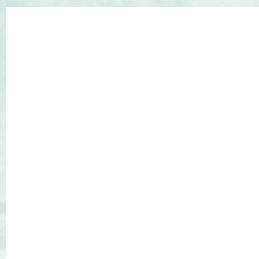


In John 10:10 Jesus says, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” Jesus is speaking about every area of our life, including our sexuality. Unfortunately, many of us do not experience “life to the full” in our sexuality. The world around us says that sexual experiences are for our enjoyment any time and any way we want. We end up out of sync with God’s plan and full of guilt and shame. Thankfully, God offers something better.

LIFE CONCEPTS



I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

We grow up learning about sexuality from many sources: parents, friends, school, and the media. What were the prominent messages you heard or observed about sexuality while you were growing up?

MY EXPERIENCE ...

YOUR EXPERIENCE ...



STEPPING
FROM

Sexual Brokenness

TO

WHOLENESS

2. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

HOW have the messages you heard about sexuality growing up shaped your life positively and negatively?

Guilt and shame can be two of the emotions that arise when people talk about their sexual perspectives and experiences. Why do you think this is?

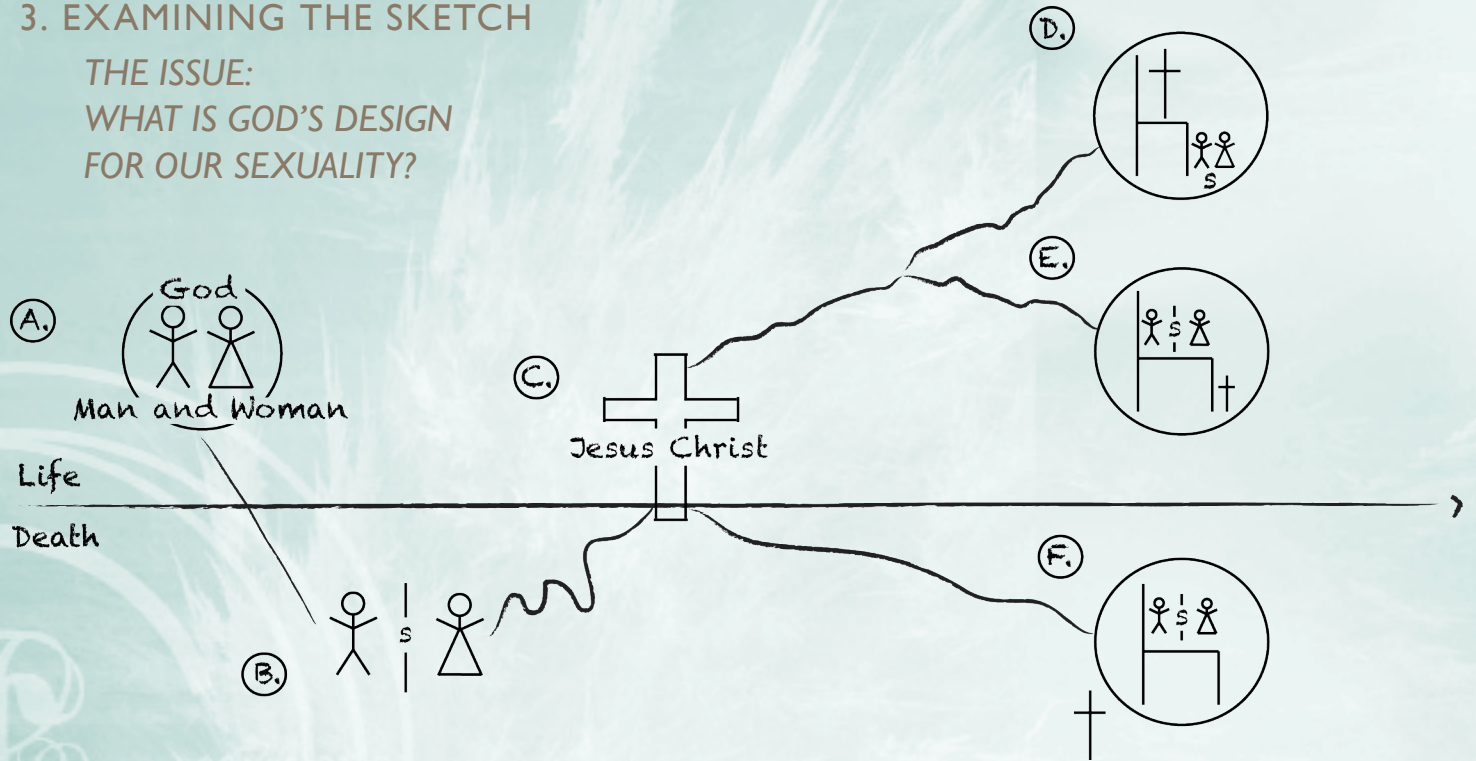
If someone asked you to describe God's view of sexuality, what would you say?

WHY do you think God would care about our sexuality?



3. EXAMINING THE SKETCH

THE ISSUE:
WHAT IS GOD'S DESIGN
FOR OUR SEXUALITY?



A. In the beginning, we were in perfect relationship with God and one another. Our sexuality was and is a good gift from God given in Genesis 2:18-25. We can honor God in our sexuality in both singleness and marriage. God created sexual intimacy to be expressed in a life-long covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. What does Genesis teach us about God's original design and plan for our sexuality?

