**BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SEX & SEXUALITY (Gender)**

Review:

 Last week, we talked about self-control and we learned that if we don’t learn self-control we are vulnerable to others who might push our buttons. We said that with God’s help we can learn to “live self-controlled, upright and godly lives” (Titus 2:12), but that it comes down to the desires of our hearts. We said that whatever desire controls our hearts will be the thing that controls us. We gave the example of an athlete who is willing to go into strict training, exercise incredible self-control, to win a gold medal. We said that when our greatest desire is to please God more than ourselves, we will be on the right track to learn godly self-control.

We then looked at how self-control is necessary to do God’s will related to our sexual purity.

Introduction:

Two weeks ago we talked about a biblical understanding of our emotions. Our lesson tonight is going to combine a proper understanding of our feelings with our sexuality. We are going to talk about the issue of gender confusion and a biblical understanding of the purpose of sex.

I. God created humanity as male and female.

 A. Genesis 1:27: “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God, He created him; male and female, He created them.”

 B. From the very beginning, God created the two sexes, male and female, and said this was good.

 C. God created men and women with different strengths & weaknesses and different giftings & roles. But this does not mean that women are somehow inferior to men. No, they are just different.

 D. We see this illustrated for us in the Trinity. While the Son has a different role than the Father and the Spirit to the Son, they are all equally God; none inferior to the other.

 E. As it relates to our need of salvation and our position in Christ, we are the same. That is why Paul says in Gal 3:28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek (cultural status), slave nor free (class status), male nor female (gender status), for we are all one in Christ Jesus.” Both men and women need to be saved.

 F. Consider Jesus. When He came to earth, He was born as a man, but He was born into the world through a woman.

 1. In the birth of Christ, God is showing us that both male & female are important and that they are dependent upon each other.

 2. That is why Paul said in I Cor 11:11-12: “In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman comes from man (Eve), so also man is born of woman.”

 3. The Scriptures are very clear that there is an interdependent relationship between man and woman.

 4. In Genesis 2:18 when God created Eve for Adam, He said, “I will make a helper suitable for him.” Man and woman were created to complement each other.

 G. Our sexuality (being male or female) impacts how we experience the world.

 1. Jesus was not sexually active, but He experienced His world as a male human being.

 2. Your sex impacts how you relate to others. This has to do with more than just “having sex”.

 3. For example, if you are a girl, do you relate differently to your mother than you do to your dad? If you are a boy, do you relate differently to your brothers than your sisters?

 H. The point is that God designed us as sexual beings, male and female, and that was part of His plan, and we need to learn to embrace that.

 I. Unfortunately, in our culture, there is a lot of confusion about gender today. Some are trying to suggest that your sexuality is not based on your physical genetics but is entirely based on how you feel.

 J. Biology would state that a person is born either a male or a female based on their genetic makeup. This is simply an established, objective, scientific fact. Biologically, there is no “in-between”, and there is no third option.

 K. The way that our culture is trying to argue this is to differentiate between your biological sex and your gender.

 1. They say that while your sex is biological, gender is a psychological, social, cultural construct.

 2. It used to be that your sex and your gender were the same thing.

 3. Now by trying to make them two distinct things, our culture argues that if you do not feel like your biological sex, then you can just change your sexual identity.

 4. The question comes down to if your feelings about your sexual identity do not agree with your biological sex, which one determines who you really are?

 a. Science would say biology.

 b. Culture would say your feelings.

 c. The Bible would say that your sexuality is not just about how you feel but about how God created you.

 L. To reject how God created you biologically is to say God messed up and to rebel against Him as Creator.

 1. That is why whenever a man presents himself as a woman, or a woman presents herself as a man, it is denounced in Scripture.

 2. Deuteronomy 22:5 says, “A woman must not wear men’s clothing, nor a man wear women’s clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this.”

 3. The idea of this verse is that you are presenting yourself in such a way that it is hard to distinguish what sex you are.

 4. The reason God denounces this is because it goes against His intent of making us male and female.

 5. Romans 1:26 condemns this because it says, “they exchange natural relations for unnatural ones.”

 M. We need to look to God & His Word to determine what is right, not how we feel.

 1. Our culture says that happiness comes when you are able to fulfill your desires, your feeling and so “what you feel is what is real.”

 2. However, scripture tells us that true happiness is a byproduct of doing what God wants you to do; of delighting in God.

 Psalm 37:4 “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.”

 a. I want to suggest to you that the order is important.

 b. We need to seek to please God first and when that is our desire then everything changes.

 3. The Scriptures would tell us that when we allow our feelings to be in charge instead of truth, life does not go well. Our identity is not determined by how we feel about ourselves but needs to be based on what God says is true about us.

 4. That is why John 8:32 says, “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

 5. And where is truth found? In John 8:31 Jesus says that truth is found in obedience to the teachings of God’s word.

 N. We all struggle with identity

 1. Everyone struggles at some level to understand who they are and why God made them the way He did. This is true of the adults in the room as well.

 2. it is normal to wrestle with figuring out who God made you to be, but the issue of gender in particular, is determined by God.

 3. For this reason, to try to change your gender identity will not fix the struggle, it will just add to the confusion.

 4. To truly understand our identity, we need to look to God who created us, and learn from Him who we are. We do this as we already said, by looking to God’s Word and what He says is true of us.

