



Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church

The Sermon on the Mount - Part 1 • Sex and Lust • Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 5:27-30 •

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Main Point

God designed sex to be enjoyed in the context of marriage, and He calls believers to hold marriage in honor by uprooting lust in their hearts.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What was the sexual culture like when you were in high school? How has it changed?

What temptations and challenges do young people face today with regard to sexual immorality that you did not face as a teenager?

How do you think the prevalence and accessibility of pornography has influenced the way that young people think about sex?

Sexual immorality has corrupted hearts and destroyed relationships ever since the fall. There is no doubt, however, that sexual immorality has been normalized in recent years by the prevalence and accessibility of pornography afforded to young people through the Internet. As followers of Christ, this should move us both to reclaim a biblical understanding of sex and to diligently prepare our children to see through the lies of sexual immorality.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Have a volunteer read genesis 2:18-25.

What does it mean to “become one flesh”? In what ways are husbands and wives to be one flesh?

What do we learn about God’s design for sex from these verses?

Why is it important that we view marriage as a one flesh union? How might this view strengthen marriage?

God’s design for women and men in marriage to “become one flesh” highlights both the priority of the marriage relationship and its unique nature. Women and men are to leave their parents and start their own families—the marriage relationship is intended by God to take precedent over every other human relationship. Additionally, the two becoming “one flesh” indicates that marriage is the context for which God created sex.

Sexual union, however, is not the only sense in which husbands and wives are to “become one flesh.” The Hebrew word for “flesh” in verse 24 refers to personhood. Jesus was saying that the husband and wife are now one person. Whether we recognize it or not, everything one spouse does affects the other. Marriage is a mysterious union, one in which husbands and wives are called upon to give up their unique personhood for the good of their spouses. Paul says this union was created by God to point us to the union He offers us with Himself through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross (Ephesians 5:25-32).

How does pornography contradict God’s design for sex?

What is the purpose of sex?

The greatest commandment is to love God with all one’s heart, soul, and mind and to love one’s neighbor as one’s self (Mt. 22:37-38). Our ultimate purpose in life is to glorify God (Isa. 43:7; 1 Cor. 10:31). Therefore, the purpose of sex is ultimately to bring glory to God. However, if we hope to glorify God in the way we approach sex, we must submit to His design for it. Pornography would lead us to believe that the purpose of sex is personal pleasure, whereas Scripture calls us to see sex as a means of glorifying God. Pornography corrupts God’s design for sex by encouraging us to view others as objects that exist for our self gratification rather than as people made in God’s image.

| Have a volunteer read matthew 5:27-30.

How did Jesus interpret the commandment not to commit adultery? How did this differ from the teaching of the Pharisees? How did this raise expectations for His followers?

How does Jesus define lust? What does this teaching reveal about the human heart?

According to Jesus, where does sexual immorality begin?

Jesus intensified the law by looking at the heart of the command and exhorting His listeners not to lust. To look with “lustful intent” is to look with sexual desire upon someone who is not your spouse. Sexual immorality begins in the heart, the center of a person’s identity and will, long before it is acted upon. By

using the past tense and saying that the person has already committed adultery, Jesus focuses on the heart of the person that is bent by sin. The heart of a person who commits physical adultery is the same heart of a person who looks lustfully as Jesus describes.

How did Jesus emphasize His point in verses 29-30?

Is there anything too important to lose if it causes you to give into adulterous lust?

Jesus emphasized the point by telling them to put out the right eye or cut off the right hand if it leads to sin. Using classic Jewish teaching techniques, Jesus demonstrated that nothing is too precious to eliminate from our lives if it causes us to lust. Self-mutilation and amputation are not effective ways to overcome sin. After all, sin arises from a corrupt heart rather than flesh and bone. Jesus here uses hyperbole (intentional exaggeration for the sake of making a point) and allegory (in which the eye represents a lustful perspective and the hand represents an immoral deed) in order to convey a vital requirement of discipleship. Disciples should put a stop to thoughts and behaviors that contribute to sexual immorality.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How has studying God’s design for sexual relationships changed the way you think about sex?

What are some ways you can combat the temptation to commit sexual sin? Where do you turn? How is Christ our only hope in regard to lust and sexual purity?

What role does personal accountability play when it comes to sexual purity? Who is keeping you accountable in this area of life?

What are some practical ways we can guard our families against sexual immorality?

Pray

Close in prayer, thanking God for setting us free from the power of sin through the death and resurrection of His Son. Ask Him to help the parents of the church to help their children understand how God has designed sex. Pray that God would protect their hearts against lust and use them to point others to Christ.

Commentary

| Genesis 2:18-25

2:18. The theme of God providing for Adam’s needs (see note at v. 8) is picked up again here, as God declared that Adam’s being alone is not good. God created the man with a need to relate to one as his complement, and now God will meet that need.

2:19. Like man, animals were formed out of the ground, but they did not receive the breath of life from God (v. 7) nor the image of God. By giving names to the animals, Adam showed that he ruled the animals and that he perceived the nature of each animal.

2:20. Adam's understanding of the nature of the animals he named only highlighted the differences that existed between him and the rest of God's creatures: no helper was found as his complement.

2:21. At what must have been a moment of loneliness in Adam's life, God stepped in to create one who would perfectly meet Adam's need. Because God took one of his ribs to use as His raw material, the woman would correspond perfectly—though not identically—to Adam. Like Adam, the woman possessed God's image. The fact that she was not taken either from the man's head or his foot may suggest that the woman was not to rule over the man (1Co 11:3), nor the man to oppress the woman (1Pe 3:7).

2:23. Adam's first recorded words express his delight with God's handiwork and his recognition of the unique suitability of God's last recorded creation in the creation accounts. As with no other piece of divine craftsmanship, this one was singularly suited for the man, being bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Adam expresses dominion by choosing a name for God's final created being, but the name he chose suggests that he viewed her as his equal. The Hebrew term 'ishshah, woman, identifies her as the feminine complement to 'ish, the man.

2:24. God's timeless design for marriage is declared here. The one flesh relationship certainly involves sexual union, but also includes a husband and wife coming together in spiritual, mental, and emotional harmony.

2:25. Because the devastating effects of sin had not yet ravaged nature or humanity, there was no need for clothing. Adam and Eve could live without the barriers needed to shield them from their environment and each other without a sense of shame. Later, in the time of the patriarchs and kings, clothing was associated with dignity. Accordingly, prisoners of war were not permitted to wear any clothing, slaves wore very little clothing, and higher social classes wore more clothing than anyone else in society.

Matthew 5:27-30

5:27. Once again Jesus quotes one of the Ten Commandments, in this instance, the seventh commandment—do not commit adultery. "Adultery" was a terrible offense because it violated another person and it broke the marriage covenant, a symbol of the relationship of God and His people.

5:28. Much like Jesus did in the previous paragraph about anger, He expounds on the commandment, showing its intent. "Lust" is a heart issue, the center of a person's identity.

5:29-30. The right side was considered more powerful and important at that time, thus to point out the “right eye” and the “right hand” as the objects of sin is an exaggeration of the act itself. The solution was equally as troubling for His audience: to “cut” them off. This stressed the importance of sexual purity.