

God and Sexuality

written by Randy Starkey | 09/04/2023

The church is often reluctant to address money and sex. The apostles were not reluctant at all! They declared God's WHOLE counsel!

The apostle Paul said in Acts 20:27 (ESV) — *"for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God."* In this post we'll be looking at sexuality, and what God has to say.

Why do we need God's "whole counsel"? Because God calls us to make choices!

The devil wants to steal, kill and destroy in our lives, but Jesus wants to help us live an abundant life. We read this clearly in John 10:10 (NASB) — *"The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly."* And God calls us to CHOOSE that abundant life! We do that by LEARNING God's ways, which He lays out for us in His Word! Our choices even affect our descendants! Listen to what God says in Deuteronomy 30:19 (NLT) — *"Today I have given you the choice between life and death... Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!"* We must make right choices!

We must understand we are in a spiritual war!

Satan is called *"the god of this world"* (2 Cor. 4:4), and this side of Heaven he will be constantly battling us to get us away from obeying Jesus! He especially attacks us in our mind, trying to deny or distract us from God's Word so we will make wrong choices. This is aptly described in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV) — *"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."* The Word of God is our offensive weapon in the armor described in Ephesians chapter 6. That's why we must know it, and use it and be in it daily! Ephesians 6:17b (NLT) — *"...take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."* We use it to cut down these attacks of the enemy against our mind!

We also face a culture today that is increasingly hostile to God's Word and ways, and it points us in all sorts of wrong directions! Paul warned us about this in Romans 12, and unsurprisingly, he pointed out the problem is wrong thoughts and wrong ideas in our mind that must be renewed! Romans 12:2 (NLT) — *"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."* And Proverbs points out that how we think determines what we become! Proverbs 23:7b (GNB) — *"What he thinks is what he really is."*

The battle is in our mind! What we think determines what we believe, which determines what we do, which determines what we become!

To tear down lies we believe, we need truths that show us God's ways!

A classic passage in God's Word that illustrates this is Romans 1:20-22, 23-25 (GW) — *"From the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly observed in what he made. As a result, people have no excuse. They knew God but did not praise and thank him for being God. Instead, their thoughts were total nonsense, and their misguided minds were plunged into darkness. While claiming to be wise, they became fools. For this reason God allowed their lusts to control them. As a result, they dishonor their bodies by sexual perversion with each other. These people have exchanged God's truth for a lie..."* God is saying to us here that every day we see the beauty and reality and complexity and design of His creation all around us, yet people continue to ignore God, and He describes what then happens. We end up with *"misguided minds"* that are plunged into *"darkness"*, and interestingly, the area that God says follows right after that is *"sexual perversion"*!

So let's look at several key areas of truth, all found in God's Word, that will keep us on the right track in our sexuality!

Our first area of truth is that God invented sex and it is good! Can I hear an amen! ☐ But, as we will see, it's like atomic power, if wrongly used, it can be extremely destructive!

In the very beginning in Genesis, the book of beginnings ("genesis" means beginning) we see that God created us male and female, including our sexuality, and declared it *"very good"*! Genesis 1:27-28,31, 4:1 (NLT) — *"So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it...' Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! Now Adam had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant."* It's important to note here that the devil cannot create anything! All he knows how to do is to mess up the good that God has created! And he works hard at doing that in the area of sexuality, perverting God's way every chance he gets, and selling it as *"freedom"*, yet it actually leads to bondage, hurt and heartache! The apostle Peter aptly describes those that are led astray like this... 2 Peter 2:18-19 (NLT) — *"They brag about themselves with empty, foolish boasting. With an appeal to twisted sexual desires, they lure back into sin those who have barely escaped from a lifestyle of deception. They promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you."*

Our second truth, also coming out of Genesis in the very beginning, is that sex is for marriage only, between one man and one woman.

