

SEXUAL ETHICS

Key question

How are Christians to respond to the changing sexual ethics?

Key text

I Corinthians 6:13

“Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food; but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body.”

Introduction

There is good news and bad news. The good news is that the sexual revolution is over. The bad news is that the wrong side won.

1. The evangelical church faces three challenges.
 - a. It has too often given in to the culture of sex as therapeutic, a self-serving recreational right. It must understand and seriously hold traditional Christian values.
 - b. It has failed to provide a positive and holistic sexual education. It must speak intelligently in defense of Biblical values.
 - c. Killing (excluding, marginalizing, neglecting) its wounded (those who struggle or fail).
2. Common misconceptions:
 - **The Bible has little to say about sex except “Don’t do it!”** The fact is, the Bible is laced with narratives, laws, and discourses on sexual matters. Much of the material is graphic, explicit, and reflective of the realistic consequences of behavior. One entire book (The Song of Solomon) is devoted to the sexual relationship between a man and woman.
 - **Sexual obsession is a big cultural problem in America.** Sexual obsession is not the problem. It is the way our culture treats human sexuality that is the problem. Our culture has treated sexual acts as animalistic impulses that are best understood through the prism of biological evolution. It has challenged any emphasis on gender distinctives in favor of a model of androgyny.
 - **Sexuality is only or primarily about sexual acts.** Human sexuality includes the very broad topic of gender with the distinctive natures and roles of men and women.
 - **Sexiness is primarily physical.** If this were true then only the beautiful people would be sexually fulfilled. Sexiness is linked to being confident about our gender

distinctives. For men it means being significant, confident, and self-sacrificing. For women it means being responsive, soft, and secure.

- **Sexual satisfaction is diminished with long-term committed relationships.** Studies have repeatedly indicated that couples in a secure long-term relationship and from a conservative religious background have registered the highest level of sexual satisfaction.
 - **Sexuality is a primary hindrance to spirituality.** The early church believed that this was true but the Biblical text suggests that there is a very close relationship between human sexuality and human spirituality. Human sexual behavior can be a significant part of spiritual development while at the same time it can also be (when wrongly understood or used) a source of spiritual destruction.
 - **Sexuality and family can be separated.** Sexuality is at the heart of family – marriage, procreation, environment for learning what it means to be male and female.
 - **Sexual sins are unforgivable.** Sexual sins are nearly universal and are among the most common examples of forgiveness in the ministry of Jesus.
3. The Biblical teaching on the subject of human sexuality
- a. It is all about **power to love**. God's plan for society includes families that are built upon sexual energy channeled through the social security, and spiritual intimacy of marriage. Sexuality, spirituality, and security are connected by the covenant of marriage.
 - b. Human sexuality is a **symbol** of Christ and the church. Eph.5:32
 - c. Human sexuality is a point of personal **worship** through chastity (I Cor.6:13,18). The human sexual drive is not just for procreation as it is in animals. It also is linked to core impulses in the soul for intimate community and unconditional love. It is therefore has a deeply spiritual dimension that can displace the role of Christ's Spirit if expressed outside of God's plan.
 - d. Human sexuality is a laboratory of love in the **family**. Eph.5:22-6:4
 - e. It includes:
 - Power of procreation (bringing into this world immortal souls).
 - Celebrating gender distinctives where men and women learn and live out what it means to be manly and womanly.
 - The joy of learning to love, understand Christ's relationship with the church, and disciplined worship. The sexual energy of life drives us to be more fully mature in our experience of being human.
 - Teaching children to give and receive love.
4. Sexuality and boundaries
- a. **Chastity** (self-mastery) is the power, which frees love from selfishness and aggressiveness.
 - b. Sexual acts without the **security of marriage** miss the mark of God's designed purpose and are sinful. An important part of the experience of love includes the covenant of social spiritual commitment and the exclusivity that it implies.

- c. Gender distinctives with distinct roles and responsibilities are to be respected as an important part of human sexuality.

A. Everyone is sexy. Sexuality is one of the major characteristics of our humanity.

1. This is not only the conclusion of Sigmund Freud but it is the testimony of Scripture as well. The first things said of mankind in the creation account of the Bible is that he is made in *“the image of God”* (He is spiritual). The second thing said is that he is a sexual being - *“male and female He created them”* (Gen.1:27)
2. Every human life (immortal soul) starts with a sexual act.
3. Sexual ethics are related to man’s spiritual life.
 - a. In the **Old Testament**, idolatry is compared to whoredom.
 - b. In the **New Testament**, the Church is described as the Bride of Christ.
4. Sexual ethics are grounded in natural law.
 - **Sex is designed** (it is not simply the product of natural evolution)
 - – **for the purpose** (it is not just for reproduction, and recreation)
 - – **of a loving family** (emotional bonding of marriage, security for children, training ground for love)
 - – **personal spiritual worship** (the human body is a temple that glorifies God when it is disciplined and chided in sexual matters)
 - – **reflection of Christ’s relationship with the church.**

NOTE: Development of human maturity requires acceptance and understanding of one’s own sexuality.

