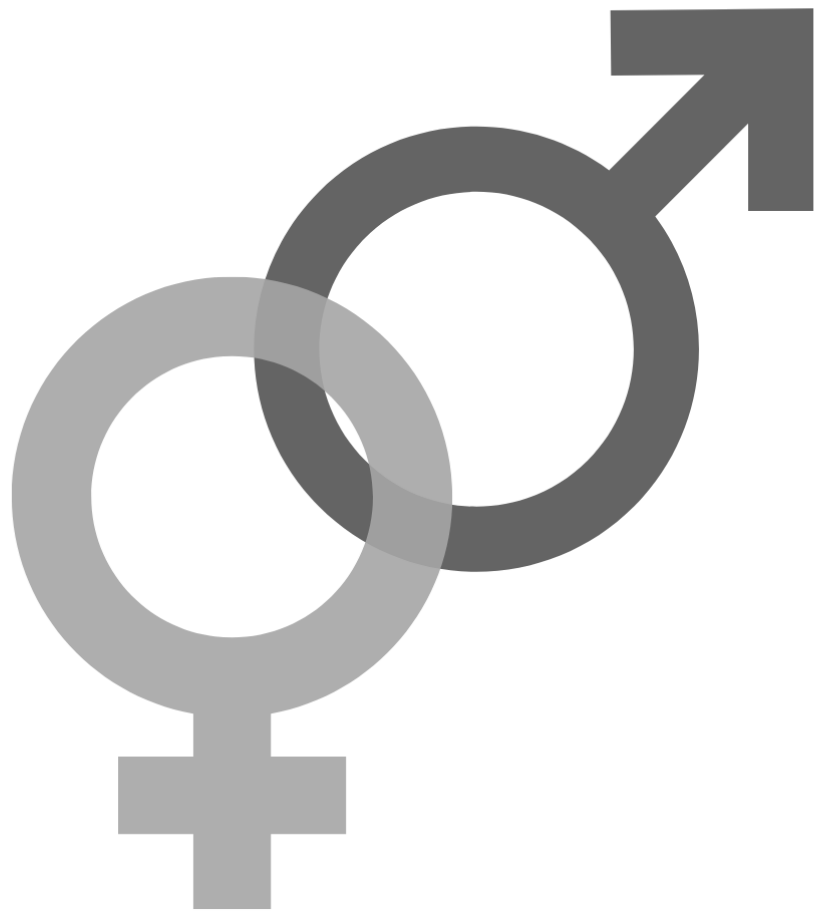


# GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEXUALITY





## Orientation, Disorientation, Reorientation

The biblical worldview consists of God's design in creation (orientation), the fall of humanity into sin and its consequences (disorientation), and God's redemptive reclamation project to restore His creation to its original state (reorientation). This lesson will briefly review God's design for sexual expression, the effects of the fall in this area and others, and God's remedy for sin.

### I. **Orientation: Who God is and What He Expect From Us**

*God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground. (Genesis 1:27-28)*

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (Genesis 2:15)*

*The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18)*

Rather than making the man's helper immediately, God took time to use the man's objective *aloneness* to create subjective *loneliness*:

*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. So 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. (Genesis 2:19-20)*

Having created in Adam the feeling of loneliness and desire for a companion, God demonstrates to Adam that He is the One Who supplies man's need:

*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. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 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." (Genesis 2:21-23)*

God then pronounced the sacred words that have been used in marriage ceremonies ever since:

*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (Genesis 2:24 KJV)*

Jesus confirmed the ongoing validity of the original marriage covenant millennia later:

*“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.” (Matthew 19:4-6)*

*To the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. (1 Corinthians 7:8-9)*

The ‘unmarried’ and ‘widows’ are two categories of formerly married, the former no longer married due to divorce and the latter due to the death of the spouse.<sup>1</sup>

In an article in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Denny Burk writes:

*The only sex desire that glorifies God is that desire that is ordered to the covenant of marriage. When sexual desire/attraction fixes on any kind of non-marital erotic activity, it falls short of the glory of God and is by definition sinful. ... this ... principle applies to the experience of both opposite-sex and same-sex desire.*

## II. **Disorientation: Our Problem That Distorts Everything**

One question that has arisen in recent years is whether some sins, at least, are a biological phenomenon. Are we simply “born that way?” Some point to scientific evidence that suggests that brain biology explains various sexual behaviors. Others suggest that the primary cause of at least some sexual struggles is early psychological influences in one’s environment.

