

## Culture Wars: Sex and Gender

### *IS SEX OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE SINFUL?*

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HDBC

**I love history** and am almost always reading some history book. Often those books are about past wars. I'm currently reading a biography of William Tecumseh Sherman as well as an account of the battle of Guadalcanal. Why the fascination with past wars? Maybe it's because of the impact that wars have had on the generations in which they were fought. Maybe it's because of my gender.

**As a little boy** I joined my brothers and other boys in playing army. Most little boys, at least at some point in their lives dream of being heroes on the field of battle. And at a certain level that extends into our adult lives. Years ago I read *We Were Soldiers Once, and Young*, the story of Col. Hal Moore and the 7<sup>th</sup> Calvary. They participated in the first major battle against the NVA in Vietnam. They trained & prepared for months. There is a scene in the movie version where the men learn they are finally heading to Vietnam. Moore's wife said to the other wives, *get out your best dresses, ladies. The men are going to want to celebrate.* The **warrior spirit inside** was calling them to do battle.

**Wars** are not only fought on physical field of battle with physical weapons. There are mental wars, psychological wars, financial wars, theological wars and culture wars. In this series we will be considering the culture war related to **sex and gender**. And make no mistake about it, we are in a culture war. **Before we** get into today's specific topic, let me share a few thoughts in general about the series.

1. We are not at war with people. Those who disagree with us are not our enemy.
2. We are not at war with the government, government leaders or a political party.
3. We are at war with an army of evil spirits, led by their captain whose name is Satan. He is a fierce and determined enemy. His goal is to win at all costs. He doesn't play by the rules. He will use anything that will help him accomplish his goal. And what is his goal? To kill, steal and destroy, you and your family.

**Among other things**, Satan wants to use **sex and gender** as tools of destruction. Both were created by God and are good. However, Satan wants to confuse, distort and pervert what God made for good. And that is exactly what he is doing with **sex and gender**. He is not simply bringing confusion and distortion to individual minds, but he is bringing it to the overall culture.

**In this series** I am going to address several key questions that believers must consider. **And, quite frankly, we must be right on them. We have to get these right, or the salt becomes tasteless and the light becomes dim.** So, here is the first question.

**Is sex outside of marriage sinful?** In the early days of my pastoral ministry, almost everyone in the church knew the answer. Most people outside the church knew the answer as well. I'm not saying people acting on what they instinctively knew, but they did know it. This is no longer true.

**So, let me give** you the answer first, then I'll defend it from the Bible. Sex outside of marriage is sinful. Period. My job is not to make you feel good or tell you what you want to hear. My job is to teach the Bible. I assume that's why you are here.

This is not an all adult group, so I want to be careful with my language. When I use the word **sex** in this message I am speaking of **any activity that seeks to arouse, stimulate or satisfy one's own sexual desires or the desires of another. I'm not only speaking of the ultimate act of sex, but of many of the things that go with it.** If you are struggling with where the lines are, I suggest you talk with a mature believer who is older than you and seek their counsel. Three general statements about sex before we get to the outline.

### **1) God is not against sex**

He created it and blessed it in the context of marriage. He was part of His good creation. It was a gift to Adam and Eve and was blessed by God.

### **2) The Bible does not condemn sex**

When we say sex outside of marriage is sinful, it means sex in the marriage relationship is good. By marriage the Bible teaches that only involves the union of a one man with one woman.

### 3) Sex is not simply a physical act

There are deep psychological aspects to sex. There are relationship aspects. Anyone who reduces sex simply to an activity designed to satisfy certain physical drives fails to understand its deeper purpose and meaning.

**Some would say**, if sex is created by God and is good, then why can't we enjoy it whenever and however we want? That perspective is a bit short-sided. God created many things that are good and are to be enjoyed, but that have limitations. **Bacon is great**, but would not be healthy without moderation. **Spending time in the sun on the beach** can be fun and good, but it can also cook your skin and lead to skin cancer. Most of the good things in life are only good when enjoyed inside certain boundaries. Sex is to be enjoyed inside the marriage relationship.

### What does the Bible say about sex outside of marriage?

#### 1. The simple command about sexual immorality (Ex. 20:14)

God gave ten commandments to the people of Israel to provide a general outline of what it would mean to live as His people. These would reflect the righteousness that He required of them. Among those was the command to refrain from committing adultery. In this context the word speaks of a married person having sex with someone other than his or her spouse. It is a violation of the marriage commitment not only to one's spouse but to God.