B. When Adam and Eve sinned, their perfect relationship with God, and with each other, was broken. Selfishness, the choice to do what we want instead of what God wants, separates mankind from both God and other people. With this separation, comes an understanding and expression of sexuality and relationship that is based on our own sinful desires rather than God's good plan, Galatians 5:19-21. All of us express and experience sexuality that is outside God's intent. This happens as we reject God's design for our sexuality and choose to sin through areas such as lust, masturbation, pornography, sexual intimacy, etc. outside of marriage. This is what we call sexual brokenness.

C. When we trust in the death and resurrection of Jesus for forgiveness of our sins we enter into eternal life. Our broken relationship with God is repaired and we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit to live in us. The Holy Spirit brings restoration to our relationships with one another and to our sexuality. He gives us the wisdom and self-control needed to experience sexual wholeness. As we understand and live out our sexuality in a holy way we experience some of that, "life to the full"

D. Those who have eternal life through Jesus have a repaired relationship with God. They have a new identity as sons and daughters of God that will remain secure for all of eternity. Their past and future sexual sin does not and will not separate them from God again. They have entered into a surrendered relationship with God and are able to live in light of God's design and authority regarding their sexuality. This surrender enables them to understand and express God's good gift of sexuality in a holy way in singleness or in marriage. The Holy Spirit gives them the desire and strength to resist temptation and will draw them back to God when they do sin. There is great hope that they will experience, "life to the full", in sexual wholeness.

E. Those who have eternal life through Jesus, but are not willing to surrender to God's design and authority in their sexuality, are not experiencing the fullness of their repaired relationship with God. This will lead to a distorted view of God's good gift of sexuality, similar to someone who does not follow Christ.

F. Those who reject eternal life through Jesus continue to experience the brokenness of their relationship with God and have a distorted view of their sexuality.

STEPPING FR
SEXU

4. EXPLORING THE SOLUTION

1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-8

3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; 6 and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. 7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. 8 Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote this letter to new Christians to encourage them and help them understand how to live the Christian life, as well as to bring clarity to God's view on sexuality.

GOD'S HEART

As we saw from the sketch, God's intention has always been that we would experience a perfect relationship with him and others. Part of this perfect relationship came as God gave us the good gift of our sexuality. Complete restoration of these relationships and our sexuality will only come as Christ returns, but even now we are able to grow in our pursuit of sexual holiness. Through his word, God gives us helpful instructions on how to understand and experience our sexuality in a way that pleases him.

Why do you think God gave us instructions regarding our sexuality?

GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS

What does it mean to be sanctified (v 3)?
What is sexual immorality?

What does it mean to control our body in a holy and honorable way? (v 4)

How would you define passionate lust? (v 5)
What is a pagan?

Why is lust (v 5) tied to taking advantage of a brother or sister? (v 6)

What did God call us to? (v 7)

Who are we rejecting when we don't follow these instructions? (v 8)
How does the Holy Spirit help in this area?

Why do you think we still struggle with sexual sin even though we have new life in Jesus?

Why would someone want to follow these instructions?

FROM

SEXUAL BROKENNESS TO

WHOLENESS

SUMMARY

God made our sexuality, called it good, and teaches us how to experience it in the best way possible. Being sanctified is a lifelong process. Over time, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we learn how to control our bodies in a way that is holy and honorable. When we are living in light of God's truth we experience "life to the full".

5. TAKING STEPS

Knowing God does not take away our sexual temptation, but it does give us hope that there is something better to fulfill our desires. Throughout the Bible there are examples of people who struggle as we do to surrender to God's good design in many areas of our life, including our sexuality. One such man was David.

David knew God. In fact, God once described David as, "a man after my heart." Even in the midst of this close relationship with God, David battled sexual sin. He lusted, viewed pornography, and pursued adultery. Because David knew God, he had a heart that was open to God's intervention in his sexual brokenness. Psalm 51:1-17 lets us see David's conversation with God about his sin. Read the passage and then consider David's response to his sin.

EXAMINE - David took the time to examine his own heart and actions in light of what God had already taught him about his sexuality. He had a humble heart and was willing to take responsibility for and verbalize his wrong beliefs and actions. (v 1-4)

CONFESS - David confessed his sin. He agreed with God that he had sinned and trusted that God had forgiven him. David talks with God, not as one who is afraid, but as one who knows he is in a secure relationship. (v 5-12)

TURN - David turned from his sin and obeyed God. He even determined to teach others what he had learned so they too could live inside God's good plan. He praised God that he could be restored and know how to live "life to the full" (v 13-17)

Why was David willing to examine, confess, and turn from sin? He saw who God really was. The one who made him, loved him, forgave him, pursued him, and provided great truth to follow. These are the same things that free us up to examine, confess, and turn.

David shows us there is hope for experiencing sexual wholeness. By God's power we can turn from our sin. This turning happens over time as we grow in our relationship with God. For some of us, the brokenness of our sexuality has led to sexual addiction in our life. If you think that might be your situation please know that you are not alone and there is hope.

Take a moment to silently talk to God about your sexuality. Ask him to help you examine, confess and turn from sin. Praise God that in his goodness he forgives and directs your life. If you are willing, it can be helpful to share what God brings to mind with a trusted friend who can pray for you and point you to God's truth. If it would be helpful, you could share more with me.

Continue to take time to talk to God about your sexuality this week. As you do so, the following passages would be great places to learn more about God's heart for you. Ephesians 5:1-14, Hebrews 4:12-16, and 1 Corinthians 6:9-20.