

SS, Marriage, M&F, A Biblical View of Sex

4/2/23

1. Sex in the Creation Account

1) Genesis 1

Gen 1:27-31 So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth ...**”³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and **behold, it was very good.**

- i. The sexual relationship between husband and wife, one male and one female, is viewed as central from the very beginning. Man was called to procreate. He was to multiply. The means through which he would do so was sex. Sex is thus front and center in what human life is about. The fall would bring abnormalities into the world. Not everyone would marry or remain married. Not every woman would be able to bear children. The image of the devil would multiply alongside the image of God. Still, sex is central in God’s created design.
- ii. God’s assessment of sex, as he designed it, is that it was “VERY GOOD”. It was beautiful. It was noble. It reflected something precious about himself, namely intimacy, love, and creative ability. **REMEMBER THAT THE MOST BASIC PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE (acc. to Eph. 5:32) IS TO ILLUSTRATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE.** *Sex helps believers to understand the intimacy with which Christ views us, the delight with which he engages us, and the pleasure he has in our being delighted with him. It also relates to his purpose to use us in “creating” image-bearers.*

2) Genesis 2

Gen 2:24-25 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they **shall become one flesh.** ²⁵ And the man and his wife **were both naked and were not ashamed.**

- i. “ONE FLESH”

- i) In marriage, a man and a woman enter into a **total sharing of life** (“become one flesh”). A union takes place, in which God joins two people together into one. They share their money and possessions. They share their plans and objectives, their hopes and fears. They also share their bodies. *They belong to each other physically in a way that is not true of any other human relationship.*
- ii) The fact that this “one flesh” union involves and includes sexual union is explicit in 1Co 6:16.

1Co 6:15-20 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! ¹⁶ 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.**” ¹⁷ But **he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.** ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but **the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.** ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

- The sexual act is a profound activity. To engage in such, even in the most impersonal manner, with a stranger, is still to “become one body” with that person. In that moment, however casual, however lacking in kindness, “the two become one flesh”.
- Sex is wrong, unwise, and hurtful when removed from the context of a permanent, monogamous, loving relationship between a husband and wife.

APPLICATION QUESTION: Like eating and drinking, sex can be intensely gratifying (and feel necessary) when engaged in outside of marriage. And, like eating and drinking, **within marriage**, sex can be boring, hurtful, and even abusive. *How then can we insist that marriage is the only safe and beautiful place for sex?*

A: Sex removed from marriage is ALWAYS sex removed from total commitment. Even if an unmarried couple says they are committed to each other permanently, they have not publicly expressed that in the covenant of marriage. Thus, their commitment is not total. **Sex outside of marriage ALWAYS cheapens the act of sex, treating it as less than it is.** Two people are sharing the treasures of a secret garden without having established the secret garden. The feelings may be INTENSE; but those feelings will not last, nor will the relationship, apart from total commitment.

*******Jim Newheiser comments:** *“While our culture uses a ring as a sign of the marriage bond, God designed the sexual union as the sign of a husband and wife’s unique commitment to each other. Tim Keller writes, ‘Sex is perhaps the most powerful God-created way to help you give your entire self to another human being. Sex is God’s appointed way for two people to reciprocally say to one another, ‘I belong completely, permanently, and exclusively to you.’ You must not use sex to say anything less’” (pg. 142-143).*

NOTE: *Marriage, however, in and of itself, does not guarantee safety and beauty in a fallen world. Even within marriage, sex can be ugly.*

ii. “(THEY) WERE BOTH NAKED AND WERE NOT ASHAMED”

- i) God’s intention was not that the human community would live in nakedness. At the beginning, it was just the husband and his wife.
- ii) God’s intention was not that the husband and wife should immediately be clothed. He created them naked, not clothed. He was not ashamed of their nakedness. They were not ashamed of their nakedness. As they looked at each other, including each other’s private parts, there was no sense of embarrassment or inhibition, in them or in their God. As in Gen 1:31, all was “VERY GOOD”.
- iii) It may be that the main point of this statement (v25) is to create a backdrop for what is about to be disclosed in Gen 3:7, *“then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked”*.

2. Sex in the Fall Account

⁶*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate,*

*and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ **Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.** And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.*

There was nothing inherently wrong in nakedness. God had made Adam & Eve that way. However, when sin became part of their experience, they immediately were uncomfortable with their nakedness and felt compelled to cover their private parts. Their having violated their relationship with the Lord and with each other had sudden sexual implications.

