

## **A BETTER WAY TO VIEW SEX** (PROV 30:20; 1 COR 6:9-20)

\*This sermon is adapted from JD Greear's series called "Still Standing."

If you've read Proverbs much, then you've noticed that the topic of sex comes up a LOT – Solomon devotes entire chapters to it. But I want to begin with just one verse...

**Proverbs 30:20** *"This is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth and says, "I have done no wrong."*



**Why would Solomon use food to describe the *wrong* view of sex?** To understand what he's saying, we need to look closely at a NT passage – 1 Corinthians chapter 6.

In this passage, Paul is talking to Christians who grew up around, and participated in, all kinds of sexual sin. And by the way, this should encourage some of you who may feel out of place being in church because of your sexual past. This passage shows us that the early church was made up of people with a sexually dysfunctional past, but God was working to deliver them from those former lifestyles.

So, Paul addresses two false views/beliefs about sex, and those two beliefs are still common in our culture today. First is the belief that...

### **1. Sex is meaningless.**

You see, our culture tells us that sex is no big deal – that you should be able to hook up with anyone you want with no real consequences. But, notice what the Bible says...

**1 Corinthians 6:9–11** *"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."*

Sexual sin is not the *only* sin he mentions in that list, but he does bring it

up three times in the opening verse! Why? Because sex *IS* a big deal, and there *ARE* consequences when we distort God's design for sex. Notice the distortions that Paul mentions...

- **"Sexually immorality"** (vs.9a) – A general term that describes ANY sexual activity outside of marriage. Our culture tells us it's no big deal, but God says it's immoral.
- **Adultery** (vs.9b) – When a married person is unfaithful to their spouse. The unfaithful spouse will say things like, "It meant nothing – just a little fun on the side to break up the monotony."
- **Homosexuality** (vs.9c) – Jesus said, from the very beginning of time, God meant for sex and marriage to ONLY be between one man and one woman. This is the consistent message throughout the entire Bible and God has not changed His mind on that.

Notice: Paul didn't say it's a sin to be *tempted* in these areas. He said it's a sin to act on or "*practice*" these sins. We're all tempted in various ways, but acting on the temptation is where sin begins.

But the people of Corinth were so used to these sinful lifestyles – they didn't even realize how corrupt they had become. In fact, some people in the Corinthian church were even saying that the occasional visit to a prostitute was no big deal!

This is why Paul uses one their favorite quotes in verse 13 when he says, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food." People in Corinth used this phrase all the time to say, "Sex is no different from our appetite for food. After all, when you're hungry you eat, then you feel better. It's natural. It works the same way when you want to have sex – you want it, you have it, and then you feel better. No big deal." So, their mentality was the same as the adulteress in Proverbs...

***Proverbs 30:20 "This is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth and says, "I have done no wrong."***

In other words, sex is just another appetite to be satisfied however and whenever I want. But, Paul is showing them (and us) that there's a *spiritual* dimension to sex that they were forgetting. Notice what he goes on to say...

***1 Corinthians 6:13b–18 "...The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup> And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. <sup>15</sup> Do you not know that your***

***bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup> Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." <sup>17</sup> But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. <sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body."***

You CANNOT have sex with someone and not become one flesh with them. And Paul says this is true even with the most casual sex possible, which is sex with a random prostitute. In that scenario, the prostitute says...

- I don't know your real name, and you don't need to know mine.
- We will most likely never see each other again.
- So, just pay me the money and walk away.

You can't get any more casual than that, but Paul says even in that scenario, those two people become one. Why? Because there is something deeply spiritual about sex. God has designed it that way.

If you don't believe me then answer these questions (on your handout)...



**If sex is just physical, why is rape more psychologically damaging to a woman than physical abuse?** Women report physical abuse far more than they do rape. Why? Because the wound is more damaging when it's sexual, and they find it hard to even talk about it.



**Why is it that when a child is sexually abused, it's far more difficult for them to move forward, even years later in their adult life?** It's not just that an authority figure betrayed them. The wound is much deeper because it was sexual.



