

Our Lord's blessing! Biblical Sex

By Skip Elmore

Explicit sexual messages and experiences permeate our culture. Sexual intercourse has become something to be viewed as the moral equivalent of going to a movie, updating a Facebook profile, playing a video game or a bicycle ride. It's one of a variety of fleeting recreational ways to satisfy momentary boredom or desires for physical gratification or perhaps only to fulfill expectations of perceived obligations. Being a people pleaser is a frequent manifestation of our sin nature. We live in a culture that often seems to rebelliously celebrate immorality with minimal regards for possible unintended consequences.

When considering the subject of sex, evangelical Christians are often known more for what they oppose than for what they affirm. They are, many times, perceived as being totally out of touch, espousing 19th century traditions.

What evangelicals really believe about sex may surprise contemporary generations. Sexuality is a core element of humanity with physical, relational and very spiritual components. When sex is experienced as our Lord and Creator intended, it is one of His greatest gifts to humanity. Because of this, evangelical Christian churches should teach and model a robust, joyful vision of sexuality rooted in our Lord's Creation plan.

Sex is good, so what's the big deal about it all? Don't we all have natural God given hormonal stimulation? Aren't we just doing what comes naturally?

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Beware!!! We live in a cause and effect world. Instant gratification will never compensate well enough to justify the risk of unintended consequences.

Well, can't we, by using common sense protection, just avoid these unintended consequences?

The answer: No, never all of them. Oh, you may be able to, very adequately, avoid pregnancy and diseases without too much risk if you're careful. Those may not be the biggest risk or cause the greatest losses. Sexual freedom prior to marriage will almost always cultivate other unintended consequences. One is emotional, being tempted to distrust your mate after a few years of routine familiarity in marriage or living together. Another is physical, the inability to resist immediate gratification from any source available because genuine loyalty was never established during the beginning stages of the relationship.

Romans 1:24&25 *Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.* ²⁵ *They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator.*

The gender differentiation announced in Genesis 1 is developed further in chapter 2 where relational and sexual components of our humanity come in to view. Observing Gen. 2:25, Adam and Eve are naked and feeling no shame; this is affirmation that sexuality is a gift from our Creator. All biblical commands regarding sexual behavior are meant to protect the full meaning, joy and beauty of sex. They established the framework for the covenant of marriage as the context for sexual intimacy and procreation. Jesus affirms this in many biblical references.

Matthew 19:4-6 *“Haven’t you read, at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”*

Sex, we all know, has multiple purposes! The ethics of sexual intimacy are rooted in the purposes of sex. It is in the context of these purposes that we experience the true meaning of our Lord’s special gift. Morally legitimate sexual acts occur intuitively and experientially through a divinely given natural law and common grace in addition to being known through God’s Word.

There are primary purposes fulfilled by sex that satisfy some (not nearly all) of the characteristics found and enjoyed in truly intimate relationships:

- 1. A one flesh union consummates marriage. Genesis 2:24**
- 2. Sex provides procreation. Genesis 1:28. Psalm 127**
- 3. Sex is one way to express agape love - a verb, not an emotion.**
- 4. Sex provides enjoyment and pleasure. Psalm 16:11**

While sex remains good, we all agree, many aspects have been marred by the effects of the selfishly motivated fallen nature of humanity (Gen. 3:6). Our first parents, Adam and Eve, disobeyed, thereby severing the relationship and with it the fellowship, wisdom and bonds of faithfulness with their Creator and Lord. Authentic ‘Love’ – as stated, a verb, not an emotional feeling, was exchanged for fear. That fear immediately became to root of humanity’s sin nature all the way up to this day. Without fear there would be no temptation to sin!!!

The breaking up of humanity’s ‘relationship’ with God was not for sexual intercourse. It was for choosing to trade possession of God’s Holy Spirit with its incredible wisdom, counsel and protection for what was thought would be a ‘self-directed’ life. (Genesis 3:6) The bad choice!!! This gave Satan an open opportunity to infiltrate humanity with demonic intrusion through physical sexual contacts.

Everything changed for all of humanity. While the underlying reality of goodness remains, our perception of that reality became marred by yielding to the temptations to satisfy self gratifying motivations in many areas. We must not view being tempted to be necessarily sinful. It is not when our ability to make right choices is reinforced by living out the assurance granted by Scripture.

