

SAMPLE SERMON ON BIBLICAL SEXUALITY, MARRIAGE AND GENDER GENESIS 2 MESSAGE MANUSCRIPT

Today we're talking about **God's design for sexuality, marriage and gender**; as well as and the Biblical perspective on related issues, and how to respond with love and truth.

INTRODUCTION

The Bible is a book about God, about us, and about how God saves us through the person and work of Jesus Christ; so, it isn't terribly surprising to learn that the Bible has a great deal to say about sex. Human beings are sexual creatures – God made us male and female – thus the story of creation, fall, at least in part, is a story about human sexuality.

In the church setting, we can often approach sex as a taboo area. But of course we know this is not accurate. Sexuality, although private in the act, is not a taboo subject. **Christians often fail by not talking about sex enough. Those who are not in Christ fail when they trivialize sexuality by obsessing over it.**

Not long ago I was listening to a program on the radio while driving. Between songs, the radio host asked people to call in to describe the circumstances of when they first learned about sex. The DJs and callers were amused by the stories, but as a husband, father, and pastor, I found the stories heartbreaking.

Callers described how at five years old, their older siblings showed them pornography, exposing them to nudity and sexuality at a very young age. **One DJ said that a specific set of parents was so uncomfortable explaining sex to their children, that they had listed a classifieds ad offering \$3,500 to anyone who would explain sex to the children on behalf of the parents.**

While our culture has become obsessed with sex, we have abandoned the familial responsibility associated with it (and really the essence of human sexuality), exchanging it for fleeting desires.

Still, a holy approach to sex is not focused just on the “**do nots**” of sexuality. And it is a subject we need to address, because it affects us all. Every human being on this earth struggles with sexual thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that are contrary to love and in conflict with the holiness of God. **We can either pretend that a few struggle with sexual problems that don't tempt the rest of us, or we can openly acknowledge that all humanity is caught up in sexual struggles that must be engaged if we are truly to be human and holy.**

From adolescence until death, our lives' journeys related to sex are filled with turns, twists, disasters, failures, growth, and triumphs. When God created the first human beings in his own image, he created them as sexual beings, and he created one member of each sex: male and female. **Through their sexuality, they were to fill and govern the world and provide intimate companionship for one another in marriage.**

Sexual intimacy united the first man and woman as one being, an effect that sexual intimacy continues to have. Since biblical sexuality is not just physical, but has the total person in view, it validates sexual relations only as part of the partners' mutual commitment to each other's ultimate good.

The Bible speaks of engaging in the sexual act as literally "knowing" another person intimately. Since creation, the purpose of sexuality has been to join people in an intimate union of marriage that God blesses and calls "very good." The sexual relationship cements the marriage bond in an intimacy that continues even when reproduction is no longer possible.

Although sexuality was created before sin, it did not emerge unscathed from human rebellion. Sexuality is a powerful force that is easily corrupted if not carefully channeled. Sexual intimacy apart from marital commitment perverts the order that God intended for creation. **Our sexuality is not something that should be perverted, but rather something that is to become more holy and whole the longer we live. It is important to consider what it means to be holy and how that relates to sexuality.**

God has redeemed our sexuality through the death and resurrection of **Jesus Christ. He restores sexual wholeness in those who trust his work in their lives by the Holy Spirit. Those who commit their sexuality to Christ can testify to God's love for his people.** We must ask the question: What is God's goal for sex? And how can we partner with God in achieving this goal?

PASSAGE – Genesis 2

¹⁵The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.'

¹⁸The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'

¹⁹Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³ The man said,

'This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called "woman",
for she was taken out of man.'

²⁴ That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

²⁵ Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

PRAYER

There's a lot to be seen here, so let's break it down and have a closer look.

BODY

I have just a few points for you here today.

1. Sex is Good

Vs. 18: "*It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.*"

God created sex, and what God created is Good. God's design for sexuality is between one man and one woman. It is a good thing when a man and a woman come together in marriage and find themselves happily united. **In the midst of the joy of the Garden at the dawn of creation, Adam experienced a feeling and longing for intimacy that could only be fulfilled by one thing: companionship with a woman.**

Adam needed a mate who was just right for him. The person needed to be suitable, but also significantly different from him. Eve was his ideally-suited complement, made in the same image of God, and given the same commission, but fundamentally different in that she was of the other sex. The man could not fulfill his created purpose alone, but with his companion, he could.