It's not that they stopped sexual relations. **Rather, the transparency and comfort level they had previously enjoyed was now gone. Everything about themselves had been completely open. Now, they felt a need to cover up.** They had been so at ease in one another's naked presence. Now, they were no longer comfortable in one another's unclothed condition. It no longer felt safe and delightful. In some sense, they withdrew from each other.

From Genesis 3 on, sex will function as something of a barometer of what is going in other aspects of the husband/wife relationship. A barometer measures atmospheric pressure. Sex likewise reflects upon the "atmosphere" of a marriage. Eve's sin, and Adam's subsequent transgression had nothing to do with sex per se. But their sin resulted in immediate consequences for their sexual relationship.

APPLICATION QUESTION: Why do you think their SIN impacted their view of their private parts?

A: Perhaps it's the fact that their sin reflected that selfishness rather than love controlled their behavior. They no longer felt safe. Thus, they acted to protect their tender parts.

²¹ *And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins **and clothed them.***

Literally and theologically, we note God taking the life of an innocent victim in order to cover the guilty. Whatever motivated Adam & Eve to cover themselves, the Lord was motivated by grace. The husband/wife relationship was indeed no longer completely safe. The sacred communion of the first couple had been profaned. Covering was needed.

3. Sex in Genesis- Polygamy; Rape; Homosexuality; Incest; Adultery (Gen 38)

As the Genesis story unfolds, sex continues to have a central role in the procreation of the human race, beginning with the births of Cain and Abel. Through the procreation of Abraham's seed, the Promised One would come. But sex, like everything else, was deeply tarnished by the fall into sin.

POLYGAMY comes to expression before the close of Genesis 4 ("Lamech took two wives, v19). This may have been motivated by a lust for more laborers and/or a lust for an additional sex partner. It was clearly a violation of the creation pattern that one man would leave his parents and cleave to one wife, becoming one flesh with her.

More than once in Genesis, the ugly sin of **RAPE**, sexual assault, rears its ugly head. In Gen 19, all of *the men of Sodom, both young and old (Gen 19:4)* demand that Lot hand over his male visitors so that they can sexually assault them. Obviously, this also involves the sin of **HOMOSEXUALITY**. Later in Gen 19, the sin of **INCEST** is seen in Lot's daughters seducing their father through drink so as to lay with him and bear children by him. In Gen 34, Dinah is assaulted sexually. In Gen 38, Judah and Tamar engage in **ADULTERY or FORNICATION**, each for their own reasons.

APPLICATION QUESTION: What drives sexual sin more than anything else?

A: Idolatry. Sex is one of the leading counterfeit gods. We CRAVE what we think sex can give us. It may be the lust for pleasure, for relief; a craving to be desired; a sense of power; a yearning for retaliation; a lust for acceptance. The misuse of sex, even within marriage, reflects upon idols in our hearts.

Jer. 2:13 *...for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

*******QUOTE NEWHEISER FROM BOTTOM OF PAGE 145, TOP OF PAGE 146**

4. Sex in OT Narrative

Throughout the OT, God's redemptive plan unfolds, in large measure, by way of sex and procreation. The Promised One will come through people like Abraham & Sarah, and likewise

through folks like Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. Each contributes their decisive influence through having sexual relations and bearing a child.

What grabs the headlines, however, is sexual sin. We should beware of letting the fact of sexual transgression obscure our sense of the dignity of sex, rightly used.

- 1) **David-** One of the outstanding features of David's life, sadly, was his adultery with Bathsheba, and the horrible steps taken to keep his iniquity hidden. **It is wonderful that God not only forgave his son, but used his union with Bathsheba to bring the promised Messiah to the world.**
- 2) **Solomon-** The narrative of the wisest king's life ends on a sad, sobering note, with his allowing his love for his foreign wives to turn him to idolatrous worship (1Kg 11).

1Kg 11 *But King Solomon loved many foreign women...² from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love.³ And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.⁴ For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.*

Illicit sex promises reward, but forbidden fruit never delivers on what it promises.

Sex is one of the great Enchanted Forests of this world.

5. **Sex in Proverbs**

Proverbs warns repeatedly about the dangers of sexual immorality. In doing so, however, it also speaks very positively about the sexual life of the husband and wife.

