

# Human Sexuality

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Romans 1:24-28, Matthew 19:4-6, 1 Corinthians 6:18

Speaker: Joel Greenwood

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I've noticed an interesting trend over the last 18 plus years that I've been working here at the church because of my positions as youth pastor and pastor over the years. It's often where people from the community or people in the congregation will give me a phone call or they'll call the church and they say, hey, I'd like to set up a meeting with the pastor. I have a question. I have an issue. I'm dealing with. And most of the time, their spiritual in nature, which makes a lot of sense because I'm a pastor at a church.

And so over the years, I feel like I have heard just about everything. I've dealt with every situation possible to mankind, the struggles, the issues, relational struggles, financial issues, all of the above. And some weeks, I think I've heard everything. You see, over 18 plus years, a lot of teens and a lot of adults have asked me a lot of great questions. Some of which I don't have really concrete answers to give. There's still questions that I have. But every once in a while, a teen or an adult will come to me with a question.

And I really think that I could make a lot of money if I were to write these in a book and sell it. But of course, I can't. They're confidential. And so I keep those discussions private, but I've had lots of great conversations, but over the last, I was trying to think about this last 8 years or so. There is one issue one struggle that has risen to the top by far to be the number one question that I get.

It's the number one thing that people come into my office, whether they're from the community or from the church and they say pastor, I have a question. And here it is, something along these lines, all right? I'm going to read this to you. Pastor, I have a nephew, a brother, sister, aunt, family member, friend, coworker, whoever it is, et cetera, who has come out as LGBT. Now, I know that we can add more things to the end of that, but just to keep it simple, I'm just going to say LGBT.

I don't mean any offense to anybody, but that's just how I'm going to kind of categorize this. And so their question to me is, how do I respond to them? Should I go to their wedding? What do I do with my kids at family functions when they are around or bring their significant other? What is my role? How am I supposed to respond to this in my life? And so they struggle with this. And this is the number one issue.

And I have to tell you that over the last 8 plus years, I believe that this will be the issue that the church has to answer. This will be the issue that we have to come to a conclusion on. We have to look at scripture. We have to make sure that we are looking at this from a biblical perspective. I truly believe that this issue, the issue of human sexuality, has the potential to cause as much damage in the church and the culture as slavery did in the 1800s.

I don't know how many of you have ever read church history, but you certainly read world history and you understand the Civil War that took place in America, mainly over the issue of slavery. But if you read in the church, how that affected the church, you will see that that caused a great division. And I think that this issue of human sexuality has the possibility to cause great damage to the church. And so I think it's important for us to address the larger issue of human sexuality.

And so for the next little bit, my goal is to truly give you a biblical perspective on this issue. My prayer is that as we look at the Bible as our foundation, and we see what the Bible has to say about human sexuality that you and I will be able to answer these difficult questions. What am I supposed to do? How am I supposed to respond? When these come up in our life, and that you and I would respond the same way that Jesus would respond, because that's my goal in life, I would assume for most of you, that's your goal as well.

How do we respond in a way that Jesus would respond? Now, before we even get started, please know that I am not naive. I fully understand that there are people here this morning. There's people that are watching online. Certainly, people that are listening on the radio who will disagree with me and my perspective. There will definitely be people who have a different view on how to respond.

I also know without a shadow of a doubt that there are people here today, people watching people listening, who are wrestling with this issue of human sexuality on a personal level or on a family level, please know that I will do my best to communicate this truth in love and grace. In love and grace, it is my goal to offer truth the Bible's perspective to communicate truth with love and grace.

I even asked my wife as I was getting dressed this morning. What is my least controversial outfit that I could wear? Because I don't want to stir up a controversy. That's not my point in doing this, all right? I want to talk in love and grace and so because of that, I want you to know that I welcome your responses, your questions. I'm open to dialog or debate as long as it's done in grace. I'm okay with you sharing your view with me at some point.