B. The sexual revolution is over - and the wrong side won.

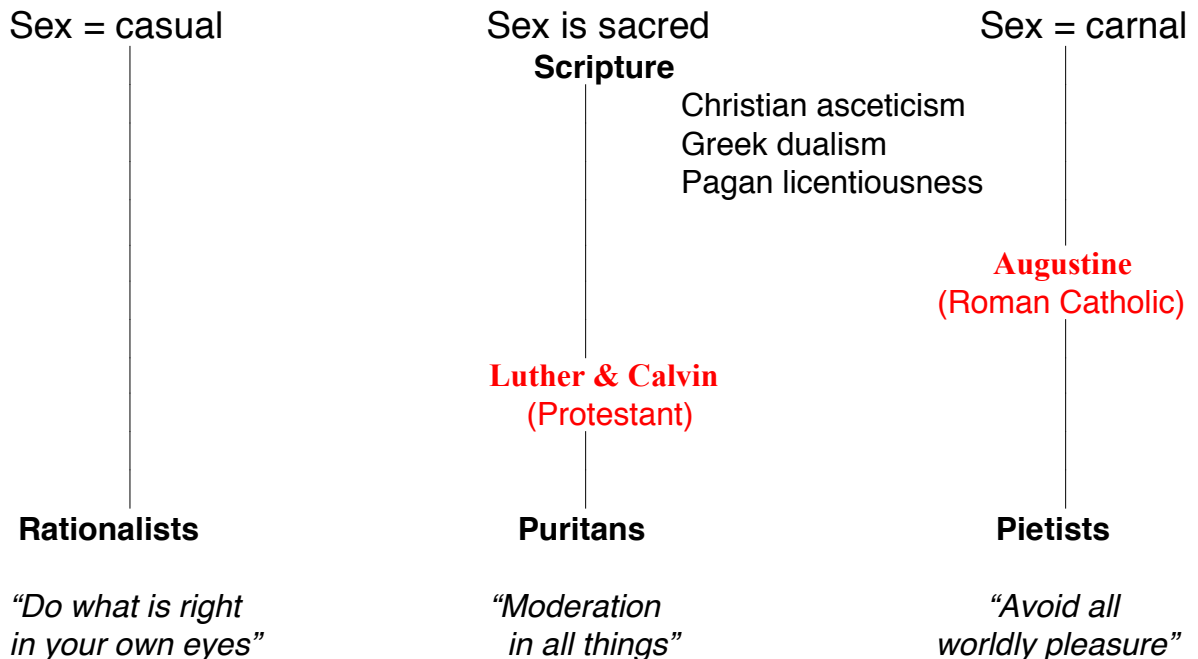
1. By definition a revolution is against something - in this case the **“sexophobia”** of the Christian church throughout much of its history. This was probably linked to the sexism of the time. The church fathers argued that the very caption *“woman”* or *“female”* (*femina* in latin) was in itself kind of obvious linguistic proof that women were inferior to men. They argued that the word *“femina”* consisted of the two words *fe = fides* (faith) and *minus* (less), thus *“femina”* meant *“of lesser faith”*
 - a. Church fathers like **Chrysostom** and **Jerome** spoke of sex in demeaning ways, even in marriage. This was motivated not so much from Scripture as from Greek dualism which distinguished the body from the spirit, the first being worldly and the latter heavenly.
 - b. **Origin** (CE 250) taught that sex was inherently evil and went so far as to castrate himself to avoid lust.
 - c. **Augustine** (CE 450) taught that sex was a part of the original sin of Gen.3.
 - d. The earliest known papal decree, issued by Pope Siricius in 386, attempted (without much success) to forbid church elders from making love with their wives. Scholar Reay Tannahill says that early Christian leaders made sex and "sin" synonymous. "It was Augustine who epitomized a general feeling among the church fathers that the act of intercourse was fundamentally disgusting," she says. "Arnobius called it filthy and degrading, Methodius unseemly, Jerome unclean, Tertullian shameful,

Ambrose defilement." Reay Tannahill, *Sex in History* (Briarcliff Manor, N.Y.: Stein & Day, 1980), p. 141

Episcopal priest Raymond Lawrence wrote in a national United Methodist journal: "The churches are in danger of evolving into havens for the sexually suppressed or, worse, communities of profound hypocrisy." *Quarterly Review*, Summer 1985.

NOTE: In her zeal to hold the line against immorality, the church miserably failed to embrace or project a positive view of sex. This failure contributed to the sexual pressure cooker that finally exploded in the form of the sexual revolution.

A historical survey of the Church's attitude toward human sexuality.



2. During the 1960s & 1970s secular social scientists describe this shift as a transition from a **"moralistic society"** to a **"naturalistic society"**.
 - a. Characteristics of a "moralistic society":
 1. Sex is **evil**.
 2. Sex is for **procreation** only.
 3. **Women** are presumed to lack sexual desire and have few rights while "boys will be boys".
 4. Sex is not to be **talked** about.
 5. There are **a lot of restrictions** on what is proper and what is not. These are usually tied to religious taboos.
 - b. Characteristics of a "naturalistic society":
 1. Sex is **good**.

2. Sex is for **pleasure** as well as procreation.
 3. Women and men are **equal**.
 4. Sex is freely **talked** about. Sex is no longer the “S” word.
 5. There are **few restrictions** on what is proper conduct. **NOTE:** Two exceptions - incest and the general requirement that sexual intercourse eventually fall within the confines of marriage. These seem to be universally respected.
 6. Some social scientists go so far as to suggest that all sexual activity is socially learned and not ascribed by religious dogma or the nature of gender.
3. What **major changes** in sexual values have taken place?

NEW ROLES

- a. **The decline of the double standard.** Women can be sexually assertive.
- b. **Women share leadership with men** - in the work place, church, & home.