1st Corinthians 10:13 - *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to mankind. God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so you can endure it.*

This Scripture offers assurance that no temptation is too strong; however some, when motivated by sexual desires, do not understand the dynamic offered here or how to apply it in their situation even if they desire to resist the temptation. Applying the spiritual power implied here seems too simple for us to accept.

Again, is it a sin to be tempted? NO. Was Jesus tempted? YES. What did He do when tempted? He “spoke” truth from Scripture. What should we do when tempted? Speak boldly against the object of our temptation in the Name of Jesus. Our Lord made us in His image after referring to all of creation as a spoken event. Is this simple enough??? Try it!!! Many tell me it’s a miraculous revelation to them.

Not being interested in sexual activities is not a prerequisite of purity. Even though our sexuality is now necessarily tinged with sin, sex is no more sinful than in any other areas of selfishness or questionable behavior. To fully understand this requires comprehending the multifaceted nature of sin.

Many evangelicals learn to think of sin first as individual acts involving disobedience. It may be helpful to think of sin as human brokenness. Everything has been tinged with ruin as a result of the Genesis choice. Disease, death, imperfection, twistedness in every way has been contaminated by sin.

Romans 8:22 says “*we know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*” Romans 14:23 states “*what ever is not from faith is sin.*”

While simplistic biological explanations are presented to explain everything from promiscuity to sexual orientation, they have proven to be inadequate to explain the satanic bondage to which the human race has succumbed.

Many evangelicals see no theological reasons to resist the idea that defective genes, distorted hormone levels, abnormal brain structures and other biological abnormalities in all of us are contributors to broken sexuality. It’s commonly believed by many that human brokenness is the accumulative result of poor diet and lifestyle choices over many millenniums and that these are the probable cause of degradations creating biological “cause and affect” results, behavioral distortions, genetic defects and diseases.

The case can then be made that these earlier poor choices can be biblically referred to as sin affecting future generations which then justifies allowing many behavior disorders and confused gender preferences to be the result of sinful choices from earlier generations. How much has my sin cost you? How much has yours cost me?

Also contributing to the mix is our tragic contemporary behavioral consequences and broken conditions such as dysfunctional family interactions, traumatic affects from abuse and twisted messages about sexuality we absorb from a distorted culture. Sin simply means we and our world are broken and living out the results of hundreds of generations of affects initiated by the original bad choice.

Bottom line, evangelicals accept the biblical position that satanic influence has targeted sexual desires as just one of many tempting ways to motivate the human target to be “grabbers” of anything attractive rather than “receivers” of the passion to live within the wisdom and counsel of their Creator’s holiness. Sin is the rebellious bondage force against the wisdom and counsel of God’s Holy Spirit. This bondage prevents us from receiving or even comprehending our Lord’s unconditional love for each of us and we cannot offer to another that which we have not received. The most important choice we will ever make is the choice to accept God’s unconditional love.

That temptation mentioned earlier to satisfy instant gratification will blur the value of visualizing a sacred relationship that could be realized by remaining pure prior to marriage. Maintaining celibacy provides a way of demonstrating love, a verb not an emotion, preserved for that future relationship with a mate who has maintained that same vision. This discipline cultivates the environment for a most beautiful wedding night where each can say with romantic eyes, their purity has been preserved for these moments in time. It is a holy experience that not only creates precious memories, this very sacred time cultivates and stabilizes an incredible ability for each to totally trust the other for many years down the road of life.

Yielding to anything less is usually motivated by a desire to please or avoid rejection from someone you are still getting to know. The truth is, in the early stages of courtship, refusing to yield to a few frail moments of temptation will stimulate a friend to become a more appealing attraction to you than giving in to a compromise for instant gratification you don’t really want, and one that can change your whole life in the blink of an eye. Our Lord blesses obedience.

Premarital sex strikes at the core of self-worth. Like it or not, God created us to protect our sexual intimacy until it is expressed in an atmosphere of commitment and love for the other partner.....called marriage. God, His Word, psychology, and millenniums of human experience all point to the protection of sexual innocence, is key to experiencing a life of positive self-image and self-worth.

Imagine experiencing a greater compliment on a date than to hear, *“I want you to know I respect you this evening and my plan is to remain pure until my wedding?”*

Note: Genuine repentance yields forgiveness, and God’s love is “Unconditional.”