And if you think differently than I do on this issue, know that I will still love you, but I do wholeheartedly believe that what I am going to share today is the truth from God's word. The views and opinions that I'm going to share today I also need you to know are 100% in agreement with the views of the missionary church. We are a missionary church, some of you know that. Some of you don't, you just think it's on the name. We're part of a denomination that is made up of over 500 churches in the United States of America and thousands around the world, as we have sent missionaries and started churches around the world.

And of course, our view on human sexuality is not just to our denomination. There are certainly thousands of other churches and denominations around the country and world that would agree with our view on this. Some of what I share today is going to be taken directly from the position paper of the missionary church on human sexuality because there were many pastors that got together to put together this document and some of the things that they have said, I can't say any better. And so I will simply be reading those from that document.

Also because I know some of you may have questions or you may want to know further, we do have our position papers on various topics, always available. They're in the literature act behind the sanctuary. But because I knew we were talking about this topic today and many may want that position paper on human sexuality, I printed off more copies and they're at the connection center. So you can grab those on the way out. And if they're all gone, which they maybe have to first service, I didn't look. We can make sure to print that for you as well.

So because of that, there will be times that I'm specifically reading from my iPad or from the screen, and that's because I want to make sure that I read that correctly. One more thing before, we get started. I know this is a long introduction. I want to give you the road map for how we are going to address the issue of human sexuality. And so here is the outline for today's message. The first thing that I feel is important for us to do is to look at sexuality and creation.

So we're going to go back to the book of genesis and see what is written there. Then we're going to talk about staying in genesis, sexuality in the fall. Then we're going to talk about really the two hot topic hot button issues in our culture today that have to do with human sexuality and so more specifically. We'll talk about homosexuality and transgenderism, and then we're going to wrap up by talking about sexuality and redemption, the hope that comes through Jesus Christ.

After we do that, I'm going to conclude today's message by reading the 16 core affirmations that we have in our position paper as a missionary church and really they are just a great summary as to what we believe the scripture teaches about human sexuality. My prayer is that these affirmations will help you and I as we traverse this difficult topic. So let's pray before we get started.

As I always do, let's pray that God will give me the wisdom to address this topic with grace and with truth. Let me pray. Heavenly Father, I know this is a big topic for many people. It's a struggle. It's a real issue. It's a relational struggle with families and friends and everything else. And so I pray that these words would not be my words today, but they would be your words.

That we would stand on the truth of your word. While at the same time, expressing grace and love. And I believe you're the only one that can do that. And so I pray that you would speak to us this morning. We asked this in Jesus name,

amen. There's one quick chart that I wanted to show you before we get started in kind of addressing this. Just so you know how big of an issue this really is in our culture.

If you live in a hole in the ground or in a cave, I guess. But really, it's this chart that made me realize as much as I didn't want to have to take a Sunday morning to address this that I really needed to. And so it was this chart right here, as I've told you before, part of my responsibility or I feel is part of my responsibility is just to keep my ear to the ground and our culture and in our society to see what's going on to address specific things.

And I came across this, which was the most recent survey that was taken, where this organization wanted to find out what percentage of our culture our society identifies as LGBTQ+, all the other things that get put in there. And so they asked, and then they did an interesting thing that I had never seen before. They divided those that responded into generations when they were born. And so you can look at this chart. Hopefully you can see it. I had to take a screenshot with my computer.

So I asked this question, do you identify as LGBT? And so those that were born before 1946, .8% of those that are part of this generation, which are called the traditionalist. If you're born before 1946, identified as LGBT .8%, you go to the next generation, the baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, asked the very same question how many of you identify as LGBT, and we got 2.6%, you go to the next generation, which is a generation just prior to mine that gen X generation, those born between 1980 5 and 1980 and 4.2% of them identified as LGBT.

Now you come to my generation, the millennials born between 1981 and 1996, and the number jumps to 10.5%. Of my generation identifies as LGBT, and then you go to the generation just after mine, which they're saying is 1997 to 2003, I think that generation will grow in the amount of years, but, you know, until history comes, we kind of make that a smaller generation, but I want you to look at this. Those born in just those few years.