NEW OPTIONS

- c. **Sex for pleasure.** Sexual expression is a form of recreation.
- d. **Homosexual life styles.** That which was formerly viewed as perverse was now seen as a normal option.
 1. Though the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of disorders in its diagnostic handbook, it recently added ISD (Inhibited Sexual Desire).
 2. Among its sexually liberated readership, Psychology Today reports an astonishing 28% of men and 40% of women hold back from sexual intimacy “due to a lack of desire” It is a significant expose of the sexual revolution that, according to this study, “among men, the largest proportion who lack desire (41%) have had at least seven extramarital affairs.”
- e. **Open marriage.** Free sexual expression outside the bounds of marriage.

NEW MORAYS

- f. **Acceptance of a new open sexual ethic.**
 1. College **women** who feel that premarital sexual intercourse is immoral has changed from 70% (1965) to 20% (1975).
 2. In a recent Harris poll the following facts were reported:

“It is all right for adults dating regularly to have sex.”			“It is important for a woman to be a virgin when she marries.”		
AGREE			AGREE		
age	Men	Women	age	Men	Women
65+	50%	28%	65+	51%	75%
50-64	60%	46%	50-64	51%	70%
30-49	70%	64%	30-49	24%	39%
18-29	80%	72%	18-29	24%	30%
 3. A 1989 GALLUP POLE indicated that 69% of college students approve of sexual relations before marriage. Twenty six percent report having sexual intercourse regularly and with 5 or more partners.

4. A random sample of white undergraduate students at Michigan State U. indicated that 74% of the men & 57% of the women had had premarital intercourse. This has more than doubled with respect to women in 10 years.

NOTE: Other studies have revealed the following life characteristics of those who are most likely to engage in premarital intercourse. - Male, Liberally minded, Higher educated, reciprocal love relationships, Protestant, Infrequent church attendance, Black, Divorced parents, Peer pressure.

- g. **Sex with successive partners.** A 1987 Redbook survey indicated that 32% of its readers had 6 or more lovers.
- h. **Casual sex** – Sexual relations without a commitment.
- i. **Our culture’s misplaced obsession with sex.**
- Revenues of the sex and porn industry in 2006 were bigger than the NFL, NBA, and Major League Baseball combined. \$13,300,000,000.
 - 60% of all website visits are sexual in nature.
 - “Sex” is the No.1 search term used at search engine sites.
 - The U.S. Customs Service estimates that there are more than 100,000 websites offering child porn.
 - Hollywood releases 11,000 adult movies per year (20 times the mainstream movies production).
4. **What can we expect in the future?** If the rest of the world (which tends to be more secular in its values) is any indicator, we can expect the trends to increase.
- a. About 70% of Italians have had sex by age 15. In the U.S. it is about 30%.
 - b. In the Soviet Union, 87% of men and 60% of women have sex before marriage.
 - c. Cohabitation in Sweden is four times as popular as it is in the U.S.

C. Is a new ethic in order? Some “Christians” think so.

The arguments used, by some church leaders, for a new sexual ethic.

1. **MODERN SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING** and changes in living styles make traditional (non-scientific, pre-modern) approaches to sexual ethics untenable for the Christian today.
 - a. Monogamy is not hard wired into the human brain but rather is a choice.
 - b. In short, if it does not cause cancer, lead to depression or hurt the community, it is ethically permissible.
 - c. **Basic to this argument** is the conviction that empirically valid data describing life in the world today **demand changes** in sexual ethics. (See: “SEXUALITY AND THE HUMAN COMMUNITY”: A report of a Task Force of the Council of Church and Society of the United Presbyterian Church, 1970: *There is little medical or psychological evidence that premarital coital experience between persons who subsequently marry is necessarily damaging either to their emotional health or to their personal adjustment.*) The implication is - If its scientifically acceptable, it should be spiritually acceptable.
 - d. **The new source of moral authority is natural (empirical) science.**
 - A theology of sexuality derived from Biblical revelation has been replaced by “a sexual theology” based on an evolutionary model from natural biology.

- Some theologians are looking at human sexuality and gender studies as a source of spiritual enlightenment.

Response: There is a difference between the truths of science and the popular opinions of scientists.

1. The claims that are made are **very general**. The difficulty of carrying out authentic scientific investigations to establish cause and effect in the area of personal relationships is well known.
2. It seems that some empirical evidence is **conveniently ignored**, i.e., the increasing divorce rates in a sexually permissive society. See also F.R. Gardner's "ABORTION: THE PERSONAL DILEMMA." Eerdmans, 1972, p. 256:

"There are those who point out, correctly, that other societies have different patterns of relationships between the sexes, patterns which often approve of premarital intercourse, and sometimes permit multiple partners. What they do not go on to point out is that the quality of family life in these societies is inferior, both as far as the status of women is concerned and in romantic love to our ideals. I write from experience of having worked among both polygamous and polyandrous peoples. Our traditional ideal of virginity before marriage and chastity within marriage can only be replaced by practices which are not only lower on an ethical standard, but yield less satisfaction to their practitioners." R. Roy ASA Journal 26, 1974

3. **Science is limited in what it can teach us.**

NOTE: Only material processes can be measured and observed. Science is like a net drawn through the ocean that can catch only the larger fish. When the fisherman assumes that what the net didn't catch doesn't exist he is wrong.

