

# Marriage & Family

## Human Sexuality

### I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. I'm sure we might feel uncomfortable in talking about sexuality as clearly as we will today.
- B. We will do so, however, for several reasons:
  - 1. Sex is an important part of marriage. In fact, God intends sex to be an important part of marriage.
  - 2. The Bible talks a great deal about sexuality. God made us as sexual creatures; therefore, we need to have no embarrassment in talking about the way God has made us.
  - 3. We're all adults, and I believe we can talk about sexuality as adults.

### II. THE BIBLE & SEX.(1)

- A. We are sexual beings by creation.
  - 1. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gn 1:27).
  - 2. Sexuality is part of God's plan of creation.
    - a. Our maleness and femaleness, our sexuality, is not something added to our humanness, nor is it a part of our fallenness; it is part of the original perfect creation of mankind.
    - b. In other words, even before Adam and Eve sinned, God intended for man and woman to express themselves sexually.
  - 3. By implication then our sexuality is nothing to be ashamed of but something to be enjoyed within the proper bounds.
- B. Our maleness and femaleness are in God's image.
  - 1. As we discover in Gn 1, not only did God make us in his own image, but even the fact that we are male and female is part of that divine nature. Notice what we read in the opening pages of

Scripture: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gn 1:26-27).

- a. It is clear from this passage that man was created by God in accordance with a particular model or design.
  - b. That design is described as the “image of God.”
2. As we talked about in the beginning of the class, we talked about the image of God having to do with our desire for relationship.
- a. In that light, our divine image as it relates to sexuality, includes two dimensions: our sexual functioning and our functioning in a relationship as a couple.
  - b. Both of these functions grow out of our becoming “one” physically, spiritually, and emotionally.
  - c. The first command given to mankind is reproduction.
    - “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground’ (Gn 1:28).
    - That is sexual function.

C. God-given sexuality includes sexual intercourse.

1. the perfect, sinless state of man and woman included sexual union, and this too was a perfect and beautiful part of God’s creation plan—part of our being reflection of him, here on earth.
2. Genesis 2:24 occurs in the Genesis narrative before sin ever enters the world.
  - a. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”
  - b. The phrase, “becoming one flesh,” has at least some reference to sexual intercourse (although I would deny that’s the whole idea of the passage).

D. Key Old Testament Teachings about Sex.

1. To understand the OT input regarding human sexuality, we must understand the *Hebrew view of the human person as an integrated whole*.
  - a. The Hebrews never divided people into body and soul, as did the Greek dualists, or into body, soul, and spirit, as some of us tend to do today.
  - b. Rather, the Hebrews thought of a person as a unity. The physical, emotional, and spiritual were various dimensions of a person, but they were closely related and were often used synonymously or interchangeably.
2. Again Gn 2:24 says: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”
  - a. This means far more than a mere physical meeting of bodies. The scripture is talking about that mystical union between husband and wife that includes the emotional, physical, and spiritual—*the total person*.
  - b. For the Christian, love-making cannot be just physical.
    - It has to be more than that if there is to be anything happening between two people.
      - That does not mean that sex cannot be for physical desire.
      - In fact, the NT teaches that husbands and wives need to give themselves to one another sexually to prevent sexual temptation: “Since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. IN the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except 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 Cor 7:2-5).

- However, if there is to be a fulfilled relationship, there must be more to it than meeting physical needs. The total person—intellect, emotions, body, spirit and will—becomes involved in the process of giving ourselves to each other.
3. As we look at many of the well-known characters from the OT, we find they were passionate people.
- a. We have a tendency to think that sexuality is below us, but we find as we look at these characters, that sexuality is accepted as being an internal part of human nature.
  - b. In other words, one can be a great hero of the faith and still be an intensely passionate person:
    - Notice what we read about Jacob and Rebekah: “When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, ‘She is my sister,’ because he was afraid to say, ‘She is my wife.’ He thought, ‘The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful. When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah” (Gn 26:7-8).
      - About this text, Tim & Beverly LaHaye wrote: “We are not told how far his [Isaac’s] advances went, but he obviously was sufficiently intimate to make the king conclude that she was his wife, not his sister, as he had at first falsely declared” (p. 18).
      - “The fact that he was caught . . . suggests that it was common and permissible in their day for husbands to ‘sport’ [engage in foreplay]” (Ibid.).
    - “By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient” (Heb 11:31).
4. “If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to

stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married” (Deut 24:5).