1997 to 2003, 20.8% of that generation identifies as LGBT, meaning one out of every 5 people that are in that generation. Now, I don't know if you noticed like I did. The shocking thing as I looked at this chart was that every generation, those that identified as LGBT about doubled. About every generation.

It's been a growth exponentially there, which means those born after 2003, which would be my children, so if you're my age and you have kids that my children, if this trend continues, nearly 50% of that next generation will identify as LGBT. That's half. One out of every two in that next generation, if we continue with that trend. This is why it's important for us to discuss this because if it has not come up in your family yet, it will.

It will be an issue you will have to have an answer for. You will have to know how to respond. So how do I respond? Just so you know, understanding human sexuality as a whole for me starts in the book of genesis. Now, I feel that I find myself in good company that genesis is where I go back to, especially as a follower of Jesus, because when you look at Jesus in the New Testament, when he would share his view of human sexuality, he always went back to genesis as well.

Look at this in Matthew chapter 19. This is Jesus speaking, talking about marriage. He says, haven't you heard that 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.

Here, Matthew is talking about marriage and divorce, of course, but you see where he went back to as his foundation for truth concerning male and female and marriage and relationships, human sexuality. He went back to the book of genesis. Again, there's a lot more scriptures that I would love to read today, but for sake of time, I have them listed in your bulletin. Also, if you have the U version app, I believe that I have linked all of those scriptures in the U version app today so you can take time to look at those.

If you look at Ephesians, chapter 5 or 31, you'll see that the apostle Paul, who wrote the majority of the New Testament, also goes back to the book of genesis as his foundation for truth on the issue of human sexuality. So if we go back to genesis, according to genesis, God created us as human beings in his image, male and female. Gender distinctions were a part of his creation. They were a part of his idea. He came up with it.

We also need to recognize as we read in genesis that our gender is also necessary in order to accomplish his spoken purpose for us, which was to multiply and fill the earth. Gender is essential for that to happen. So now I'm going to read my first statement word for word.

Human sexuality then is a divine gift by which human beings created male and female may experience within marriage, a deep and multifaceted union, one that is physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual, and this fulfills the divine mandate to be fruitful and increase in number. Now, I also want you to know it's important to recognize that as you read scripture, and again, these Bible verses are listed for you.

The Bible celebrates the gift of marriage as a gift that God has given us, but the Bible also celebrates the gift of celibacy, not getting married. Both are celebrated as options or choices that we can make. So now let's talk about sexuality in the fall, because we cannot truly understand our current situation in the culture in which we live unless we recognize that sin and the fall of mankind greatly affected all of creation, including and not limited to our spiritual intimacy with God, as well as our human intimacy within marriage.

Due to the fall, due to sin entering this world, sexual disorder has entered creation. This has come up in lots of different forms and lots of different ways, just to think about some of the sexual disorder. You have things like premarital sex, adultery, pornography, sexual abuse. These would all fall under the category of sexual disorder, things that were never intended in the original creation until sin entered the world.

You also need to know that this struggle that we currently have in our culture in our society with human sexuality is not a new dilemma. This is not new in the 21st century. This is not the first time that we've had to deal with issues of human sexuality so much so that this issue, this problem of sexual disorder, is addressed over and over again in scripture because in biblical times, they also struggled with this.

Large sections of scripture, if you want some fun reading after church today, look at the book of Leviticus, more specifically in chapter 18. If you want a whole chapter about the sexual guidelines that Jesus puts around this thing that he created in order to protect us. The Bible also shares the consequences that are associated with sexual disorder, those things that result because of that, probably the most famous one is in Romans chapter one, and I intentionally find a scripture in the New Testament, because I know many people want to say, well, the Old Testament that was cultural, whatever else.

So we'll go into the New Testament to Romans chapter one 24. And here we read, therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and they chose to worship and serve created things rather than the creator who is forever praised amen.

And so because of this, because mankind decided to worship, created things rather than the creator, God gave us over, mankind, to shameful lusts, what were these shameful lusts? He's very specific. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way, the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another.