4. **Scientists are sensitive to the political - social climate of their culture.**

NOTE: There is a difference between what science can tell us and what scientists say. Some of what is said or published is determined by political - economic factors rather than what the data indicates.

2. **BIBLICAL TEACHINGS** on sex are either unclear and/or not applicable to modern life.

- a. The real message of the Bible is a **primitive** (misinformed) attempt to articulate what we now understand through the enlightenment of modern science.
- b. **Some theologians** view legitimate Christian **authority** as centered, not external to the believer (Church or Scripture), but in the believer's personal experience with God through life's "encounters."
- c. We are told that the problems of **proper interpretation** seem to paralyze the modern mind and bog it down in seemingly impossible contradictions and enigmas.
 1. While the **Old Testament** forbids adultery, it also forbids many other things that are no longer taken seriously (property, lending, dietary laws).
 2. The correct **meaning of the original Greek** word translated "*fornication*," "*adultery*," etc. are most probably referring to "pagan practices of cultic and commercialized prostitution."

Response: Investigation of these arguments soon reveals that what is at stake **is not a problem in exegesis**, but rather two quite different views of the nature and authority of the Biblical Revelation.

3. The authentic application of the Gospel to modern life calls for a response dictated by **LOVE, NOT BY LAW**, and hence for radical changes where Love overrules Law in the modern situation.
 - a. We are already living out a more liberated sexual lifestyle and we know that guilt is very destructive to our health so it makes sense to rethink the traditional ethic.
 - b. It is often claimed that sexual sins and crimes are caused by the prohibition against them and that Christians bear a heavy weight of guilt for their role in this historical process. **We should concentrate on communicating what love is really all about** and avoid all absolute prohibitions concerning sexual conduct.
 - c. It is argued that Paul, particularly in his letter to the **Galatians**, conclusively demonstrates that grace overrides law totally.
 - d. It is argued that **Jesus Himself** repeatedly broke the letter of the law in order to meet the requirements of love (see Matt.12:1-12; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 13:10-17; Luke 4:1-6; Jn.8:1-11).

Response:

1. **Love and sexual expression are not necessarily synonymous.** Many in recent years caught up in the despair of life without God have sought to deify sex as the ultimate experience.
2. The Bible seems repeatedly to frame sexual regulations in the context of a simple formula—**sex minus security equals sin.**
3. It is simply **not true** that the Scripture in **condemning legalism advocates radical relativism** (see John 14:15; Rom.6:1-2, 13:10; I Cor.6:12; Gal.5:13-21).
4. It is wrongly assumed in each of the above arguments that what seems to be **common behavior today is also what ought** to take place (ethics via the democratic method). Following are some examples:
 - a. To be true to our Lord we should try to “feed” the sexually hungry, not give them the Bible ONLY.
 - b. The empirical data show that today a high percentage of concerned, loving, active Christians have had wholly positive experience with premarital sex; some equally with premarital abstinence. Both are options for Christians today.
5. The evolutionary thrust of history leaves us no doubt as to the outcome. The Church will sooner or later accede to Society’s patterns and THEN find the rationale to justify co-marital, loving (including sexuality) with persons other than the spouse . . . The question is: shouldn’t the Church lead the way? (from R. Roy, “Is There a Christian Basis for a Sexual Revolution,” *Journal ASA*, 26, 1974)
4. Other factors that have fueled the sexual revolution.
 - a. **Political privacy rights** – no public shame. “What I do is no body else’s business.”
 - b. **Modern medicine** – no disease. Sexually transmitted diseases have or can be treated if not eliminated.
 - c. **Birth control** – no pregnancy.

- d. **The automobile** – no parental control.
- e. **Freudian Psychology** – no guilt.
- f. **Women’s liberation** – no double standard.
- g. **Media standards** – no stigma.

D. The foundation of human sexuality is in the creation accounts of Genesis.

- a. **Genesis 1:27-28** “And God created man in His own image, in the **image of God** He created him; **male and female** He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, “**Be fruitful and multiply**, and fill the earth””
 - Humans are first described as spiritual and sexual.
 - Humans are to share God’s work in bringing immortal souls into this world.
- b. **Genesis 2:24** “For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become **one flesh**.”
 - Human sexuality is to serve the purpose of uniting a man and a woman together in an intimate, secure, and life long covenant.

E. The teaching of Jesus must be read in its theological context.

- 1. **Matthew 5:27-30** “²⁷ You have heard that it was said, ‘*You shall not commit adultery*’; ²⁸ but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. ²⁹ And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell.”
 - a. Jesus’ teaching makes the following points clear.
 - Lust is a form of adultery and just as serious as an offense to the moral Law of Moses.
 - The consequences of sexual immorality (including lust) are so serious that avoiding it calls for the most extreme measures.
 - There is no hint or offer of grace or of help in obeying the commandment, other than cutting off any offending body part.
 - b. These observations (above) leave the reader with one of three conclusions.
 - 1. Jesus expects his Jewish readers to avoid all immorality (including lust) if they are to avoid hell. But this presents a problem when attempts are made to harmonize this text with others like John 4 and 8.
 - 2. Jesus expects Christians to live chaste and pure sexual lives. But this view demands that Jesus’ teaching not be taken at face value. Those who take this view must make two assumptions.
 - Believers are equipped with the power of Christ’s Spirit to live chaste lives.
 - Those who do not live chaste lives must question the authenticity of their salvation.