#### 2. The clear instructions about sexual immorality (Heb. 13:4)

*Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.*

**Note** that he distinguishes between adulterers and the sexually immoral. So what does sexually immoral mean? **Porneia**. It refers to those who surrender their sexual purity and usually refers to premarital sex. Adultery refers to sex outside of marriage by those who are married. **Sexually immoral** refers to sexual activity by those who are not married. Both dishonor the sanctity and sacredness of marriage.

**2 Corinthians 7:2** reinforces this understanding of *sexual immorality*.

*But because of sexual immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband.*

**In other words**, sexual immorality occurs when one engages in sex before marriage. One way to avoid that sin is to get married and focus your sexual attention on your spouse. There are many other warnings about premarital sex in the New Testament. Here are a few.

### **1 Corinthians 6:18**

Flee sexual immorality. Every other sin that a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

### **Galatians 5:19**

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, indecent behavior,

### **Ephesians 5:3**

But sexual immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints;

## **3. The dangerous nature of sexual immorality**

The Bible not only condemns sex outside of marriage but repeatedly warns of its dangers. Proverbs 5 warns in graphic detail of the seductive power of sexual temptation and the destructive danger of sexual immorality.

My son, pay attention to my wisdom; listen carefully to my wise counsel. Then you will show discernment, and your lips will express what you've learned. For the lips of an immoral woman are as sweet as honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil.

But in the end she is as bitter as poison, as dangerous as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. For she cares nothing about the path to life. She staggers down a crooked trail and doesn't realize it.

So now, my sons, listen to me. Never stray from what I am about to say: Stay away from her! Don't go near the door of her house! If you do, you will lose your honor and will lose to merciless people all you have achieved. Strangers will consume your wealth, and someone else will enjoy the fruit of your labor. In the end you will groan in anguish when disease consumes your body.

You will say, “How I hated discipline! If only I had not ignored all the warnings! Oh, why didn’t I listen to my teachers? Why didn’t I pay attention to my instructors? I have come to the brink of utter ruin, and now I must face public disgrace.”

Drink water from your own well—share your love only with your wife  
Why spill the water of your springs in the streets, having sex with just anyone?  
You should reserve it for yourselves. Never share it with strangers. Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you.

Rejoice in the wife of your youth. She is a loving deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts satisfy you always. May you always be captivated by her love. Why be captivated, my son, by an immoral woman, or fondle the breasts of a promiscuous woman?

For the LORD sees clearly what a man does, examining every path he takes. An evil man is held captive by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him. He will die for lack of self-control; he will be lost because of his great foolishness.

#### 4. **The right perspective** on sexual immorality

We’ve seen what God says in His word. It’s clear. Maybe you still think it’s no big deal. It may not be to you, but I can assure you, it is to God.

**You remember** the story of Joseph in the O.T.? Jace preaching on it last week. Part of his story involved the seduction of Potiphar’s wife. She was bound and determined to get Joseph into her bed. Repeatedly she seduced him and repeatedly he rejected. I want you to see what he said to her. It reveals just how egregious this sin is to God. Listen to Joseph’s words.

*So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn’t worry about a thing—except what kind of food to eat!*

*Joseph was a very handsome and well-built young man, and Potiphar’s wife soon began to look at him lustfully. “Come and sleep with me,” she demanded.*

*But Joseph refused. “Look,” he told her, “my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. No one here has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I do **such a wicked thing**? It would be a **great sin against God**.”*

Did you catch it? **Such a wicked thing**. It would be **a great sin against God**. Do you realize when you engage in sex outside of marriage, it is a wicked thing and a great sin against God. I’m amazed at how people can engage in this wicked thing and then ask God to bless their relationship, bless their finances, bless their studies, bless their business, keep them healthy. **It’s like eating at the devils restaurant and expecting God to pay the bill**. God is not amused, nor is He blind or deaf. What you consider frivolous, He considers a great sin.

**That is not** what the culture says or believes. So, who you going to trust? The culture, which is in a constant state of change, or the one who loves you passionately and desires for you to enjoy the best that life offers?

#### **Takeaways:**

- 1. If you are married**, stay true to your spouse
- 2. If you are a single adult**, abstain and trust God
- 3. If you are young**, wait and trust God
- 4. If you have failed**, confess, repent and recommit to purity.

For all of us, remember this. Sexual temptation is the only temptation from which God tells us to run. Get as far from it as you can!

Two little girls were walking across a pasture when the bull took notice and began to jog in their direction. One little girl said **let’s stop and pray**. The other little girl said **let’s run and pray**. The second one had more wisdom.

**God sent Jesus** not simply to give you victory of the power of sin but over the penalty of sin. You might resist temptation from time to time, but you are powerless to take away the penalty of your sins. Only Jesus can do that.