

XX. Timeless Truth for Timely Topics in Biblical Perspective

What Does the Bible Say?

“Biblical Sexuality Understood, Part I”

I Corinthians 7:1–5; Hebrews 13:4

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We will cover this topic on Biblical Sexuality in two parts—this study and the next and I’ll be using primarily two passages of Scripture for this. We will start by looking at Hebrews 13:4 in this study and then go to a companion text in I Corinthians 7. There are a number of creation ordinances that communicate certain things that are sacred that if ever abandoned those nations that abandon them will not long last over the face of the earth. In creation there is the sanctity of work. Work is not a part of the curse but is a gift from God. We will not only learn forever in a new heavens and new earth but we’ll work. What will be missing are the thorns and thistles. Work preceded the fall and is not a curse. Work is cursed but work is not a curse.

Secondly, is the sanctity of rest. The Lord has made the Sabbath so that we would rest. Many of us to the demise of our personal life and our family life we do not create the Biblical cycle of six days of work and one day of rest, setting ourselves aside to the praise of God. We maybe give God an hour on a day perchance but we do not set aside a day. That is to our detriment and our families detriment for that is the way God made us. Rest and the Sabbath was a gift from God to us. Jesus said “I did not make man for the Sabbath but I made the Sabbath for man.

Thirdly, there is the sanctity of life. Where God gives life and it is the Lord alone who is to take away life and therefore we are to honor the Lord with life and honor the dignity of life itself. If we ever abandon this matter of the dignity and sacredness of life then that also becomes a means whereby the judgment of God falls upon His people.

Then there is the matter of the sanctity of marriage. Marriage is not a church ordinance but a creation ordinance. That’s why in common grace the church would influence the culture to observe the created order that God has given in marriage and tied to that, embedded to that is the sanctity of sexuality. Sex was given as a gift from God in the context of creation wrapped in the dynamic and the environment of marriage itself so the two are inseparable. In our last study we said that marriage is a relationship that is covenantal, monogamous, heterosexual (man and woman), conjugal and a commitment for life. In that commitment for life we are to honor the Lord through any means that He might allow us to procreate either biologically or by adoption but that we in the family by marriage is crucial for the propagation of the next generation.

The church takes the creation ordinance of marriage and moves it into society because it is good for humanity. We love our neighbors so we want them to understand this creation ordinance that God has given for society but we also recognize that in the church we take this to another level and that is marriage in the Lord between two believers. What fellowship does light have with darkness? So we establish Christian marriage. We are to promote, propagate, perpetuate and establish a Christian understanding of marriage in the Lord, wrapped in the womb of the church so that God’s people know the blessings of God’s covenant families that are established in and for Christ. So remembering that now we move to this matter of sexuality.

Let’s start by looking at Hebrews 13:4 which says [4] *Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.* The phrase ‘let the marriage bed be undefiled’ is a euphemism to refer to the

intimacy between a man and wife within marriage. It is to be treated with honor, joy and as sanctified for it is a statement of praise to the Lord for His good gift to humanity in the marriage bed. Notice the qualification—it is the marriage bed, not an adulterer's bed. Then He makes a statement of promise that God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. This includes any sexual activity of any type outside of the marriage bed that will come under divine judgment.

I want to point out three observations from this text. After affirming marriage to be held in honor among all, specifically believers, the first thing he is saying is that there is an inseparable relationship between marriage and sexuality. When he says that marriage is to be held in honor he immediately goes to the matter of the seventh commandment where it says we're not to commit adultery. I hope to do in the coming year or so a study on the law of God. Each law of God in the Ten Commandments is built upon a sanctity—something that is basic. When the Bible says not to make graven images, that means not to worship God with your vain imagination. This is affirming the sanctity of the Word. We don't worship God by imagination but by divine revelation. We avoid creating a god made in our image with our imagination but we surrender to the One with whom we are made in His image by understanding who He is by divine revelation.

What about when it says not to commit murder? We are not supposed to kill people. Is there a place for defensive life, the state to have the sword, etc? It is another study but we're not allowed to be judge and jury to take the lives of men and women out of personal direction, personal emotion or personal vengeance. You haven't obeyed that commandment simply by not murdering because the commandment that tells you what not to do is also telling you what to do for that commandment 'do not murder' is built on the sanctity of life. Therefore to embrace the sanctity of life you commit life, not death.