- It is often assumed that missteps have and will happen but they are forgiven if confessed and repented of. In other words, Jesus demands are not absolute. They assume an unspoken gracious provision.
3. Jesus is defining the demands of the Law so as to shut everyone up under a cloud of condemnation with the expectation that they will then respond to the gracious provision of the Word of the Cross atoning for sin. This view makes the following assumptions. But this view demand that Paul's understanding of the tutorial role of the Law be read back into the teaching of Jesus.
 - Jesus' words are to be taken at face value (literally). There is no grace offered.
 - Paul's explanation of the purpose of that Law as a tutor (Gal.3-4) is to provide a context for understanding Jesus' teaching.
 - Jesus expects that all who hear these words will be undone and unable to meet the demands of the Law. They will then hunger and thirst for the "righteousness of faith" that can only be found by trusting Christ who fulfilled the demands of the Law "for" all who believe.
 2. For information on Jesus' teaching with respect to divorce and remarriage go to apptoteach.org theology file #409
 3. Jesus forgives those condemned by the Law for sexual sin. This suggests that the teaching in Matthew 5 is to be taken in the context of an exposition of the purpose of the Law as Paul reveals in Gal.3-4. (Point #3 above)
 - John 4:1-42 (the Samaritan woman)
 - John 8:1-11(the woman caught in adultery)
 - Luke 7:36-50 (the sinful woman who anointed Jesus)

F. Paul's sexual ethic is the lens through which we read the Scripture.

1. The vocabulary of sexual sin from **I Cor.6** "9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God."
 - **"fornicators"** – (PORNOI) refers to any kind of illicit sexual intercourse.
 - **"idolaters"** – (EIDOLOLATRIA) literally meaning "to serve idols." It is not limited to ceremonial service but also may include a lifestyle of following the dictates of anything but God.
 - **"adulterers"** – (MOIXOI) Those who have sexual relations with another person's mate.
 - **"effeminate"** – (MALAKOI) literally meaning "soft to the touch." It came to refer to the passive role in a homosexual union. This term and the one that follows are somewhat obscure with the result that they are controversial. Gay activists insist that they refer to male prostitution only and not homosexuality generally.
 - **"homosexuals"** – (ARSENOKOITAI) This word probably refers to the active role in a homosexual relationship. Note: Fourteen out of the first fifteen Roman Emperors practiced unnatural vice. The ancient world was riddled with homosexuality. Both Socrates and Plato were involved.

2. What motivation does Paul use in calling sinners to repentance? **I Cor.6:9-20**
- Paul does not suggest that fear of losing one's salvation or covenant relationship with God is the issue. Verses 9-11 describe the Corinthian believers who "were" (vs.11) a part of the culture distinguished by sexual sin. Through faith in Christ they were "ceremonially (legally)" justified, sanctified, and washed just as the Levitical Priests of the Old Covenant. See theology files **#107,#108,#706**
 - Paul suggests that while sexuality is a natural part of life, immorality is not.
 - Paul appeals to the believer's freedom and common sense. Vs.12. Freedom from the Law's condemnation must not lead to bondage to the flesh. (**Gal.3:12-14** "12 However the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, he who practices them shall live by them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us. 13 For you were called to freedom, brethren, only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."")
 - Paul notes that because our bodies will be resurrected they are important. Vs.13-14
 - Paul appeals to the believer's relationship with God "in Christ" as the basis for repentance. Vs.15-17. (See **Rom.6:1-23** for a more extensive exposition of this point.)
 - Paul exhorts the believer to "flee" immorality. He does not suggest the believer flee sexuality. Nor does he suggest that they can or should check out of an immoral society (5:9-10) but that they not feed or sow to the flesh (**Gal.5:16-26; 6:8**).

G. Sexual sin is unique and serious but not unforgivable.

1. Sexual sin gets detailed attention in **Lev.18**

"¹The LORD spoke to Moses, ²Tell the Israelites: I am the LORD your God. ³You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes. ⁴Follow my rules, and live by my standards. I am the LORD your God. ⁵Live by my standards, and obey my rules. You will have life through them. I am the LORD. ⁶Never have sexual intercourse **with anyone related to you by blood**. I am the LORD.

⁷Never have sexual intercourse **with your mother**. She is your own mother. Never have sexual intercourse with her.

⁸Never have sexual intercourse with **your stepmother**. She is related to you through your father.

⁹Never have sexual intercourse with **your stepsister**, whether she is your father's daughter or your mother's daughter. It makes no difference whether or not she was born in your house.

¹⁰Never have sexual intercourse with **your granddaughter**, whether she is your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, because she is related to you.

¹¹Never have sexual intercourse with **a daughter of your father and his wife**. She is your own sister.

¹²Never have sexual intercourse with **your father's sister**. She is your paternal aunt.

¹³Never have sexual intercourse with **your mother's sister**. She is your maternal aunt.

¹⁴Never have sexual intercourse with the **wife of your father's brother**. She, too, is

your aunt.

15 Never have sexual intercourse with **your daughter-in-law**. She is your son's wife. Never have sexual intercourse with her.

16 Never have sexual intercourse with **your sister-in-law**. She is your brother's wife.

17 Never have sexual intercourse with a **woman and her daughter or a woman and her granddaughter**. They are related. Doing this is perverted.

