union but about satisfying yourself. Porn breeds an inherently self-centered view of sex.
- Estimate are porn makes \$10-14 billion a year. 70% of American men ages 18–34 view Internet pornography once a month. Porn demeans the image of God in the person who is being viewed because it is turning them into an object to be used, not a human being with dignity. Aside from the trafficking of women to make porn, the affects of porn on the users is staggering.
- [www.Fightthenewdrug.org](http://www.Fightthenewdrug.org) –Website with tons of peer reviewed research and help to understand the porn problem and some practical help to overcome addiction.
- And lest we think that it is only XXX porn we are talking about, we're not. A lot of our media paints a shallow picture of sex. Hollywood actor, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, in an interview with NPR, talks about this.

"I paid a lot of attention to the way that media influences how we see the world, and especially when it comes to love and sex and relationships.... I think that there's not a substantial difference between a lot of main-stream culture and pornography. They're equally simplistic, reductionist. Whether it's rated X or "approved by the FCC for general viewing audiences," the message is the same. We have a tendency in our culture to take people and treat them like things.
- Despite the massive amount of porn usage only 29% of Americans think porn usage is morally ok. So we have many people who know it is wrong and year are experiencing the incredible social, mental, and personal problems porn creates.
- The affects of sexual brokenness are seen in other areas as well, like **Abuse**. 1 in 4 women, and 1 in 6 men have experienced sexual abuse. That means roughly 40 women and 23 men here today have experienced it. Devastating impact on people. I have never met anyone who has suffered sexual abuse who it has not had a deep, lifelong impact on. Sexual abuse happens because of sin.

- Our sexuality is broken and we can see it all over our world and even in our own hearts. On our own, we don't want to honor God with our sexuality and we are not even born knowing what that is. "Your sexual desires on their own, will lead outside of God's will every single time." -JD Greear

### 3. Restoration (1 Cor 6:12-7:1-5)

- We see Paul addressing how the Corinthian culture view sex and how Christ has come to redeem us from all sin, including sexual immorality. The Corinthian church was in the middle of a sexually promiscuous culture and many of the new Christians had been a part of it. Paul was running into new members of the church that wanted to act on their sinful old desires. Remember that as we have talked about through this series, Jesus came as a new Adam to usher in a new humanity, one that walks with our Creator through him.
- Paul cites 6 of their arguments and then shows them how this is not God's will for them in Christ. <sup>12</sup> "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. <sup>13</sup> "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup> And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. <sup>15</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup> Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." <sup>17</sup> But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. <sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

#### 1. There's no law against two people having sex if they want to

- Paul quotes the Corinthians saying, You say "All things are lawful for me," They were saying, "hey, there's no law saying we can't have sex." The Christians who were saying, "hey, we're saved by grace so why can't we just do whatever we want now?" We are FREE in Jesus, right???
- But Paul reminds them...**Just because it is legal does not make it moral or right.**
- Paul says OK, it may be legal in our society, but it is not good in God's eyes. It is not against the law to stay up all night long playing video games before you have a very important job interview but it doesn't make it wise. It may not be against the law to eat 200 Maple Bacon Donuts from Union Square Donuts but that doesn't make it helpful to do it.
- Christians are given freedom from condemnation through Christ, but we are held to a higher standard than the minimal legal requirement of our society.
- 2. We are free, consenting adults** – they were saying we are choosing to have sex of our own free will. Paul repeats the phrase "All things are lawful for me" –and answer it in a different way meaning he was drawing attention to a different way it was being used.
- Corinthians were arguing, "Hey, we are free and consenting" BUT Paul says, . . .
- you are not free, you are in bondage to sin and are in disobedience to God.**
- Sexual sin in particular has incredible power to enslave. More so than just about any other sin sex has the power to enslave and create addiction. Paul says, don't be mastered by sex.
- 3. It's just natural** – biological urges just like for food, sleep, or going to the bathroom Sex is an appetite – Greek understanding was that the physical world was temporary and didn't matter so you could just do what you wanted to do with your body.

- So, you have an urge to eat – nobody is condemning you for eating! If you have to go to the bathroom, no one is waving their finger at you, so if you have the urge for sex, just go for it.
- Men and women are created in the image of God and are not to act like animals**
- You are not an animal, just giving into your impulses without control. We are different than animals in that we are aware that we are. Animals are not. Animals are driven by instinct and impulse. My dog NOEL has never thought about how her incessant drive to go fetch a ball is super annoying to the people around her. But we are different. EXAMPLE – anyone had just an insane thought run through your head? Like “oh, you’re going to drive 12mph in the left lane, well I’ll just ram the back of your car!” Now, what happens is you are aware that you are aware and go, “Wow! That was crazy.” And you don’t do it. BUT you know who would do it in my situation? Noel. She would not have the awareness to be aware of the craziness of her thought and she would ram my car into the car in front of me.
- Sex causes an emotional, physical and spiritual union – different than eating food or sleeping. And Christ has not redeemed us as human beings so we can then act like animals driven by impulse.