God's purpose for sexuality was for the man and woman to be one another's helpers and supporters – but most importantly enriching companions. Man and woman share in their responsibilities and cooperate in fulfilling God's purpose for their lives, and their sexuality.

Sexuality is natural, good, and part of the healthy human experience.

It would be good neither for Adam nor for humanity for him to have been alone. Without companionship, and a partner in reproduction, not only could Adam (as the first and only person) fully

realize his personhood (through companionship/relationship), but neither could he have fathered all of his descendants. In this case, sex was the one thing that guaranteed against destruction of death.

Through sexuality, even after the Fall, God promised humanity it would not be extinct.

Before we move on, I want to clarify that God has called some to marriage, and some to singlehood. **It is not bad to be unmarried. There are plenty of examples of celibacy and singlehood in the Bible.**

Despite all of what the Scriptures say in support and celebration of human sexuality, the Bible makes it very clear that you can completely experience a happy and fulfilled life without ever having it.

Jesus never had it. Nor did Jeremiah. Or John the Baptist. Or Elijah. Or the Apostle Paul. All of them were of course fully human and fully used of God. Sex is natural for human beings, but not necessary. A person can live a full, blessed, rich, useful, meaningful, God-glorifying, fulfilling life without ever having sex with anyone. Sex is good but it is not ultimate.

Still, **Sex is to be Celebrated:**

Vs. 25 – “²⁵ Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”

Nakedness symbolizes not only a physical openness to each other, but also an unashamed spiritual, psychological, and emotional exposure and oneness.

Through their nakedness, sexuality, and unification, Adam and Eve delighted in one another, and they had nothing to hide.

There is no shame in God’s design for sexuality. It is something to be celebrated and rejoiced in. Freedom from shame means moral innocence. **Your sexuality can be pure when you follow God’s design for it.** Don’t give into the world’s pressures or ideas and notions of sex.

So many people today define themselves by their sexuality. **They believe they ARE who they have sex with.** But the Bible doesn’t take that view. **The Bible says that a person is a human being because they were created in the image and likeness of God. Meaning, before you have sex – before you have anything – you have maximal value and significance before God! You are an image bearer!**

The Bible says that marriage is good, sex is good, singleness is good and celibacy is good. They are all precious gifts given according to the wisdom and timing of the Lord for his glory and our everlasting good.

2. Intimacy Precedes Sex

Vs. 23 - “*This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;*”

This verse is interesting, because **Adam’s exclamation occurred before the consummation and/or love act of the marriage**, the implication here is that intimacy precedes sexuality. What is the significance of that? The significance is that...

Sex that occurs before intimacy is empty, and attempts to bypass the necessary prerequisite.

When you are discerning a life partner, be sure to: love one another and know one another, marry one another before having sex with one another. Sex in the Bible is first and foremost about intimate friendship. **Sex is about not just physical union, but also emotional and spiritual union.** It is about submission, exploration, discovery, and delight.

My wife and I were in a long-distance relationship across the ocean before marrying. **One of the great advantages of that was that we were able to truly get to know one another well before we got married.**

It is companionship that provides intimacy, not just sex. So **together a couple finds fulfillment in life through intimacy, even before they have sex.**

The Bible also encourages sex, and says that married couples should engage in sex often.
The Apostle Paul wrote in

1 Corinthians 7:5: “Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

In this way, the intimacy is strong, to the point of two becoming basically one person. In fact...

3. Sex Unifies; Forming a new Family

Vs. 24 – “*That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.*”

God’s design for sexuality takes place within the context of the formation of a new family. It is intended for procreation, yes, but not exclusively for procreation. Also for intimacy and the formation of the joining of the persons of husband and wife.

Sex is reserved for marriage between one man and one woman. From the very first pages of the Bible, we see God's intentional design for humanity. He created us in His image, male and female. This duality is essential to reflecting God's character. There is a unique beauty and purpose in the distinctiveness of male and female. Both sexes together represent the fullness of God's image.

In Genesis 2, we see that it was not good for man to be alone. God created a suitable helper for Adam, forming Eve from his rib to signify that this relationship is meant to be side-by-side, a partnership in life. This companionship is foundational to God's design. A man and a woman come together to fulfill the mandate to be fruitful and multiply, creating families that reflect the unity and diversity of God's creation.

What does this tell us about God's design? It affirms **gender**—God created **male and female** intentionally. It affirms sexuality—sex is a gift for a husband and wife, intended for procreation and intimacy, experienced without shame. It also affirms marriage—God designed marriage to be a union of one man with one woman, making them one flesh.