We clearly see, again in the beginning in Genesis, that marriage is one man and one woman, married (Eve is called Adam's wife), and, leaving father and mother, are joined together as one, which includes sexually. Genesis 2:18,22,24 (NLT) — *"Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.' Then the LORD God made a woman... and he brought her to the man. This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one."* This shows us God's plan from the beginning. There are no other variations given, and we do not have the right to alter or add to God's plan for marriage and sexuality. As we get further into the Old Testament, and then carried into the New Testament, variations and perversions of God's

marriage and sexuality plan are soundly condemned and warned against. (See many of the supporting Scriptures at the end of this article.)

The further we get away from God's truth, the stranger things get. We see this in our modern culture. Even some churches are being influenced by this. Things like homosexuality, transgenderism, gender dysphoria, transitioning (including wrongly influencing children and even pursuing hormonal and surgical irreversible and horrendous procedures!), multiple pronouns, polyamorism, pedophilia "love", bestiality, sex trafficking, the sex industry, pornography, and ANYTHING that is contrary to marriage being between one man and one woman, and sex being only within that relationship, is contrary to God's truth and His ways, and will ultimately be hurtful! As many of the above scriptures point out, these aberrations begin as thoughts and desires in our mind, and they must be resisted with God's Word! God did not create us for them! And specifically with gender, God does not make mistakes! (PLEASE NOTE: Gender and sex are the same thing! It's only been in recent years that they have been separated. There are NOT 101 different genders!) Just because we have a "desire" does not mean it's a right desire! All desires must be judged by God's Word. This side of Heaven, we have the flesh, temptations of Satan, and painful experiences that can push us in directions that are not good for us, and we must be highly aware of this to avoid being led astray!

Some of these areas are tough to overcome in, but God is there to help us! We must not give in to sin, or rationalize that there is no victory for us. God always has a way out! (see 1 Cor. 10:13) There is no sin that the power of the cross of Jesus is not able to handle!

Unfortunately, culture today is in full rebellion against God and is pushing hard on its agenda contrary to God's truth, not just to be accepted, but to push YOU to believe their falsehoods! It has even subtly begun to infiltrate the church as we will see below.

This is a very important biblical topic for people to understand today, as the issues involved have multiple consequences. What you THINK determines what you BELIEVE, which then determines what you DO, which determines your CONSEQUENCES. This is why it's so important to know thoroughly what the Bible, God's love letter to us, written for our good, actually SAYS!

Subsequent to my posting this blog post, Pastor Andy Stanley hosted a conference called "Unconditional" that unfortunately followed the wrong direction.

You can read an analysis of what happened in the article linked below by a ministry I highly respect, "Stand to Reason". One of the marks of society as we get closer to the return of Jesus is deception (See how that works in James 1:13-21). Unfortunately, it's beginning to happen. Be VERY CAREFUL what you THINK and BELIEVE. It will determine a lot of things in your life!

Here's the link...

<https://www.str.org/w/an-assessment-of-andy-stanley-s-unconditional-conference>

Our third truth is that sex is not just physical, it is sacred and it is spiritual.

I love this passage from the Message Bible... 1 Corinthians 6:16,18 (The Message) — *“There’s more to sex than mere skin on skin. Sex is as much spiritual mystery as physical fact. As written in Scripture, ‘The two become one.’ There is a sense in which sexual sins are different from all others. In sexual sin we violate the sacredness of our own bodies, these bodies that were made for God-given and God-modeled love, for ‘becoming one’ with another.”*

Today, sex is often looked at as just physical pleasure. “If it feels good do it!” is often the mantra. But sex is far more than a physical pleasure. It is designed for “becoming one” in marriage, and so in the sexual act, married or not, you are actually joining yourself to that other person! So when we lack a marriage commitment, and move on to other, often multiple relationships, it breaks that oneness and leaves behind a string of emotional and mental baggage, hurt and damage! Often we don’t realize this and we suffer guilt and anxiety under the surface on a continual basis, whether we admit it or not.

The Bible reveals that human beings have 3 parts within our personhood – we are spirit, soul and body. We see this in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NKJV) — *“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* This is also God’s order – spirit, soul, body. Spirit should come first, which is doing things God’s way, and looking to build a marriage relationship on a spiritual God level (God will guide you to the right life partner if you ask Him and obey Him!), with soul (friendship) and body (sex) following after (in marriage). Our problem is that we often turn this order upside down, and we then make decisions based first on only physical attraction and LUST, which leads us into disobedience to God’s Word and then into big trouble!