Men committed shameful acts with other men and received in themselves that do penalty for their error. Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so because of that, God gave them over to a depraved mind so that they do what ought not to be done. From the beginning, God's gift of human sexuality, which he intended for our good has been misused to our detriment.

And it's not the only thing that God created that was intended for our good and now because of fall has been used to our detriment. As you look at scripture in the Old Testament, nearly every what I would call hero of our faith, those pillars of our faith, Abraham's descendants, nearly every single one was caught up in the disorder of human sexuality. We see this in many shapes and in many forms, the many ways that they struggled with it, but the number one way is with polygamy.

Meaning that the man would have multiple wives instead of just one. You see, sexual disorder, and the effects of it have been an issue for both men and women, believers and unbelievers, different sex and same sex attracted people for a long time. We currently, though, find ourselves at a, what I would call a cultural crossroads.

Where two particular expressions of sexual disorder have come to occupy truly the center stage in the contemporary debate on human sexuality. And these two are the ones that I mentioned earlier, homosexuality, and transgenderism. These have always been a part of the human fallen condition, but the widespread clamor for their acceptance as a morally appropriate lifestyle choice truly is unprecedented.

Therefore, it's important for the church to think about such disorders such struggles, as well as those who wrestle with them as deeply biblically and compassionately as possible. So now let's get into the issue of homosexuality, but before I even begin, I want us all to be reminded of what the apostle Paul said in Ephesians chapter four 25 to speak the truth in love.

And so that is my goal. I'm going to be sharing biblical truth in as much love and as much kindness as I can. I think the problem when we address this issue is that there are two extremes that we end up finding ourselves on, whether we realize it or not. And so here are the two extremes. I just wanted to write them out for you. The first extreme that some churches, some people, some families find themselves on, is to accept the growing cultural trend of homosexual behavior as a valid personal choice, exempt from any moral ramifications.

Now, I know that even in reading that statement, and even believing this to be true, that no matter how I state that, as loving as I can state that, that I am going to be viewed as homophobic or hateful. But you need to know from my perspective that I believe I can make this statement in love and with compassion while it's still being true. Truth statements don't need to be hateful statements.

So that's the one end of the spectrum that we're just going to accept it all and refine with it all because we want to love everybody so much. You do you and we're fine with that. That's one extreme. The other extreme that some churches and individuals find themselves on is the other side where we overreact. And we single out homosexual practices as if they are the only behavior that scripts are condemned. Which is also not true. Scripture does clearly disapprove of homosexual behavior.

It's very true that it does. You can look at genesis chapter 19. Romans chapter one, which we read, but scripture also clearly condemns heterosexual immorality. Actually, scripture condemns sexual immorality of all kinds. You can find hundreds of verses in scripture that declare sexual immorality as being judged by God. And so this conversation of homosexuality continues in our culture with talks of sexual orientation.

This is a phrase that we have become used to. And so my generation, our generation, is asking questions like this. These are questions that we may get asked by our children or by our grandchildren or by friends or family members. What gives us our sexual orientation is it determined by our biological distinction or genetics? Is it conditioned by our environment at a young age, or is it merely a choice that we get to make? Do we choose our sexual orientation?

Now I have to share with you in all honesty that when it comes to these questions, I have more questions personally than answers. But I do believe that human sexuality is a remarkably complex issue that includes psychological, biological, physical, and spiritual components, all wrapped together. It is way too easy for us to oversimplify this discussion and to say that our human sexuality is merely nature or nurture or an act of the will.

But here is what I do know to be true. We live in a world that has been greatly affected by the fall. Things are not as they were supposed to be. Romans tells us that creation is in bondage, to corruption. And so in this fallen world, a disordered creation, it should come as no surprise that human desires become disordered.

That sexual desires, which were intentionally designed to blissfully propel us towards sexual intimacy and procreation within marriage has now gotten bent out of shape. Now you need to hear this. Still, some people, through no fault of their own, find themselves struggling with same sex attraction.