18 While your wife is living, **never marry her sister** as a rival wife and have sexual intercourse with her.

20 Never have sexual intercourse with **your neighbor's wife** and become unclean with her.

22 Never have sexual intercourse **with a man as with a woman**. It is disgusting.

23 Never have sexual intercourse with **any animal** and become unclean with it. A woman must never offer herself to an animal for sexual intercourse. It is unnatural.”

2. Adultery as Idolatry

- a. There is a close relationship in Biblical literature between idolatry and illicit sexual activity (temple prostitution). There seems to be a preoccupation in modern culture with not just sexuality but illicit sexuality.
- b. Hosea's story (his unfaithful wife) is a picture of Israel's idolatry.
- c. In Eph.6 Paul indicates that marriage is a picture of Christ and the church.
- d. In Matt.7:21-23 Jesus declares that he never “knew” those who were religious but unholy. The expression “know” suggests not an intellectual perception but an intimate relationship. The expression is often used of “sexual union” in the Old Testament (Gen.4:1).
- e. The references to idolatry and immorality in Revelation – 14:8; 17:2,4; 18:3; 19:2.

3. The Animal self and the Diabolical self.

“Finally, though I have had to speak at some length about sex, I want to make it as clear as I possibly can that the centre of Christian morality is not here. If anyone thinks that Christians regard unchastity as the supreme vice, he is quite wrong. The sins of the flesh are bad, but they are the least bad of all sins. All the worst pleasures are purely spiritual: the pleasure of putting other people in the wrong, of bossing and patronizing and spoiling sport, and back-biting; the pleasures of power, of hatred. For there are two things inside me, competing with the human self, which I must try to become. They are the Animal self, and the Diabolical self. The Diabolical self is the worse of the two. That is why a cold, self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church may be far nearer to hell than a prostitute. But, of course, it is better to be neither.” (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

H. Gender roles are a big part of human sexuality.

1. Much of our human energy is linked to our sexual identity as male and female. This means that we are energized as we sense our gender identity with its distinct roles, responsibilities, and longings.
 - a. Men are drawn to relationships, activities, vocations, and situations that make them feel like men. This gives them needed and desired energy. Men tend to be conquest oriented in athletics, business, relationships, etc. Men want to make a difference, they want to fix things, they want to be respected for being significant.

- b. In the same way women are drawn to circumstances that make them feel like women. Women tend to be nurturing in their orientation. They find energy in doing things that enhance their femininity (much of which may be culturally conditioned). They want to be cherished, they want to feel secure (protected), they want to support and nurture.
 - c. It is in this context that the Biblical teaching on gender roles in home, and church ministry are significant. They fit the needed encouragement to celebrate gender distinctives.
2. As American culture down-plays gender distinctives and roles it takes away significant points of gender affirmation and the energy that is released with it. This leaves fewer and fewer places to acquire and unleash this energy. Thus we find an inordinate and unhealthy emphasis on physical sexual activity (fornication) as a channel for affirmation and energy.
3. The church does well to respect gender and its unique role in energizing people for life and service. One of the ways in which we can fight the pressure of a promiscuous society is by finding ways of affirming gender in a broad way.

CONCLUSION

For more information check out this helpful web site

http://www.carm.org/questions_sex.htm

I Cor.6:13 *“Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food; but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body.”*

The Corinthians argued that natural appetites and desires should not be confused with spiritual values. Food offered to idols could be eaten because the idol was nothing (ch.8). The same should be true of sexual appetites. Modern man would agree. Paul doesn't. In a nutshell we have here the conflict of our age. What is God's design and how does it relate to what seems “natural” to us?

NOTE: IT IS OF LITTLE VALUE TO ARGUE THAT TEMPORAL HAPPINESS OR PUBLIC CONSENSUS OR POLITICAL FASHION OR POPULAR SCIENCE IS THE TEST OF ETHICAL TRUTH. THE REAL TEST IS SCRIPTURE.

The Colorado Statement on Biblical Sexual Morality The Council on Biblical Sexual Ethics

God intends sex to be a source of satisfaction, honor, and delight to those who enjoy it within the parameters of the moral standards He has established. Biblically speaking, human sexuality is both a *gift* and a *responsibility*. At creation, the gift of sex was among those things God declared to be “very good” (Gen.1:31). What's more, the sexual relationship is invested with a profound significance in that it brings together a man and a woman within the context of the shared image of God (Gen.1:27). Because sex is God's idea, and because it touches the image of God in human life, it is very important that the holiness of sexual behavior be diligently preserved. In fact, sexual behavior is moral only when it is holy (Eph.1:4; 5:3; 1 Thess.4:3-7; 1 Pet.1:14-16).

Not only is sex good in itself; it is also given to serve good purposes. At creation God made it very clear that sex functions in two ways: it generates “fruit” (Gen.1:28); and it enables relational “union” (Gen. 2:24). In other words, sexuality does not exist merely for its own sake. Rather, sex fosters human nurturing, both through the union of husband and wife and also through the enrichment of society through the building of families and communities. God also made sex to reflect the mysterious spiritual relationship He will one day enjoy with all redeemed humanity following the wedding supper of the Lamb (Rev.19:7, 9).

According to God’s plan, sexual intimacy is the exclusive prerogative of husband and wife within the context of marriage. Sexual morality, on the other hand, is everyone’s concern. It matters to single individuals, to families, and to society. Most of all, it matters to God.