#### **4. It’s my body, I can do what I want – nobody can tell me what to do**

- Individualistic – I own my body. I can do with it what I want.
- Paul says, **Your body is part of the body of Christ.** Look at v.15-16. You can’t take your body and just unite it with a prostitute if you belong to Jesus. That includes anyone else too. If you are a Christian your body is not yours to do with as you please, especially something as deep and substantial as sexual union with another human being.

#### **5. Sex is not a big deal. What I do just effects me – it doesn’t impact anyone else so it is no one else’s business.**

- This takes the individualistic view to the extreme –what I do doesn’t effect other people, only me.
- your body’s purpose is to glorify God.** You belong to Him and has wired you and I so what what we do effects our friends, our family, it effects our present or future spouse, our walk with Jesus.

#### **6. I alone decide what is right and wrong for me.**

- The desire for Self-determination – the original sin.
- Jesus paid the price for our bodies.** What we do in our bodies is to honor Christ. vv.19-20
- ILL -- Some of you know that I lived in West Newton for over 5 years. I can’t tell you how many times I just wanted to sell our home and move closer to Brookline. Only one thing kept me from being able to do it. I was renting at the time. I had no right to sell the home even though I lived in it. A Christian doesn’t have the right to do whatever they feel like doing with their bodies. They belong to Christ.
- In the face of all of this, Paul warns us v.18. You are destroying yourself. “OK but what does “flee” mean in the original language?” --- “RUN AWAY!!!”
- “sexual immorality” – Greek word (porneia) encompassed adultery, prostitution, and for Jews, any sexual behavior deviating from the biblical norm. In other words, *porneia* is junk drawer term meaning any sex outside of sex in the bonds of a lifelong marriage between a man and woman. It is the term Jesus used to refer to ALL sexual immorality.
- But you could easily read this passage in 1 Corinthians 6 and think Paul is just being prudish about sex but what he does as he continues into 1 Cor 7:1-4 gives a beautiful picture of sex.  
*Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”<sup>2</sup> But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. <sup>3</sup>The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup>For the wife does not have*

*authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.* <sup>5</sup> *Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

•God came up with sex. Created the human body to be able to experience great pleasure...

### **1. If you have sexual desires, don't look for sex, aspire to marriage. (7:1-2)**

•v.2 Paul sets the parameters for godly sexual expression – a husband and wife. Up to this point it sounds like Paul is condemning sex but he has only been pointing to sinful sex- sex outside of marriage.

•Sex is this glorious, amazing reality that God has set up for those who are in lifelong covenant with each other to enjoy. Think about it. Absolute trust. Absolute security. Absolute oneness with your spouse creates a context where you are known, loved, and at one with another person. Think about the freedom this brings. NEVER to be broken except by death.

### **2. Husbands and Wives have a glorious calling to serve each other (7:3-4)**

•This means husbands have a responsibility to love and serve their wives sexually. Yes. That means what I said it means. And wives have a responsibility to love and serve their husbands sexually. "Well that sounds demeaning." Its not demeaning if this is your lifelong, one flesh, covenant friend! You love each other. V.5 – NEVER DENY but by mutual consent.

•If this is God's design then you would expect this plan to lead to sexual fulfillment. Guess who says they are the most sexually satisfied people? A massive study focused on sexual satisfaction of Americans revealed that married couples in their 40's and 50's were the most sexually satisfied (both people) and married couples who were able to have sex continued to describe a satisfying relationship into their 70's and even a few in their 80's.

•Paul gives the reasoning why this works in v.4. A couple recognizes their true oneness. The man doesn't have authority over his own body independent of his wife because she is one with him. And vice-versa.

•A husband and wife, born with a self-centered bent, through Christ experience the grace to selflessly give themselves to each other. When a husband and wife, who are one in God, living out a deep covenant friendship in life, enter the bedroom with the desire to serve the other and bring them joy, what happens? Any guesses? Sexual union brings joy and feeds into a greater sense of oneness, which as we learned LAST WEEK – points to message of the gospel and the relationship between Christ and his church.

•Sex feeds into and out of the oneness that God created marriage to be. This is why happy couples almost always have a good sex life and unhappy couples rarely do.

### **CONCLUSION**

•Sex is a gift of God for the good of marriage and human flourishing. For those struggling with sexual sin and temptation. You may feel alone today. Know that you are not. We are all fellow strugglers with sin. There may be guilt and shame but there is grace for you. So what do you do?

1. Confession/Repentance - 1 John 1:9

2. Share during your men's and women's time during CG – ask for prayer and accountability

3. Hope's Men's Conference

•Take communion knowing Jesus has done everything that will ever be needed to make you clean.

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