Our fourth area of truth involves a question – Why sex? Why did God create sex for us anyway? I see at least 4 reasons in God’s Word.

- Bonding and becoming one in marriage.

Scripture says this in Genesis 2:24 (NKJV) — *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”* God wants us to become one. The experience of sex is one of the ways that happens. And all that is meant to be in the context of marriage. As we have said above, it’s not just physical, it’s spiritual. It creates a special bond that is very important in marriage. A healthy marriage will be healthy sexually.

- Intimacy and enjoyment in marriage.

We find revealed in Sarah and Abraham’s sexual relationship, intimacy and enjoyment. When they were old, and God was promising them the birth of Isaac, Sarah was wondering if she was too old to experience sexual pleasure, but Isaac was born after that according to God’s promise, so apparently not! □ Genesis 18:12 (NLT) — *“So she laughed silently to herself and said, ‘How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?’”*

Intimacy and enjoyment are part of God’s blessing in marriage. Marriage is like the cake, and sex is like the icing. The cake is the main thing, but without the icing, it’s like the enjoyment is missing! The

problem today is a lot of people want to skip the cake and eat only icing. They get addicted to it. Guess what happens – you get sick, and you become a spiritual diabetic! Addicted to sex or pornography, taking a huge spiritual, mental and emotional toll on your life!

- Having children.

Of course one of the reasons for sex is procreation. Being fruitful. Having children. Children require care and nurture, and this happens best in the context of a healthy marriage and family, which is one reason sex should be reserved for marriage. We see this clearly also in the very beginning of God's plans for us, as we see in Genesis 1:28 (NKJV) — *"Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"*

- Foreshadowing the Church and Jesus.

Although the Bible reveals that there won't be human marriage in Heaven (see Mt. 22:30), there will be an eternal marriage between Christ and the church! The Bible describes it as a mystery, and I'm sure it will have a lot to do with all the hurtful effects of sin being gone! In the meantime, our earthly marriages can begin to experience a little of "heaven on earth" when we do it God's way! Ephesians 5:31-32 (NKJV) — *"'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

How to "break free" of lust!

The Bible calls it "lust" when we treat sex on just a physical level, seeking personal enjoyment, all while violating God's commands. Jesus said if we look with lust, we've committed adultery already in our hearts! This can be a very strong problem to break, like a "stronghold", so here are six keys to help you break free!

- a. Commit to God's way.

To break free of lust, we must first of all have God's truth, His Word, in our hearts, and we must be TOTALLY COMMITTED to obeying it by God's grace and power! Listen to Psalm 119:11 (NKJV) — *"Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You."* Jesus put the temptations of the devil to flight by using God's Word in Matthew 4. Jesus said in John 8, if we continue in His Word we would know the truth, and the truth would set us free. We have to KNOW God's way. and we have to COMMIT to it!

- b. Claim the power of the gospel.

You will never overcome lust or any other sin by will power. It needs your will, but it takes HIS power! His power flows from the gospel, which has the cross at the center! When Jesus died on the cross rocks split! Darkness fell for 3 hours! There was an earthquake! Roman soldiers cowered! The veil in the temple (a

foot thick!) ripped from top to bottom! That's the power of the cross! And it's yours through faith! Jesus won the victory for you! Now you must claim it! A key verse is Romans 6:11 (NKJV) — *"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Read the whole section of Romans 6-8 to see how it works. Lust has no power over a dead man. By faith "reckon" yourself dead to sin and alive to God (no lust in the new creation!) and you will begin to experience it!

c. Control your mind.

We must take control of our thoughts. In 2 Cor. 10:4-5, Paul talks about taking every thought captive that is not focused on God's ways. In Romans 12 we learn that we do that by the renewing of our minds. We can be "conformed" to the bad, or "transformed" for the good! It's our choice! Primarily that renewal comes by soaking our minds in God's Word. Psalm 1 is great to memorize to get that truth down inside our hearts! (Check that Psalm out!) Romans 12:2 (NKJV) — *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

d. Conquer by walking in the Spirit.