- a. This allowed people to get to “know” each other at a time when their sex drives were strongest and under circumstances that would provide ample opportunity for experimentation and enjoyment.
  - b. Admittedly, this provision was also given to make it possible for a young man to ‘propagate’ before he faced the risk of death on the battlefield. Contraceptives were not used in that time, and since the couple had so much time to be with each other, it is easy to see why children usually came early in the marriage.
1. The Song of Solomon.(2) While there are some who have attempted to allegorize Song of Solomon as a poem of Jesus and the church, most today accept it as a love poem between a husband and wife.
    - a. Sexuality is good.
      - While the author never explicitly mentions the work of God in creation, he does describe the beauty of God’s handiwork: brilliant light, fountains and springs, many waters, mountains and hills, pastures and vineyards, trees and flowers, sun and moon, animals and birds.
      - Likewise, sexuality is assumed to be a creation of God given to man for enjoyment.
    - b. Sex is for couples.
      - The man and woman are a duality, as in the beginning—a lover and his beloved.
      - The love of a man and woman is extolled.
    - c. Sexuality makes men and women equal.
      - Yes, men and women have different roles in the church and in the home (they even have different roles in sex). However, different roles doesn’t mean that one is better than the other.
      - Notice how sex makes men and women in the Song of Solomon:

- Song of Sol 2:16: “My lover is mine and I am his.”
- The Book begins and ends with the woman speaking.
- She initiates most of the meetings and is just as active in the love making as is the man. Likewise, she is just as eloquent about the beauty of her lover as he is about her.

e. Sexuality is related to wholeness.

- One of the main themes in the Book is the absence or presence of the lovers.
- Throughout the song the fact of physical closeness is obviously important as the loves speak and cling to each other: “His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me” (2:6).
- This idea is heightened when the lovers are apart: “Tell me, you whom I love, where you graze your flock and where you rest your sheep at midday” (1:7).

f. Sexuality is pleasurable.

- Something markedly absent from the discussions of sexuality in Song of Solomon is the role it plays in procreation—something Genesis repeatedly mentions.
- Lovemaking for the sake of love is the theme of the poem.

5. We learn from this that human beings are accepted by God as beings with a sexual nature.

- a. God does not condone disobedience to his standards in expressions of our sexuality; but he does not condemn our sexuality itself, nor does he condemn us for being intensely sexual beings.
- b. He recognizes that the sexual part of us is a very powerful element of our being—a forceful drive.
  - We can see the power of sexuality in the men and women who were chosen as models of faith (Heb 11).

- Our human sexuality is not something to be diminished as we become more “spiritual.” It is part of us as spiritual, godly persons, and it is good.

c. However, we do need to follow our Lord’s instructions for the responsible use of this important part of ourselves. Evil comes from the misuse of sex, not from its mere existence.

### III. STEPS FOR GOOD SEX IN MARRIAGE.

#### A. From the Association of Christian Counselors:

1. Husbands and wives must consistently practice the concept of mutuality—mutual respect and mutual responsibility—in their sexual relationships. When there is a spirit of mutuality, passion will be expressed, sexual freedom discovered, and true “oneness” fulfilled.
2. Speaking sexually, men and women are different.
  - a. Women function on two tracks: (a) the emotional track and (2) the physical track. In order for a woman to be sexually aroused, both these tracks must intersect.
  - b. Men function on one track. This means that when physically aroused, men will almost always be emotionally ready to have sex.
3. It is also true that (in general) women open up sexually when they feel connected with their husbands, while men connect emotionally and open up through sex and physical touch.
4. The husband must start the process of discovering mutual sexual fulfillment by connecting with his spouse. A husband’s love, adoration, and connection will help to ignite his wife’s sexual passion. He feels loved by her positive response to his advances and they both end up fulfilled.
5. A woman’s responsibility is to receive her husband’s affirmation and lead by invitation, as did the bride in the Song of Solomon. For a woman to do this, she has to believe she is worthy and has a right to be sexual. She has to know that her body was designed for her sexual satisfaction.
6. To experience long-lasting passion in marriage, couples must focus their sexual times together on delighting in each others’

bodies. Arousal, intercourse, and orgasm do not measure sexual satisfaction, but result when pleasure is the focus.

7. For pleasure to be the focus of sex in marriage, the couple has to accept their differences as men and women: the husband's more predictable constancy and the ever-changing complexity of the woman. Sex will then be more interesting, less goal-oriented, less pressure-filled, and more deeply satisfying.
8. Western society glorifies spontaneity. However, for most couples, the anticipation of planned sexual times builds quality, and the secure scheduling of those times increases quality. Put simply, setting aside specific times for pleasure means more great sex.

B. Understand the [sexual response pattern](#).

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(1) Many of these ideas come from Tim and Beverly LaHaye, *The Act of Marriage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), Clifford Penner and Joyce Penner, *The Gift of Sex* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1981),

(2) The material related to the Song of Solomon comes primarily from Richard M. Davidson, "Theology of Sexuality in the Song of Songs: Return to Eden," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 27 (1989): 1-19.

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