Sex that honors God’s guidelines and standards is pleasurable. He designed sexual activity to be physically enjoyable, emotionally satisfying, psychologically fulfilling, and spiritually meaningful because He delights in the joys and pleasures of His creatures (Song of Sol.4:1-16). Men and women who honor God’s standards for sexual behavior please Him as well as themselves (1 Cor.6:20; also note analogy in Isa.62:5).

But while sex is designed to be pleasing, not all sexual pleasure is ethical. Feelings are extremely unreliable as guides to the morality of sex. As a matter of fact, it is possible for sinful men and women to experience a form of physical enjoyment and degrees of emotional, psychological, and spiritual fulfillment even in sexual conduct that God considers abhorrent. For this reason, the Bible gives many solemn warnings against appealing to human passion or lust as the basis for our definition of moral sex (Rom.1:24, 26; 13:13-14; 1 Thess.4:5; 2 Tim.2:22; 2 Pet.3:3; 1 John 2:15-17; Jude 18). Our sex lives are moral only when conducted according to God’s standards. When engaged in according to these guidelines, sexual activity is enriching, fulfilling, and eminently blessed.

We want to warn against deceptions that hinder or forestall this blessing of God upon our enjoyment of the wonderful gift of sex. We also want to help men and women understand God’s good plan for sexual conduct, and thereby to realize all the joy, satisfaction and honor God offers to sexual creatures made in His image.

Based on our understanding of biblical teaching, we make the following declarations. We do not claim that these declarations cover everything the Bible says on sexual morality. But we do believe they highlight standards that are critical for our time.

1. Desire and experience cannot be trusted as guidelines to the morality of sex (Rom. 8:5-8; 13:14; 1 Cor.2:14; 1 Thess.4:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:22; James 1:14; 1 John 2:15-16; Jude 19). Instead, the morality of sex is defined by God’s holiness(Lev. 20:7-21, 26; 1 Cor.6:18-19; Eph.1:4; 5:3; 1 Thess.4:3-7; Heb.13:4; 1 Pet.1:15-16).

Thus we affirm that men and women are free to enjoy sex in any way that honors God’s holiness. We affirm that God made sex to be physically enjoyable, emotionally satisfying, psychologically fulfilling and spiritually meaningful, and that only sex that honors God’s holiness can fully realize the complexity of His design at every level. We affirm that concepts of sexual morality founded upon anything other than God’s holiness always pervert God’s standards of sexual moral purity.

2. God's standard is moral purity in every thought about sex, as well as in every act of sex.

Sexual purity can be violated even in thoughts that never proceed to outward acts (Job 31:1; Matt.5:28; Phil.4:8; James 1:14-15). Sex must never be used to oppress, wrong or take advantage of anyone (1 Thess.4:6). Rape, incest, sexual abuse, pedophilia, voyeurism, prostitution and pornography always exploit and corrupt and must be condemned (Lev.18:7-10; 19:29; 2 Sam.13:1-22; Prov.6:26; 23:27; Matt.5:28; 1 Thess.4:3-7; 1 Pet.4:3; 2 Pet.2:13-14).

Thus we affirm that God requires sexual moral purity in thought as well as in deed. We affirm that sexual desire must be disciplined to be moral. We affirm that thoughts of indulging sexual desire by outward acts of sexual sin are inward sins of lust. We deny that stimulating lust by images of sexual sin can be moral at any age or under any circumstances. We believe that no sexual act can be moral if driven by desires that run contrary to the best interests of another human being. We believe no sexual act can be moral that treats persons as impersonal objects of sexual lust. We reject the idea that thoughts about engaging in sexual sin are not immoral if not expressed in outward acts. We reject the idea that pedophilia, voyeurism, prostitution or pornography can ever be justified.

3. God's standards for sexual moral purity are meant to protect human happiness

(Prov.5:18-19; 6:32-33; John 15:10-11), but sex is not an entitlement, nor is it needed for personal wholeness or emotional maturity.

Thus we affirm that unmarried singles who abstain from sex can be whole, mature persons, as pleasing to God as persons who are faithful in marriage. We affirm that sexual celibacy is a worthy state for mature men and women (Matt.19:12; 1 Cor.7:1, 8; Rev.14:4), and that lifelong celibacy can be a gift from God (1 Cor.7:7). We affirm that freedom for service without obligations to spouse and children is a worthy advantage of the unmarried life (1 Cor.7:32-35). We reject the idea that persons are not "whole" without sexual intercourse. We affirm that all persons, even unmarried teenagers, can rely on God for strength to resist sexual temptation (1 Cor.10:13). We deny that unmarried teenagers must have sex and cannot abstain from sex before marriage.

4. God calls some to a life of marriage, others to lifelong celibacy, but His calling to either state is a divine gift worthy of honor and respect (1 Cor.7:36-38). No one is morally compromised by following God's call to either state, and no one can justify opposing a divine call to either state by denying the moral goodness of that state.

Thus we affirm that God is pleased with those He calls to serve Him through the loving expression of sexual intimacy in marriage. We also affirm God is pleased with those He calls to special witness and service through a life of celibacy apart from marriage. We reject the idea that God's Word ever represents the loving expression of sexual intimacy in marriage as morally compromised.