Do not commit adultery means to commit purity. For this commandment is built upon the sanctity of marriage. So we do not commit adultery which are sexual acts outside of marriage. So how do we obey that commandment? This is what we don't do—we don't defile the marriage bed by creating adulterous beds or sexually immoral beds. We honor the marriage bed for sexuality is within marriage so we commit purity within the bounds of marriage. If you are not married then purity is chastity. Sexual activity within marriage is pure and honorable. It is that which God has given as a gift to His people and to humanity.

The sanctity of sexuality can only be observed within marriage and marriage has within it the blessing sexuality because sexuality initiates the marriage in those marital ceremonies. When I do a marriage ceremony I end them with this statement; 'upon the consummation of this union before God I pronounce you man and wife.' We have set up a covenant of marriage and then we've done these niceties of visible tokens of a ring and a kiss. It is the last kiss of the wedding and not the first kiss of the honeymoon for that comes later. The kiss seals it and the ring is something we do publically but the real sealing and signifying of the marriage is the marriage bed—the consummation before the Lord. It initiates and invigorates the marriage. It is a continual gift from God to celebrate within the marriage, and renew within the marriage. If God so chooses it is also a means by which procreation can come about as well. So there is that inseparable relationship that has been established between marriage and sexuality.

The second observation is the negative side which means any sexuality outside of marriage brings an assured divine judgment. Fornicators and adulterers are the sexually immoral as the text says. It is not simply any kind of judgment but divine intervention for God Himself will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers. He is telling you that sin has consequences. What a man sows he also reaps. What if you're a Christian and you commit sexual immorality?

If you are a true believer then you will be brought to repentance for that will be the evidence of it. You will be forgiven but you still might have lost your marriage. You may have demoralized your children. You may have lost at least for a significant period of time your ministry. There are divine judgments that come with sin, even when a believer does that. We can learn enormous lessons out of our sin as well but there are consequences that take place and He is warning us of that.

Judgment can come about in a number of ways. It could be through relational death or ministerial death or even physical death through sexually transmitted diseases. If one is not a believer then ultimately there is eternal death and eternal condemnation. If one is a believer the judgment is not eternal because there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus but it doesn't mean we don't have redemptive divine discipline in our life. There are many pastors, and rightly so, who have lost their ministries over sexual immorality. Do I believe if a leader, an elder or pastor in the church that commits sexual immorality can continue in their ministry? No, for they are not above reproach. Do I think they can be completely restored to their ministries? I think in exceptional cases you might be able to persuade me of that but for the vast majority my answer is no. I believe basically the door into the ministry opens one time and it is directly tied to our walk with the Lord and faithfulness before the Lord. I believe they can be restored to fellowship and by God's grace I believe they could be restored to their wife but restoration to ministry at best is a highly exceptional moment.

When I talk about this people tend to always point out to me a leader who was restored to leadership on this matter and that being David. I would ask you to go back and read about David and see what happened to Israel when this happened. It probably would have been best experientially for them that David not continue in leadership for it set up everything that was about to come and the apostasy at the end of his life of Solomon as well as the loss of a child. In the name of grace don't treat sin lightly as a believer and don't treat sexual sins lightly either. Certainly we can and will be forgiven if we repent and manifest that we are true believers. So I hope and pray you heard me clearly on this. I want you to realize that there are consequences. Broken trust is a consequence.

This was so important to myself and three other pastors who I have been meeting with for 33 years now. When we met we drew up five things in our accountability group. One was that if any of us commit sexual immorality and transgress our covenantal marital vows that the other three would insist that you leave the ministry. Two is that we'll work with you to restore your marriage. Three is that we'll work to restore fellowship in the church. Four we will see to it that you never come back into the ministry. People might think this is arrogant but we all took this commitment realizing just how weak we were. If this happens not only do you have the marriage relationship to deal with but the ministry is gone. That commitment wasn't based on how strong we were but how weak we are so I not only believe you need stepping stones to obedience but I think you need obstacles to sin in your life and that was an obstacle we tried to put in place. I have seen very few profitable ministries after ministers have stepped into sexual immorality.

Many of you are not facing the matters of leadership or the ministry but you're facing other issues in your life. Please do not see walking away from obedience in this matter of sexual purity that is placing sexual relationships only within the bounds of marriage, as a light matter like if I do then I can get forgiven. Yes you can be forgiven but that is not light either for God had to send His Son to the cross to pay for that sin so don't treat it lightly. Secondly, even as believers, there are consequences to sins that we have been forgiven from. Can we grow through

it? Absolutely. Can God teach us lessons from our sins, repentance and restoration? Absolutely, but there are always consequences that are bound to it, so he is warning us in this text that God does bring divine judgment on sexual activity outside of marriage.