 We need to do this instead of trying to figure out who we are by how we feel about ourselves (which tends to change a lot during the teen years) or by how others treat us.

 5. If you are a student, and you are struggling with your identity, please seek out your small group leader, your parent, or another adult, and let them know. We want to help you walk through what can be hard at times to decipher.

 6. Trying to understand more about yourself and your identity during adolescence is not an uncommon experience, so please do not be afraid to ask for help even if that includes questions about gender.

II. The purpose of sex

 A. Our culture defines freedom as being able to do whatever you want without restraint. But instead of bringing freedom, that brings bondage.

 B. True freedom comes by understanding the purpose and design of something and living accordingly. That is certainly true with understanding the purpose of sex and our sexuality.

 C. There are some in our culture who do not believe there is a God and that we are all just products of random chance that would say that sex is merely the fulfillment of natural animal instincts. They would say that the reason we have these instincts is so that the species survives.

 D. While we would agree that having children is essential for humanity to survive, we believe that the meaning of sex goes much deeper than animal instinct.

 E. Three purposes of sex according to God.

 1. Procreation

 a. In Genesis 1:28, after God created Adam & Eve, He told them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.”

 b. It is important to note that even if a couple is infertile and cannot have children, their sexual activity is still oriented toward procreation. It may not produce a child because there is a biological problem due to living in a fallen world, but otherwise, it would cause procreation.

 c. This cannot be said of same-sex couples. They cannot have children because their bodies are not mutually oriented toward procreation by design.

 d. Simply put, there is a difference between an action that fails to produce its intended outcome of having children and an action that cannot produce an intended outcome by its very nature because both parties are of the same sex.

 2. Unity

 a. One of the most powerful aspects of sex is its ability to bond people together.

 b. We talked about this when we talked about glorifying God with our bodies. If you remember, we said that when a couple has sex, it not only impacts them physically but also emotionally, relationally, and spiritually.

 c. There is a neurochemical that is released into our bodies called oxytocin which causes a person to experience a greater bonding with their partner.

 d. Genesis 2:24 says it this way, “Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

 e. Oxytocin helps build the trust that is essential for a lasting, healthy relationship.

 f. This is one reason that sleeping with multiple partners has such negative emotional consequences.

 g. God has designed sex to help bond a man and his wife together for life.

 h. While sex is pleasurable as a gift from God within marriage, pleasure is not the purpose of sex. Just like eating food is pleasurable, the purpose of eating is to gain nourishment and stay healthy.

 3. Foreshadowing heaven

 a. The Bible begins with a wedding between Adam & Eve. (Genesis 2)

 b. Paul tells us that marriage existed since creation to point us to a greater reality, the union between Christ and His bride-the Church.

Eph 5:30-31 ““For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%205:31-32&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29336a)] **32**This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.”

 c. Human history even culminates with the “marriage of the Lamb” which is the heavenly wedding of Jesus who is the Groom and the Church who is the Bride.

Rev 19:7 “Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.”

 d. Why is this so important?

 (1). As beautiful as earthly marriage is, it is only a faint glimpse as to how sweet will be the relationship and eternal union we have with God in heaven.

 (2). We said that marriage is to be a union that involves the emotional, relational, spiritual, and physical elements. When people only focus on the physical, they miss the deeper unity, the intimate connection, that occurs between two people.

 (3). The cultural obsession of sex outside of the context of marriage destroys what it ultimately is pointing to.

 (4). Our problem is that we so quickly look to the gift and forget the gift-giver, and as a result, make the gift the ultimate thing. We forget how amazing God is.

 (5). No human relationship, no pleasurable experience can ultimately fulfill the deep yearning of our hearts for love and relationship.

 (6). We were created for a relationship with God which does not just begin when you die. It begins the moment you repent of your sin and trust in Jesus to save you.

 (7). Marriage is to be a picture of the most intimate relationship we have this side of heaven. But it is only a faint glimpse.

 (8). Psalm 16:11: “You have made known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence with eternal pleasures at Your right hand.”

 (9). Whether married or single, we have hope of this intimate relationship with God. Does that hope impact how you live today?

Conclusion:

There is a lot of sexual confusion in our culture today. We need to make sure we are constantly looking to God and what His Word says to guide us. God did not make a mistake when He created you as male or female. God is not a giant killjoy when He says that sex is to be limited to marriage. He knows that without the right restraints of marriage, instead of bringing the blessings of procreation, unity and foreshadowing of heaven, it brings bondage and heartache.

Will you trust God and when you talk with your friends about these subjects, point them to God’s design for sex and sexuality?

Small group: (leaders: be sensitive to students who may be struggling with their sexual identities and/ or may have failed in this area. Remember to point them to God’s grace to forgive and cleanse when we repent.)

1. Have you ever wished God created you differently? In what way? Does it make it hard for you to trust God if you think He messed up when He made you? Why/why not?

2. Have you ever struggled with your identity? In what ways?

3. What are you most grateful for about your gender?

4. In what ways do you think you could be more of an encouragement to the opposite gender?

5. Why is it important to understand that sex is more than just a physical act?

6. Would you say you have a close relationship with God? Why/why not?