5. Sexual behavior is moral only within the institution of heterosexual, monogamous marriage.

Marriage is secure only when established by an unconditional, covenantal commitment to lifelong fidelity (Gen.2:24; Mal.2:14-15; Matt.19:4-6; Mark 10:6-8; 1 Cor.7:39; Rom.7:2; Eph.5:31), and we should not separate what God has joined (Mal 2:14-15; Matt. 19:6; Mark 10:9). Christians continue to debate whether there are a limited number

of situations in which divorce is justifiable (Deut.24:1-4; Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor.7:15), but all agree that divorce is never God's ideal; lifelong commitment should always be the Christian's goal.

Thus we affirm that God established the moral definition of marriage, and that it should not be changed according to the dictates of culture, tradition, or personal preference. We deny that the morality of marriage is a matter of mere custom, or that it should be allowed to shift with the tide of cultural opinion or social practice. Furthermore, we affirm that God views marriage as an unconditional, covenantal relationship that joins sexual partners for life. We oppose the reduction of the moral obligations of marriage to a business contract. We do not believe that divorce for reasons of dissatisfaction, difficulty, or disappointment is morally justified.

6. Marriage protects the transcendent significance of personal sexual intimacy.

Heterosexual union in marriage expresses the same sort of holy, exclusive, permanent, complex, selfless and complementary intimacy that will some day characterize the union of Christ with the redeemed and glorified Church (Eph.5:28-33; 1 Cor.6:12-20).

Thus we affirm that intimate sexual union in marriage is a reflection of the intimate moral and spiritual union Christ will some day enjoy with the redeemed and glorified Church. We do not agree that the meaning and purpose of human sexuality can be defined on the basis of personal preference or opinion. We oppose the idea that sexual morality is simply a matter of culture, tradition, or individual aspiration.

7. Sex in marriage should be an act of love and grace that transcends the petty sins of human selfishness, and should be set aside only when both partners agree to do so, and then only for a limited time of concentrated prayer (1 Cor.7:3-5).

Thus we affirm that sex in marriage should be enjoyed without selfishness. We do not believe that sex should be withheld as a way of controlling, punishing, or manipulating the behavior of a spouse. We reject the morality of any sexual act, even in marriage, that does not express love seasoned by grace. We believe no sexual act can be moral if it is driven by selfishness or ambition for power.

8. Sex outside of marriage is never moral (Exod.20:14; Lev.18:7-17, 20; Deut.5:18; Matt.19:9,18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom.13:9; -1 Cor.6:13,18; Gal.5:19; Eph.5:3; 1 Thess.4:3; Heb. 13:4). This includes all forms of intimate sexual stimulation (such as foreplay and oral sex) that stir up sexual passion between unmarried partners (Matt.5:27-28; 2 Tim.2:22). Such behavior offends God (Rom.1:24; 1 Thess.4:8) and often causes physical and emotional pain and loss in this life (Prov.5:3-14). Refusal to repent of sexual sin may indicate that a person has never entered into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ (Rom.1:32; 1 Cor.6:9-10; Eph.5:3-5; Jude 13; Rev.22:15).

Thus we affirm that God's blessing rests on sexual intimacy only when it occurs within the boundaries of marriage. We deny that sex outside of marriage is justified for any reason. We reject the idea that sexual intimacy outside of marriage can be moral if partners are honest, consenting, or sufficiently committed. We oppose the portrayal of sexual sin as a way of enhancing the popular appeal of entertainment. We reject the idea that sex between

unmarried teenagers is acceptable if it is “safe.” And we do not believe that churches should welcome into fellowship any person who willfully refuses to turn away from the sin of living in a sexual relationship outside of marriage.

9. **The Old and New Testaments uniformly condemn sexual contact between persons of the same sex** (Lev.18:22; 20:13; Rom.1:26-27; 1 Cor.6:9; 1 Tim.1:10); and God has decreed that no one can ever excuse homosexual behavior by blaming his or her Creator (Gen.2:24; Rom.1:24-25).

Thus we affirm that moral sex is always heterosexual in nature. We affirm that God gives strength to His people when they ask Him for help in resisting immoral sexual desires, including desires for homosexual sex. We affirm that God has perfect knowledge concerning human sexual biology and made no mistake in prohibiting homosexual sex without qualification or exception. We deny the claim that science can justify the morality of homosexual behavior. We reject the idea that homosexual attraction is a gift from God (James 1:13). We deny the idea that homosexual relationships are as valid as heterosexual relationships. We do not agree with those who claim that it is sinful to make moral judgments that favor heterosexual behavior over homosexual behavior.

10. **The moral corruption of sexual sin can be fully forgiven through repentance and faith in Christ’s atoning work** (1 Cor.6:9-11; 1 John 1:9), but physical and psychological scars caused by sexual sin cannot always be erased in this life.

Thus we affirm that God fully forgives all who repent of sexual sin. We believe that relationships broken by sexual sin can be restored through genuine repentance and faith. We deny that there is any sort of sexual sin God cannot forgive. We oppose the idea that victims of sexual infidelity or abuse should never forgive those who have sinned against them.

11. **Christians must grieve with and help those who suffer hard-ship caused by sexual immorality, even when it is caused by their own acts of sin** (Rom.12:15; Luke 19:10). But we must give aid in ways that do not deny moral responsibility for sexual behavior (John 8:11).

Thus we affirm that God calls Christians to love all who suffer social isolation, poverty, illness, or the burdens of unplanned pregnancy and single parenting, whether or not it was caused by their own sexual sin. We believe Christ set an example of loving ministry to those who suffer from the results of their own acts of sin. We reject the idea that our obligation to alleviate human suffering is valid only if such help is “deserved.”