Thirdly, is that He assures blessings of sexuality within marriage. He says this is honorable. This is worship. What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. What does that mean to glorify God? It means to give praise to the Lord with the way we live our life, in what we say and what we do. How far does that extend? Here is what Paul says in I Corinthians 10:31, *[31] So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* This includes sex. How do you sex to the glory of God? You do it Biblically and that means you do it within marriage. When you do that blessing upon blessing is given by the Lord. It is a good thing that God has given to His people that they would enjoy those relationships within in the context of marriage, because they are not only honoring the Lord by not doing it outside of marriage but the Lord is honoring them by blessing them with the marriage bed that is undefiled. It is a sacred blessing of God whereby God is being worshiped by the intimacy between a man and a woman in the context of marriage.

It is more than just sexuality within marriage. The Bible gives us more insights on that. Let's look at I Corinthians 7. Here the Apostle Paul brings to us a parallel text that speaks to us of sexuality within marriage and he also gives us hints on discipleship. I call them seven essentials concerning Biblical sexuality. So one, we are saying according to the seventh commandment sex and marriage are inseparably related. Two, sex outside of marriage brings divine judgment. It is not condemning judgment upon the believer but it does disciplinary judgment and can bring judgment emotionally, spiritually, recreationally, physically and ultimately eternally if one does not know Christ. Three, sex within marriage is a blessing from God. It is an act of worship through which God blesses the marriage relationship. What does that sex within marriage look like?

I Corinthians 7:1–5 says *[1] Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." (men and women do not have sexual relationships outside of marriage) [2] But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. [3] The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. [4] For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. [5] Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

What do we now learn about the blessings of sex and sex that is now a blessing within marriage? We learn seven things from this text. One, is that it is heterosexual. It clearly talks about a man and woman. It clearly says that sex outside of marriage is wrong. What is the opposite of good? It is bad or evil so sex outside of marriage is evil. It brings multiple consequences in divine judgment. What is good? It is sex within marriage. Each man is to have his own wife and each woman is to have her own husband. It stands obvious that marriage is heterosexual on the face of how God made us biologically and how God continually affirms it throughout the Scriptures.

The second essential blessing of sex within marriage is that it is monogamous. It is to be between one man and one woman. Let each man have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

Thirdly, it is a reciprocal relationship. It is not a hierarchical relationship. Paul takes great pains to bring this point across. He certainly affirms that the man is to provide servant leadership within the home and he has ultimate responsibility before God for the decisions made within the home but in the context of the marriage bed he says the man does not have authority over his own body but the wife does and the wife does not have authority over her own body but the husband does. In other words, a sexual relationship between a husband and wife can be initiated by either of them not just or only one of them. They have a reciprocal relationship in the marriage bed. There is not an authoritative structure here.

The fourth essential is that the sexual relationship is ministerial. The woman's body is there for her husband and the husband's body is there for his wife. In other words, your sexual abilities and appetites have not been given for self-gratification but for other gratification. That is a man's desire for a sexual relationship with his wife is to lead him to that relationship with her in the marriage bed that gives her pleasure. In other words your sexual appetites are not there to use the other person for your sexual gratification but your appetites and abilities are there to teach you and call you to the other person's gratification. We call this the golden rule for it is more blessed to give than to receive. Love others as you would be loved. So you love your wife as you would be loved. This is why mono-sexual activity or self-sexual activity is destructive for by its very act teaches self-gratification. Therefore in the marriage bed the other person becomes an object to use for personal gratification instead of a person to care for and love and give pleasure to.

One of the greatest works on this is the Song of Solomon. The Song of Solomon and the book of Proverbs affirm another thing in the marriage bed. People want to learn how to be Christian in their sexual relationships with my spouse and I have this great desire for sexual intimacy but I am using that as an impetus and a directive to give pleasure instead of take pleasure. I am about to find out that it is more blessed to give than to receive. The problem is that we both go at this two different ways and Song of Solomon and Proverbs point this out. Forgive this archaic illustration but in the marriage bed women are crockpots and men are microwaves. Men have to realize they are not going to turn the microwave on and women realize how this works together so that means there is something else glorious in the sexual relationship and that is communication. This isn't tough if you are going to give pleasure but if you're using the other person then when it is done there is shame. When you are ministering to the other person it brings you to tenderness, joy and rejoicing with one another. So it is ministerial. It is not self-gratification but other oriented.