This fits with what we know about our fallen world and about our fallen bodies, creation is broken, and you and I are a part of creation, this includes us, and so we all are awaiting our restoration. I can say clearly that the Bible prohibits sex beyond the bounds of heterosexual marriage. I can say that clearly, the Bible prohibits sexual immorality.

Therefore, sexual attraction is not the issue. Sexual behavior is. I hope you understand the difference between those two things. Now, let's move on. I knew it would be quiet again this morning. Though God originally created two distinct and complementary sexes, a distinction, evident in the physiological makeup of the human race, one of the effects of the fall is that some people experience this term that we now have called gender confusion.

Now, just to be clear, when I talk about transgenderism and gender confusion, I am not talking about those rare cases where someone is born with both male and female primary sexual traits. That is a completely different subject and to be honest, it's one that I am much less knowledgeable about and don't have any answers for. And so if those are the

questions you have, maybe talk to a doctor, somebody else that would know more than I do, maybe that's completely new to you.

But that's not what we're talking about. What we are talking about, when I talk about transgenderism, is those individuals whose sex is biologically clear, but psychologically unclear. Physically, their body says they're one thing, but mentally they feel another. As some of you may already know, recently, the American medical community has begun providing a range of treatment options for what is technically called gender dysphoria, including hormone therapy and gender reassignment surgery.

Some of you also know that this has been supported and pushed by many LGBT advocates as well as many public schools. These advocates believe that individuals have the right to define their gender according to their self-perception rather than their biological makeup. Just so you know, this would be something that I cannot support from a biblical perspective.

I believe that any understanding of gender as self-defined or self-determined stands in sharp contrast to the created order into the word of God. Again, I go back to genesis, where we read that God and his wisdom created them male and female and gender is a very important component of human personhood and should not be tampered with. I fully understand that the different roles of gender do vary from culture to culture.

And I'm okay with that. And it's actually a beautiful thing. I love going to other cultures and experiencing how the family looks and how men look and women look and how they act. But gender itself, male and female is rooted in creation rather than culture. Most of us would agree that gender does embrace more than just biology, but it cannot be determined apart from it. I do also look forward to the liberation of creation from its current bondage.

I do believe it is tragic that because of the fallen world in which we live, creation must now deal with biological anomalies like intersexuality, as well as individuals who suffer from gender identity, confusion, but until that day comes, when we are freed from this fallen world, I feel that it is our responsibility as believers to show love and compassion to those who struggle with gender identity and confusion and to invite them to share in the hope for the wholeness held out in the gospel.

That is our responsibility as believers to show love and to show grace and to invite them and to share in the same wholeness that we have and hope for the gospel of Jesus Christ. But as such, I cannot condone the actions of those who seek to alter their biologically indicated gender, whether that's chemically or surgically. Yet, you still need to know that I sympathize with the profound gender dysphoria that inclines them to do so.

You need to know that among us, there are strong Christian brothers and sisters who wrestle with these issues on a daily basis. Strong Christian brothers and sisters. And so therefore, I will choose to show them love and compassion. While I continue to teach that we are all created in the image of God, but if I was asked, and I have been, I would not advise anyone to alter their biologically indicated gender in order to align it with their gender as self-perceived.

You see, even as time goes on, I try to stay as fresh with the information as I can. Even science is finding out that these irreversible changes can carry great consequences. I've read many tragic stories. Of young people who have gone through the hormone treatments or the surgeries that have caused unexpected results now that they are older. And they wish they never would have done it. Now, let me offer you some hope.

Our fallen sexuality can be redeemed by Jesus Christ. You and I need to know that there is no sin, sexual or otherwise that cannot be forgiven by God for those who put their trust in Jesus Christ. Jesus died for those with same sex attraction and gender confusion, just as he died for those of us whose lives are sexually broken in other ways. When we invite Jesus to be the lord of our lives, we welcome the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

We invite Jesus to be the lord of our lives, and we welcome him into our hearts. And so by God's grace, we can live lives of moral purity and as Christopher Yuan has said, holy sexuality. I also understand the truth and practical living that this does not mean that grace necessarily eliminates the desire of sexual expression that God has ruled out of bounds.