It is true that both biology and environment influence behavior, but the Bible presents another factor namely, our sin nature. The Bible teaches that:

- All sin flows from a depraved heart. Man’s inner control center, the heart, is wicked, deceitful and morally corrupt (Jeremiah 17:9).
- A sinful environment can have great influence upon one’s actions. The Bible repeatedly urges us to stay away from evil people and ideas.

Therefore, the Bible teaches that sexual sin, of whatever sort, is the result of a corrupt heart working in combination with evil influences. The root cause is the sinfulness of humanity, but psychology and environment also play a role.

While it has not been conclusively proven that a tendency toward a particular sinful desire is genetic such that some are “born that way,” the Bible is clear that we are all born sinners. From man’s sinful nature flows sinful appetites that he spends his entire life attempting to satisfy. Sometimes the combination of depravity and environment moves one to lying, stealing, gossip and/or murder. Sometimes the combination of depravity and environment moves us to a particular sexual lifestyle. But even if a person was biologically prone toward a particular sin, that fact would not reduce culpability. Every person is bent toward sin (Romans 3:10ff), but that is no excuse. Jesus said ...

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<sup>1</sup> See John MacArthur, *1 Corinthians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

*For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.' (Mark 7:21-23)*

This is all due to our nature, a nature inherited from the first man, Adam, and the first human sin. This raises the question: "How can I be held responsible for sin I didn't commit?" "How can I be held responsible for actions arising from a nature I didn't choose?" The doctrine of *original sin* answers these questions, as explained by theologian R.C. Sproul:

*Original sin does not refer to the first sin but to the result of that first sin. The Scriptures speak repeatedly of sin and death entering the world through "one man's transgression." As a result of Adam's sin, all men are now sinners. The Fall was great. It had radical repercussions for the entire human race.*

*Adam acted as a representative of the entire human race. With the test that God set before Adam and Eve, he was testing the whole of mankind. Adam's name means "man" or "mankind." Adam was the first human being created. He stands at the head of the human race. He was placed in the garden to act not only for himself but for all of his future descendants. Just as a federal government has a chief spokesman who is the head of the nation, so Adam was the federal head of mankind.*

*The chief idea of federalism is that, when Adam sinned, he sinned for all of us. His fall was our fall. When God punished Adam by taking away his original righteousness, we were all likewise punished. The curse of the Fall affects us all. Not only was Adam destined to make his living by the sweat of his brow, but that is true for us as well. Not only was Eve consigned to have pain in childbirth, but that has been true for women of all human generations. The offending serpent in the garden was not the only member of his species who was cursed to crawl on his belly.*

*If God did in fact judge the entire human race in Adam, how is that fair? It seems manifestly unjust of God to allow not only all subsequent human beings but all of creation to suffer because of Adam.*

*It is the question of God's fairness that federalism seeks to answer. Federalism assumes that we were in fact represented by Adam and that such representation was both fair and accurate. It holds that Adam perfectly represented us.*

*Within our own legal system we have situations that, not perfectly but approximately, parallel this concept of representation. We know that if I hire a man to kill someone and that hired gunman carries out the contract, I can justly be tried for first-degree murder in spite of the fact that I did not actually pull the trigger. I am judged to be guilty for a crime someone else committed because the other person acted in my place.*

*The obvious protest that arises at this point is, "But we did not hire Adam to sin in our behalf." That is true. This example merely illustrates that there are some cases in which it is just to punish one person for the crime of another.*

*The federal view of the Fall still exudes a faint odor of tyranny. Our cry is, "No damnation without representation!" Just as people in a nation clamor for representatives to insure freedom from despotic tyranny, so we demand representation before God that is fair and just. The federal view states that we are judged guilty for Adam's sin because he was our fair and just representative.*

*Wait a minute. Adam may have represented us, but we did not choose him. What if the fathers of the American republic had demanded representation from King George and the king replied, "Of course you may have representatives. You will be represented by my brother!" Such an answer would have spilled even more tea in Boston Harbor.*

*We want the right to select our own representatives. We want to be able to cast our own vote, not have somebody else cast that vote for us. The word vote comes from the Latin "votum" which meant "wish" or "choice." When we cast our vote, we are expressing our wishes, setting forth our wills.*