**If sex is just physical, why is adultery so hard to get over?** Because the wound is more painful when it's sexual.



**Why is it that most people's greatest and most shameful regrets are usually sexual?** When somebody comes to a pastor and says, "I need to tell you something I've never told anybody else..." It's almost always sexual regret.

You see, everything in our human experience tells us that sex *IS* a big deal. That's why, in verse 18, Paul says every other sin is outside the body, but there's something different about sexual sin. And that's because God designed sex to **ONLY** be enjoyed by one man and one woman within a life-long marriage relationship!

Several years ago, a book called *"Hooked"* came out and it was written by a couple of neurologists (not pastors with an agenda) showing the effects of having multiple sexual partners, especially when you're young. They said...

*"The individual who goes from sex partner to sex partner is causing his or her brain to mold in such a way that eventually accepts that sexual pattern as normal... The pattern of changing sex partners therefore seems to damage their ability to bond in a committed relationship."*

– *"Hooked: How Casual Sex is Affecting Our Children"* pg. 48

**Illustration:** Duct Tape loses more and more ability to bond each time it's removed. In the same way, with every sexual encounter, you lose the ability to bond in a committed relationship.

So, on one hand our culture tells us that sex is meaningless – it's no big deal. But ironically, at the same time, our culture tells us that...

## **2. Sex is everything.**

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** *"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,<sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."*

Paul is reminding the Christian that, even though sex *IS* a big deal, it's **NOT** the most important thing in our human experience...

- For the Christian, your body is meant for much more than sex. It's a temple where God Himself (the Holy Spirit) is enthroned. (vs.19a)
- For the Christian, your body doesn't belong to you. It was "bought with a price" – the shed blood of Jesus. (vs.19b)
- So, rather than glorifying sex or sexuality, you should use your body only in ways that glorify God. (vs. 20)

**But, notice the contradiction:** on one hand, our culture constantly tells us that sex is no big deal. But, at the same time, it constantly tells us that sex is *everything* – that your sexuality DEFINES who you are. This is why...

- Guys think about sex more than anything else during the average day.
- Girls often have eating disorders because they feel constant pressure to be sexually attractive.
- Men and women often get depressed as they age because, when their physical attraction is gone, they feel like they've lost much of their identity.
- The gay and trans community believes their very IDENTITY is found in their sexual preference. They believe sex actually *defines* who they are, which is simply not true.

In fact, most people believe that happiness and fulfillment cannot be found unless they can express themselves sexually. But remember, Jesus never had sex, yet He was the most fulfilled Person who ever walked the earth!

So, it's a lie to say that sex is no big deal, but it's also a lie to say that sex is everything!

**Illustration:** Let's do a hypothetical here. What if you visited a country where young men went off to college and they hung posters on the ceiling above their bed with beautiful, exposed images of... *fruits and vegetables*. And those guys go from room to room looking at each other's posters, saying, "Dude, that spinach is so fine!"

And in that same country, you see people paying a lot of money to go into these clubs. And in those clubs, everybody sits around a stage – the lights are low, and the music is loud. And everybody in this club is watching the center stage as somebody slowly, bit by bit, in time to the music, takes the covering off of... *a hamburger*. And everybody says, "Wow!" And every night people go out and do this.

What would you think about those people? You would think, "These people must be starving. Otherwise, why would they treat food like that?" Or, at best, you would think, "These people's appetite is severely out of whack." Both would be true.<sup>1</sup>

Now, let's come back to the way we often view sex. You see, our soul

<sup>1</sup> Illustration from Tim Keller

/S starving – always searching for something that can fill an emptiness within us. So, we often try to fill that void with pleasure, romance and sex. But, when the pleasure doesn't ultimately satisfy, we just keep trying to fill it with MORE sex – which shows that our sexual appetite is severely out of wack.

But the Bible give us a better way to view sex:

- Sex is not meaningless – it's a big deal – a good and precious gift from God that is meant to be enjoyed within marriage between one man and one woman for life.
- But sex is also not everything – there's so much more to life than just sexual pleasure. Your identity and ultimate fulfillment should NEVER be wrapped up in sex or your sexual preference.

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### **Small Groups**