Prov. 5:15-21 *Drink water from your own cistern,
And running water from your own well.*

¹⁶ *Should your fountains be dispersed abroad,
Streams of water in the streets?*

¹⁷ *Let them be only your own,
And not for strangers with you.*

¹⁸ *Let your fountain be blessed,*

And rejoice with the wife of your youth.

¹⁹ As a loving deer and a graceful doe,

Let her breasts satisfy you at all times;

And always be enraptured [intoxicated, ravished, exhilarated and delight in] with her love.

²⁰ For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman,

And be embraced in the arms of a seductress?

²¹ For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD,

And He ponders all his paths.

The fundamental imperative is to engage in sexual relations righteously, not immorally. The language, however, clearly and repeatedly goes beyond simply doing one's duty. ***“REJOICE with (your) wife...be SATISFIED with her (body)...always be EXHILARATED and DELIGHT IN her love*** [in contrast with becoming infatuated and excited about another woman].

APPLICATION QUESTION: How could working out this passage practically be compared to working at preparing a nice meal rather than just throwing together a quick PB&J sandwich?

A: If PB&J is all you can afford or have time to do, that's fine. But generally, a married couple seek something more than that, wanting supper to be both nutritious and delightful. The meal is thus made a matter of consideration and preparation. It is given time and energy. Marital relations should be approached in a similar way. Sometimes, all you have is the leftovers. But generally, a couple should seek more than that, wanting the activity to both feed and delight the union. Give it consideration. Prepare. Be willing to expend time and energy.

6. Sex in the Song of Solomon

This book, found in the Wisdom Literature, provides a sustained narrative poem on Prov. 5:18-19. Throughout the entire 8 chapters, the physical and emotional delight of a healthy God-given sexual union between a husband and wife is on display.

1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine;

2:3 As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

2:6 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me!

2:14 O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the crannies of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

4:9 *You have captivated my heart, my sister, my bride; you have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace.*

4:14 *...nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all choice spices—*

5:1 *I came to my garden, my sister, my bride, I gathered my myrrh with my spice, I ate my honeycomb with my honey, I drank my wine with my milk. **Others:** Eat, friends, drink, and be drunk with love!*

7. Sex in the Teaching of Jesus

1) Matthew 5:27-32

- i. Sexual immorality is most fundamentally a sin of the HEART.
- ii. Heaven and hell are at stake in whether we habitually indulge or resist immoral sexual impulses. Thus, we must be willing to take serious practical steps to avoid sin.
- iii. Jesus underscores the gravity of sexual immorality by citing it as a ground for divorce.

2) Matthew 19:3-12

- i. Jesus affirms that the one-flesh union is what God has joined together.
- ii. Jesus underscores the gravity of sexual immorality.

3) Matt. 22:30- *For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.* Sex is not the main thing. Sex is not forever.

8. Sex in the Teaching of Paul

1Co 7:1-5 *Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." ² But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. ³ The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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.

- 1) The challenges of “the present distress” (v26) were such that the apostle thought it wiser for believers to remain celibate (v1).
- 2) Yet, he recognized the immense challenges of sexual temptation (v2) and thus encouraged marriage. Thus, one of the basic reasons for marriage, in this fallen world, is to provide a remedy for and protection against sexual temptation.
- 3) More than anything else, this passage underscores the other-oriented, self-giving nature of sex as God designed it. *“The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights” (3a)*. In ancient times, women did not have legal rights in general, nor did their culture view them as having rights to sex in particular. There was a double standard for men and women. Men could marry to have an heir. For sexual pleasure, they could connect with their wife, with a mistress, or with a prostitute. Wives, on the other hand, faced severe repercussions if they resisted sex within marriage or sought sex outside of marriage.
- 4) In this revolutionary passage, the Scriptures mandate that husbands *“should give to their wives their conjugal rights” (v3a)*. As amplified in v4, the husband *does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does*.
- 5) Likewise, the wife should give to her husband his conjugal rights. She does not have authority over her own body, but he does.
- 6) This passage calls for self-giving sexually. Sex is not about what I want, what I need, or what I demand. It is about ministering to my spouse. How can I serve? How can I protect? The context is the realism of sexual temptation. This is an arena in which it is hard for many to exercise self-control. Many “burn” with desire. Marriage provides an outlet for that desire. That fact, however, does not justify or warrant a demanding attitude on the part of either spouse. Instead, it should intensify their concern to serve one another so as to help and protect one another.

9. Sex in the Teaching of Hebrews- 13:4

10. Sex as an Illustration of the Relationship between Christ and his Bride