Temptation to sin is inevitable. But succumbing to temptation is not. That is huge. We will be tempted. That is for sure. But succumbing to it. We no longer have to. God provides you and I freedom from sins and enslavement. As followers of Jesus Christ, in order to experience that freedom, we must continue to resist the dangerous undertow of our sinful nature.

While we can by God's grace, progressively overcome the power of sin during this life in all of its forms that it takes, we will not attain complete perfection until our bodies are fully redeemed and glorified. Now, this may disappoint some of you. But once Jesus has been united with his bride, the church, scripture is very clear that marriage and sexual expression as we now know them will be replaced with the higher pleasures and the perfect intimacy of the new creation.

As hard as it is to wrap our minds around this, marriage will no longer exist or be necessary. When the new creation comes. Let me conclude this morning. I thank you for your attentiveness. Thank you for letting me go a little longer than normal. I want to finish by reading the 16 affirmations that conclude the position paper of the missionary church. And they really are a summary of everything I've tried to say this morning, how well I did it or not, let's look at these affirmations.

Number one, we affirm that God's intention for sex is that it adorned the institution of marriage, which is a sacred covenant between one man and one woman. Number two, we affirm that sex is a divine gift. Given to seal the marriage covenant and is intended for both pleasure and for procreation.

Number three, we affirm that sex is a part of the current order of creation, where it serves as a symbol of that glorious spiritual intimacy by which it will be subsumed in the new creation. Number four, we affirm that God intends heterosexual marriage to serve as a living symbol of the relationship between Jesus and his bride, the church.

Number 5, we affirm that God declares all sex outside of the boundaries of marriage, whether that be premarital or extramarital, whether heterosexual or homosexual a sin. Anything outside of the boundaries of marriage. Number 6. We affirm that sexual disorder is a universal human problem, and that all sexual sin lies under the judgment of God, number 7.

We affirm that God calls and empowers all Christians, whatever the nature of their sexual attraction to moral purity and holy sexuality. Number 8, we affirm that homosexuality is contrary to God's original design for human flourishing, and that homosexual behavior is clearly forbidden in the scriptures. Number 9, we affirm that homosexual marriage, even though it may be sanctioned by the state, remains forbidden by God.

Number ten, we affirm that gender is a divine gift, essential to both our humanity and our personal identity. Number 11. We affirm that God's design was the creation of two distinct and complementary sexes, both male and female, a distinction that has evident in the physiological makeup of the human race. Number 12. We affirm that gender identity is biologically physiologically determined rather than being dependent on self-perception or choice.

Number 13, we affirm that sexual sin in whatever form it manifests itself, cannot efface the image of God. Therefore, all human beings, whatever the precise nature of their sin remains worthy of our compassion and respect, just as they remain the object of the loving kindness of God. Number 14, we affirm that God calls us to love sinners, even as we grieve for their sin.

Number 15, we affirm that all have sinned and are in need of the redeeming and restorative grace of God every single one of us. And then finally, number 16 to wrap it all up. We affirm our confidence in the saving power of the gospel and the life transforming power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. God intends grace, rather than sin, to have the last word in the lives of his children. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our lord, Jesus Christ.

It always goes back to Jesus. Let me pray. Heavenly Father, I know this is a difficult topic. It's a difficult subject. Again, if we've not wrestled with this within our own immediate families, it probably is just around the corner. And so I pray that you would give us wisdom. You would allow those of us that are your followers that are submitting to you that you would allow us to walk that amazingly difficult tightrope between grace and truth.

Help us to answer those difficult questions that we wrestle with. Help us to love others. Help us also to continue to speak the truth. And for those that are personally wrestling with this, we've got hope to know they're not alone. They're not alone. That you love them. That we love them. And I pray for your peace. That only you can give.

I ask this in Jesus name. Amen.