*Suppose we would have had the total freedom to vote for our representative in Eden. Would that have satisfied us? And why do we want the right to vote for our representative? Why do we object if the king or any other sovereign wants to appoint our representatives for us? The answer is obvious. 'We want to be sure that our will is being carried out. If the king appoints my representative, then I will have little confidence that my wishes will be accomplished. I would fear that the appointed representative would be more eager to carry out the wishes of the king than my wishes. I would not feel fairly represented.*

*But even if we have the right to choose our own representatives, we have no guarantee that our wishes will be carried out. Who among us has not been enticed by politicians who promise one thing during an election campaign and do another thing after they are elected? Again, the reason we want to select our own representative is so that we can be sure we are accurately represented.*

*At no time in all of human history have we been more accurately represented than in the Garden of Eden. To be sure, we did not choose our representative there. Our representative was chosen for us. The one who chose our representative, however, was not King George. It was almighty God.*

*When God chooses our representative, he does so perfectly. His choice is an infallible choice. When I choose my own representatives, I do so fallibly. Sometimes I select the wrong person and am then inaccurately represented. Adam represented me infallibly, not because he was infallible, but because God is infallible. Given God's infallibility, I can never argue that Adam was a poor choice to represent me.*

*The assumption many of us make when we struggle with the Fall is that, had we been there, we would have made a different choice. We would not have made a decision that would plunge the world into ruin. Such an assumption is just not possible given the character of God. God doesn't make mistakes. His choice of my representative is greater than my choice of my own.*

*We bristle at the idea that God calls us to be righteous when we are hampered by original sin. We say, "But God, we can't be righteous. We are fallen creatures. How can you hold us accountable when you know very well we were born with original sin?"*

*An illustration may be helpful. Suppose God said to a man, "I want you to trim these bushes by three o'clock this afternoon. But be careful. There is a large open pit at the edge of the garden. If you fall into that pit, you will not be able to get yourself out. So whatever you do, stay away from that pit."*

*Suppose that as soon as God leaves the garden the man runs over and jumps into the pit. At three o'clock God returns and finds the bushes untrimmed. He calls for the gardener and hears a faint cry from the edge of the garden. He walks to the edge of the pit and sees the gardener helplessly flailing around on the bottom. He says to the gardener, "Why haven't you trimmed the bushes I told you to trim?" The gardener responds in anger, "How do you expect me to trim these bushes when I am trapped in this pit? If you hadn't left this empty pit here, I would not be in this predicament."*

*Adam jumped into the pit. In Adam we all jumped into the pit. God did not throw us into the pit. Adam was clearly warned about the pit. God told him to stay away. The consequences Adam experienced from being in the pit were a direct punishment for jumping into it.*

*So it is with original sin. Original sin is both the consequence of Adam's sin and the punishment for Adam's sin. We are born sinners because in Adam all fell. Even the word "fall" is a bit of a euphemism. It is a rose-colored view of the matter. The word "fall" suggests an accident of sorts. Adam's sin was not an accident. He was not Humpty Dumpty. Adam didn't simply slip into sin; he jumped into it with both feet. We jumped headlong with him. God didn't push us. He didn't trick us. He gave us adequate and fair warning. The fault is ours and only ours.*

The Bible links all humanity to Adam's sin very directly:

*Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned. (Romans 5:12)*

### ***Born That Way, and Made That Way***

So, as sexual sinners are we 'born that way?' Yes and no. Yes, if by that we mean that we are all born with a sin nature, and that sin nature manifests itself in different ways. Some have a tendency toward anger or dishonesty or violence while others have a tendency toward particular sexual desire. But just as the angry or lying or violent person is responsible for his actions, so too the person who struggles with sexual sin.

Consider the struggle most males have with lust. It's only because of our sin nature that we look at women as objects and talk about them in locker rooms or other so-called 'guy talk' settings in sexual terms.