These two scriptures below from Galatians show us the importance of what the New Testament calls *"walking in the Spirit"*. Notice the second passage, when listing the desires of the sinful nature (also called the flesh), shows that the FIRST three things listed are sexual in nature! That should speak to us about the importance of taking sexual sin seriously! Here's the two passages... Galatians 5:16,19 (NKJV) — *"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."* Galatians 5:19-25 (NLT) — *"When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives."*

So what does *"walking in the Spirit"* mean? It means as believers we have been *"born again"* (John 3), our spirits have been made alive to God, and hopefully we have also asked God to fill us with the Holy Spirit (see Eph. 5:18). Our old nature has been *"dethroned"* and we have no obligation to it, as long as we trust in what Jesus did for us in conquering it on the cross, and we now *"follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives."* (Gal. 5:25) For instance, maybe as a single person you are spending too much time with someone alone and you are being tempted, and the flesh says one thing, and the Spirit says "time to leave!" Yeah, do what the Spirit says! Amen!

e. Circle up.

We have a saying in Celebrate Recovery... "You can't do recovery alone!" And it's true. This is why we have Open Share small groups at CR. It's why we have Step Studies. It's why we have Life Groups in

church. The cross has a vertical member and a horizontal member. The vertical member represents our relationship with God. The horizontal member represents our relationship with others in the body of Christ. Take a look at this very powerful verse... 1 John 1:7 (NKJV) — *“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”*

We see a three step process in that verse. First, we “walk in the light”. That means we are following Jesus. Then second, we have “fellowship with one another”. If we’re following Jesus we will connect with others! We won’t isolate. Isolation is never healthy. Sin grows in the dark. We’re only as sick as our secrets! And then third, “the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin”! Not forgives us, we are already forgiven when we were saved. “Cleansing” means we get “clean and set free” from the sin that is binding us up! The baggage! The “besetting sins” of Hebrews 12. Like lust. That happens as we begin to “circle up”!

Consider your call.

When I say “consider your call”, I mean think about the consequences of being careless and messing up sexually. The apostle Paul was careful to avoid being “disqualified”. When we’re tempted sexually to get involved in something we shouldn’t, let’s “consider our call”, so we don’t throw away some awesome plans God has for us for some fleeting illegitimate pleasure! Amen! 1 Corinthians 9:27 (NKJV) — *But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

Supporting Scripture...

Galatians 5:19 (NLT) — *When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures...*

Ephesians 5:3 (NLT) — *Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God’s people.*

Colossians 3:5 (NLT) — *So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires.*

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 (NLT) — *3 God’s will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. 4 Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor—5 not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways. 6 Never harm or cheat a fellow believer in this matter by violating his wife, for the Lord avenges all such sins, as we have solemnly warned you before. 7 God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives. 8 Therefore, anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human teaching but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.*

Leviticus 18:22 (NLT) — *Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin.*

Romans 1:21-27 (NLT) — 21 Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. 22 Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. 23 And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. 24 So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. 25 They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. 26 That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. 27 And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NLT) — 9 Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, 10 or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. 11 Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Jude 7 (NLT) — And don't forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God's judgment.

1 Corinthians 7:2 (ESV) — But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

1 Corinthians 7:2 (The Message) — Sexual drives are strong, but marriage is strong enough to contain them and provide for a balanced and fulfilling sexual life in a world of sexual disorder.

1 Corinthians 10:8 (NLT) — And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of them did, causing 23,000 of them to die in one day.

2 Corinthians 12:21 (NLT) — Yes, I am afraid that when I come again, God will humble me in your presence. And I will be grieved because many of you have not given up your old sins. You have not repented of your impurity, sexual immorality, and eagerness for lustful pleasure.

Matthew 15:19 (NLT) — For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander.

1 Corinthians 6:18 (NLT) — 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.