By design, sexuality is intended to solidify the family unit. A man and a woman leave their mothers and fathers, and begin their own family.

This also means that in their sexual monogamy with one another, a husband and wife must strive to prevent any disruption to their marriage. This is accomplished by clinging to one another. This requires commitment to maintaining the union in loyal love. In a relationship of mutual trust, a man and woman must be committed to one another, vulnerable in each other's presence, and free to explore their God-given sexuality with (and only with) one another.

The familial bond between marriage partners grows as each person contributes significantly to the other's life.

4. Same-Sex Attraction

The Bible says yes to a lot of elements of sex. But what does the Bible say "no" to? It says no to sin. Every one of us struggles with sin. As long as we're on this side of heaven, we deal with it. Temptation itself is not sin; it's what we do with it. It's not a sin to experience same-sex attraction, it's what you do with it. And it is our understanding that the Biblical worldview requires those with same-sex attraction to practice abstinence and celibacy.

We must seek Jesus' grace, mercy, forgiveness, and redemption. Sin varies, and all of us need a Saviour to rescue us from it. What is more, we must recognize that all sin separates us from God, but His grace is available to all who repent.

In the New Testament, Paul addresses this in Romans 1:24-27, highlighting how abandoning natural relations for unnatural ones is against God's design. Paul also lists other sins alongside same-sex relations in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, emphasizing that we all have different struggles.

The apostle emphasizes that this is part of a broader issue of humanity's rebellion against God. But, we can be washed, sanctified, and justified in Jesus. This passage highlights the transformative power of the Gospel. No sin is beyond the reach of God's grace.

What would Jesus say to the LGBTQ+ community? Some argue that because Jesus didn't specifically mention same-sex relationships or gender fluidity, that they are permissible. But this argument falls short. When asked about divorce, Jesus referenced Genesis, reaffirming the male-female design for gender, marriage, and sexuality (Matthew 19:4-6). Jesus ministered with grace and truth, often engaging with those who were not in Christ, all the while calling them to discipleship.

Jesus befriended sinners, offering grace and truth. He ate with those far from God, like the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4) and Zacchaeus, the tax collector (Luke 19). These interactions demonstrate Jesus's mission to seek and save the lost, transforming lives through His love and truth.

Jesus exemplified this balance of grace and truth in His ministry. He didn't shy away from calling out sin, but He also extended love and forgiveness to those who repented. If you are joining us today, and you experience same sex attraction and/or gender dysphoria, we want you to know that you are absolutely welcome here, and we are glad you are here. We pray that you will be guided by the Holy Spirit into the path of discipleship, and know that we will walk with you.

SUMMARY

In short, while the Bible affirms male and female gender, sexuality, and marriage as designed by God, it also calls us to recognize and repent from sin, and walk in discipleship. Jesus's ministry was marked by grace and truth, offering redemption to all who seek Him. As followers of Christ, we are called to uphold these truths while extending grace to others, reflecting His love in our interactions.

Marriage is a powerful image of Israel's covenant with God and of Christ's relationship to the church. Marriage is designed as an inseparable, exclusive relationship between a man and a woman.

The family unit it creates is the basic building block of human society. **In becoming one flesh, a man and a woman become more closely bonded than their blood relatives.**

You say this is all well and good, but the reality is that we live in a sexually obsessed society. The music we hear, the TV and movies we watch, the billboards we see, all inundate us with sexualized themes. **Society tells us that we will not be happy until we gratify our sexual appetites. So we worry. We worry that we will not find a person who can make us happy and satisfy our sexual desires. We worry that we'll run out of time.**

If you're a young single person, you might think "these are prime sexual years! I'm letting them slip away. I should find someone, and fast!" May I remind you today that your heavenly Father is aware of your concerns and your desires. He does not want you to worry. If you've received Him, His blessing is on your life, and you need not worry about finding someone who will make you happy, and quickly! **Do not worry about your relational future.** Wait on God, and for His timing. As you do, your worrying will lessen. You're not just looking for anybody. You're looking for someone to whom you will be tied together through the bond of family.

You have desires. God knows you have desires. God wants your desires to be fulfilled. But there is a way through which those desires can be fulfilled. There is an order, and it is a high order. That's God's way, and God's way is the best way.