These bodies that we **misuse** because of sin, are also bodies that are **broken** because of sin – they don't work as originally designed. The Bible says that one of the consequences of sin entering God's good world is that our physical bodies are subject to sickness and decay and death:

*The creation was subjected to frustration ... [and] bondage to decay.* (Romans 8:20-21)

**Therefore, it should not surprise us that some guys (and gals) are born with bodies that are sexually broken, such that their desires are not natural, and their bodies do not seem to fit those desires. Why do men engage in sexual desire for what God forbids? Because we are born that way, that is we are born with a sin nature, and with bodies that are broken because of that sin.**

### III. Reorientation: God's Work to Restore His World

God is actively calling a people out of the world and to Himself through the proclamation of the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit. He will ultimately restore the entire creation but is now restoring individuals through ...<sup>2</sup>

#### A. Salvation

1. The term *salvation* is the most widely used term in our Christian vocabulary and in the Bible itself to express God's rescue of us from sin and death with all its benefits and blessings. The noun *salvation* (Greek *sōtēria*) and the verb *save* (Greek *sōzō*) and their cognates occur more than 150 times in the New Testament. Most commonly we speak of salvation as something that is past, such as, in expressions like, "I was saved..." or "Are you saved?" But in the New Testament *salvation* is spoken of as not only as a past experience, but also a present and future one:
  - a. Past — "He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace" (2 Tim 1:9). "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5)
  - b. Present — "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor 1:18).
  - c. Future — "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! (Rom 5:9–10).
2. We use the term *salvation* as an umbrella term under which are subsumed a number of other terms that are considered subsets or aspects of salvation. So *salvation* encompasses all the various saving benefits we have in Christ—past, present, and future.

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<sup>2</sup> The following is excerpted from a course taught by Dr. William Combs at CBC in 2016.



3. Some of these aspects of salvation are past: we have been justified. Some aspects are present: we are being sanctified. Some are future: we will be glorified.
4. Some of these aspects of salvation are experiential and some are nonexperiential. Experiential (or experimental) as applied to salvation refers to an act of God **within us**. An experiential act is one in which the believer is changed in his or her immaterial spirit/soul. Regeneration (being born again) is experiential. Our immaterial being receives spiritual life. We are no longer dead spiritually. Nonexperiential as applied to salvation refers to an act of God **with respect to us**. Nonexperiential acts of salvation do no change us internally, in our soul, though they are just as important. They are more judicial or legal or positional. Justification is nonexperiential. I am declared righteous—strictly a legal declaration. Theologian John Murray suggests that we might better grasp the difference between the experiential act of regeneration and the nonexperiential act of justification with this illustration: “The distinction is like that of the distinction between the act of a surgeon and the act of a judge. The surgeon, when he removes an inward cancer, does something in us. That is not what a judge does—he gives a verdict regarding our judicial status. If we are innocent he declares accordingly” (*Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 121).

#### B. Justification (past)

1. The word *justify* is a forensic or legal term with the meaning “acquit.” It is the normal word to use when the accused is declared “Not guilty.” It means to “declare righteous,” not to “make righteous.” It is the opposite of condemn. “To condemn” does not mean “to make wicked,” but “to declare guilty”; similarly, “to justify” means “to declare just.” To be justified means to be acquitted by God from all charges that could be brought against a person because of his sins.
2. “Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight” (Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 723).
3. One aspect of our justification includes forgiveness of our sins. “However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them’” (Rom 4:5–8).
4. The second aspect of our justification is God imputing the perfect righteousness of Christ to us. God imputes, that is, regards or counts the righteousness of Christ as belonging to us. He credits it to our account. “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous” (Rom 5:19).

## C. Sanctification (past, present, and future)

1. The basic meaning of the term *sanctify* is “to set apart,” “to make holy.” In sanctification the believer is set apart from sin and set apart to God. In justification God *declares* us righteous; in sanctification God *makes* us righteous or holy.
2. Three phases of sanctification:
  - a. Past or initial sanctification (I have been sanctified) — The believer is definitively and instantaneously set apart from the dominion of sin. The believer is no longer a slave to sin. “For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness” (Rom 6:14, 17, 18). “And that is what some of you were. 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” (1 Cor 6:11). “And by that will, we have been made holy [sanctified] through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:10).
  - b. Present or progressive sanctification (I am being sanctified) — The believer is progressively being set apart from the power and practice of sin. Throughout this life the believer is progressively becoming holy while sin is being extirpated. “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified” (1 Thess 4:3). “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires” (Rom 6:12). “Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Cor 7:1).
  - c. Future or entire sanctification (I will be sanctified) — The believer is completely and entirely set apart from the possibility of sin, no longer able to sin. The believer is made perfectly holy either at death or the rapture. “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 5:23). “...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless” (Eph 5:25–27).