The fifth essential is that it is to be habitual and regular. I know today the premium is on spontaneity and I'm not opposed to that but Paul basically says for this not to get interrupted. Perhaps you can interrupt it for a couple of days for prayer and fasting but put a limit on it and get back together because if you don't you will set yourself up for temptation. So you are to be habitually intimate sexually with each other regularly in the context of your marriage. One might think they might not be interested in that regular part but it is not about you. It is about the other person. So it is to be habitual and regular.

The sixth essential is that it is to be recreational as well as procreational. It not only initiates the marriage but invigorates the marriage. It is a way to bless each other in the marriage, to renew relationships in the marriage. The very thing that initiated your marriage bed becomes a regular part that is recreation, renewal and revitalization of invigoration within the marriage. Then there is the matter of the blessing of procreation of God bringing another generation to you to raise and nurture in the admonition of the Lord.

Seventhly and finally, it is preventional. In other words, by this gift from God is a way to avoid temptation. So to my dear friends who are not yet married, what do you hear? You hear a call to purity in anticipation and preparation if God would allow marriage in your life. I have no documentary evidence on this. My wife and I were 20 and 21 years old when we got married and in my family that was old because my mom and dad and grandparents were married at 17 and 18. I know there are some issues here where kids today aren't ready to be married that young and the reason for that is because of the way we are raising them. Adolescence used to be 16 and now it is 27. We are responsible for that for we don't raise our children to leave us but to cleave to us and therefore they are not ready for it. Another reason the age is moved up is because of the availability of sexuality and the lack of discipline in their lives but don't think that it doesn't come at a cost.

So my dear single friend I know you don't know how much I love you but I pray for you regularly. Ask the Lord to give you a heart so fixed on Jesus who has loved you that you will say to the Lord, 'Lord I love You so much that I will not only eat and drink to the glory of God but I will make sure the appetites that You have given me sexually will be gratified to the glory of God.' I would ask the rest of us for our brothers and sisters who are attempting to pursue purity and chastity in anticipation and preparation for marriage, let us not by our actions, touch or dress put stumbling blocks in front of them. Let us not dress and touch for our gratification but for their encouragement in the Lord.

People come to me all the time and say they are committed to marriage for they are getting married in two months so why not have sex? I tell them you're not married so what will it mean when I say 'upon the consummation of this union' and you've already done that? We are just playing words games here, but more than that you're telling me the sovereignty of self overrules the sovereignty of God's Word to you. You know what God's Word says but you're really saying that you're an exception. Therefore explain to me why now the sovereignty of self allows you to violate the boundary of marriage in premarital sexual relationships and how the sovereignty of self will stop when you want to have an extramarital relationship and violate the boundary of marriage. On the contrary you will already have embedded the principle I and my gratification is more important than God's Word. If you think premarital is easy then extramarital will be even more easy in the sovereignty of self.

The greatest thing in the context of marriage is to get a love for Jesus that is so great that it leads you to love for your spouse that is so deep that you can't even think of anything but him or her. I call it a sanctified obsession. God I only have eyes for the one You've given to me. First is the glorious obsession—Jesus I love You so I want to bring this to Your glory like everything else. I don't want to live to eat but I want to eat to live for You. I don't want to live to drink but I want to drink to live for You and I don't want to live to have sex. I want sexuality to be within the marriage relationship and I want it to honor You. Would You bless us? With that glorious obsession give me a daily obsession that my heart is full for my spouse, therefore my body belongs in the name of the Lord to my spouse and no one else can use it for a playground for their own gratification, Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could spend in Your Word. Thank You for the privilege to walk through these passages of Scripture. Thank You for their clarity and please over rule my lack of clarity. God, by Your Holy Spirit give Your people wisdom and the ability to share this with the next generation, these essentials for I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

THREE OBSERVATIONS FROM HEB.13:4

- I. An inseparable relationship between marriage and sexuality
- II. Assured Divine judgment on sex outside of marriage
- III. Assured blessing of sex within marriage

SEVEN ESSENTIALS CONCERNING BIBLICAL SEXUALITY FROM I COR. 7:1-5

- I. Heterosexual
- II. Monogamous
- III. Reciprocal – Not Hierarchical
- IV. Ministerial
- V. Habitual – Regular
- VI. Recreational and Procreational
- VII. Preventional