God wants sexual intimacy to be reserved for the marriage bed. Why? Because things go better that way. Following God's plan for sexuality means that you can avoid heartbreak, baggage, difficult memories. You can avoid illness, and you can avoid death. In the moment, sexual temptation outside of God's design may be appealing. But the moment is fleeting, and the consequences are lifelong. God has a way and He invites you to follow it. It will require patience, sacrifice, and self-denial. But it will be worth it. **If you have the temptation to have sex outside of marriage, I encourage you to resist that temptation. God's way is the best way, and if God isn't in it, then you don't want it.**

God has not forgotten about you, and your wait, and your efforts for sexual purity. Even as you wait for what seems like an eternity. The wait is worthwhile. Those who fear God and acknowledge him in all their ways have the promise that God will make their paths straight.

Whether we're single, dating, married, or divorced, understanding our sexuality is crucial because it has bearing on how we understand our being. Like I said, one does not need to have sex to be a fully alive person with rich experiences. This is because **beyond marriage, we have that one other exclusive relationship: relationship with God.** In the creation ideal that we've examined today, one

can have only one spouse and only one God. To have more than one is to do harm to the relationship; this represents an analogy between idolatry and adultery.

Sexual intimacy is reserved for the marriage relationship and is approved and blessed by God in that state. Through faithful marriage, physical and emotional pleasures are ordained by God and held in honour by him. **Sex is about pleasure, but It is also about an intimate, exclusive, and loyal bond that is beyond words and comprehension, but within the reach of our minds' and bodies' imaginations and desires.**

It's possible that all this time I've been talking, you've heard only a long list of "dos and don'ts" It's possible that you've been listening and thinking to yourself "this is great if somebody wants to wait until marriage to have sex, but that's not realistic." It's possible that you've been listening, and you think that everything I've mentioned is merely a wishful thinking sexual ethic from a bygone era. It's true, our society has arrived at a place where sexual purity is not a widely recognized virtue. And I do need to be realistic and state that we work towards an ideal, but have I so much as considered the reality?

The reality is that many do practice sexually active lifestyles outside of marriage. If that's you today, and you haven't appreciated what I've had to say, may I just ask that you consider what's been said. May I also say that the last thing I wish to do today is condemn. Yes, **I'm preaching a message about God's design for sexuality, but I also want to share Good News.** I'm retelling the story of the gospel, the message of Jesus Christ. A message of **Grace and Hope**. If all that I've said today has only served to frustrate you, may I just ask for your patience, and that you would listen to this passage found in **John 8:2-11**;

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

No one here is going to throw stones. Least of all me. If you haven't practiced sexual purity in your life, know that there is grace, forgiveness, and hope. But Jesus says even without condemnation, "Go now and leave your life of sin." You see, **God asks us to follow his design for our sexuality. Do we follow Christ? Do we wish to be obedient to Him? Then we need to try!**

CONCLUSION

I recently heard the story of a gentleman with some pretty strong opinions towards the LGBTQ community, until something in his life changed. His very own brother came clean to him and said, “Listen, I have been living in a relationship with another man, and I have just been diagnosed with AIDS.”

The man didn’t know what to do. Suddenly, it wasn’t just somebody out there; it was right here in his family. He was confronted with the question: How are you going to deal with this? He allowed the Holy Spirit to speak to him, and he became the key caregiver to his brother. Every day, he had him in his home. He stayed with him till the day he died. Through that whole journey, you could see God changing him. All of a sudden, it wasn’t just somebody down the street or in some other place. This was his own family. He loved his brother. He served him.

If he were here today, he would be repentant. He’d have a deep love for the LGBTQ community, a heart that wants to embrace them with the love of God, to lead them with grace and truth. His life was transformed because, all of a sudden, it wasn’t somewhere over there—it was right here.

There might be parents here who have had a child share some news about same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria. And you might be wondering, “How do I respond to that?” You lavish love upon them, that’s how. You love them. You extend grace to them. But you stay rooted in the truth. That means you’re going to put some boundaries around how things will work in your home and how they won’t.

But don’t abandon your child. They’re your kids. They need your love. Don’t quit on them now. Lean in; don’t lean out. We’re all facing our own realities. We all need to come to an altar and say, “Jesus, I need your grace today. I need your mercy today.”

PRAYER

Lord, we thank you for your Word and for the clarity it brings. Help us to uphold your truth with love and compassion. Give us the wisdom to navigate these complex issues and the grace to reflect your heart to those around us. Transform our lives by your Spirit, and help us to live out your design in every area of our lives. In Jesus’s name, we pray. Amen.

BENEDICTION and DISMISSAL