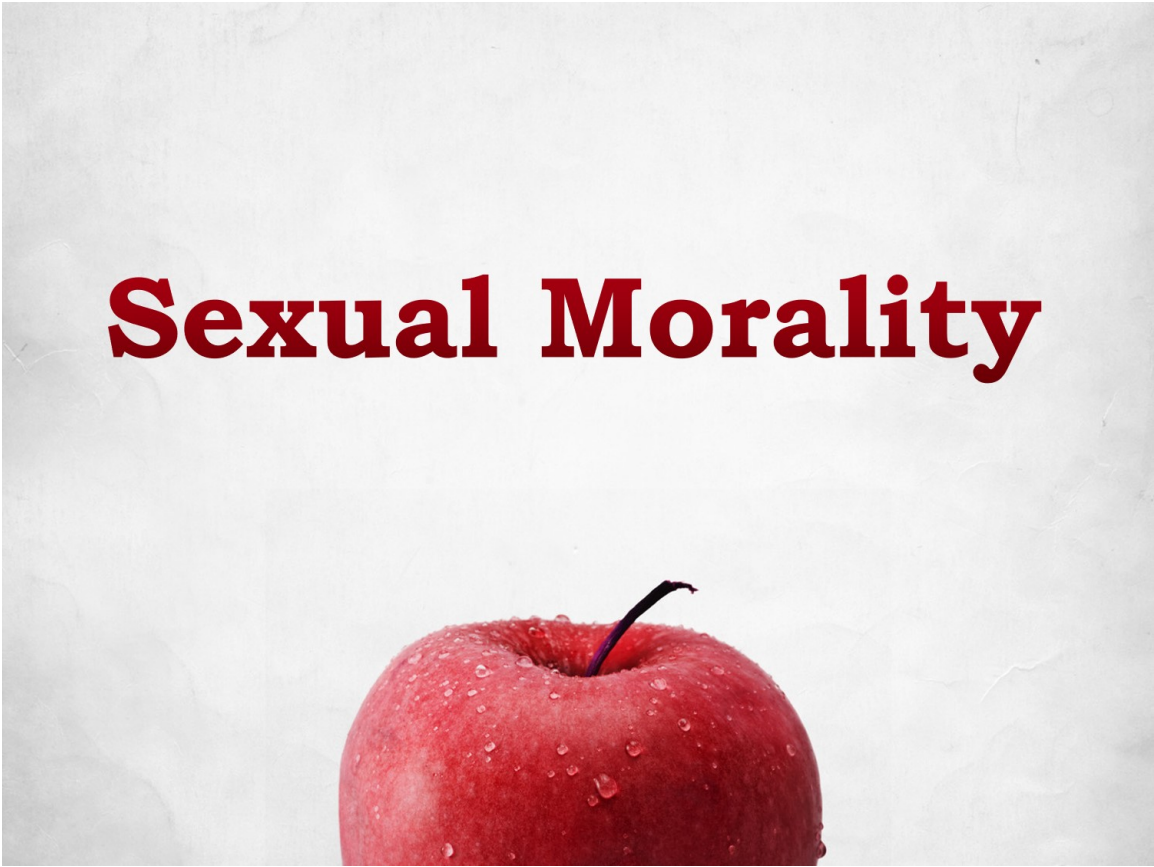


Sexual Morality



By my count, we are nearing the end of our series of half-hour studies we might hold with an unbeliever or a new convert. After today, I have three sermon topics remaining, one relating to instruction in righteousness, and two that are miscellaneous studies. Today, though, we are going to turn our attention to something that we must discuss with everyone who has recently obeyed the gospel—the subject of sexuality.

If there is any sin that our society loves, it is sexual sin. Practices that were hidden in shame during my parents' time are now accepted and even celebrated by a majority of Americans. There are millions of people in our country who would be deeply offended if they heard me say what I'm about to say. Nonetheless, our job isn't to win popularity contests. It's to declare the whole counsel of God, and if somebody doesn't like that counsel, that's on them. Without further ado, then, let's explore the Bible's teaching on sexual morality.

This study must begin with GOD'S PATTERN for intimate relationships. Jesus sets out this pattern in Mark 10:6-9. I've heard it said that when the Treasury Department trains Secret Service agents to detect counterfeit money, they don't do that by showing them examples of counterfeits. Instead, they have them study genuine money, and anything that doesn't have those characteristics is counterfeit.

In the same way, the best way for us to understand Bible teaching on sexuality is to look at the genuine article of God's plan. It's very simple. God makes us male and female, joins us in marriage, and in that marital relationship, we become one flesh. That's it. Full stop. Any sexual activity that does not involve one man and one woman, and anything that does not take place in marriage, is not according to God's will.

This includes even so-called same-sex marriage. There are many today, some of whom are even quite prominent, who will claim that their homosexual relationship is sanctified because they have been "married". I bear these people no ill will, but they are plainly wrong. It's easy for us to tell what God's intent for marriage is by looking at His design. He has designed us as males and females, and that design reveals His intent for male and female to go together.

By contrast, when we consider two males or two females, it is clear that God has not designed them to go together. Any union between them is contrary to His will, and regardless of whether they claim to be married or not, it will not receive His blessing.

This is important because the Scriptures also teach us that God will bring JUDGMENT ON THE IMMORAL. Here, let's read together from Hebrews 13:4. There are two parts to this verse. The first part reaffirms the goodness and holiness of sex in marriage. From the beginning, God has intended husband and wife to become one flesh, and their coming together pleases Him. It's a blessing that we should receive and enjoy with gratitude as we receive and enjoy all of God's other blessings.

However, the same is not true for fornication and adultery. My father-in-law insists that people often don't know what these are, so let me explain. Fornication is sexual activity outside of marriage; adultery is when a married person becomes sexually involved with someone other than their spouse. There is a stern warning attached to both of these practices, and it is that God will judge the fornicator and the adulterer.

Let me be clear. Unmarried people, if you want to be with somebody, you need to marry them. If you are not married to them, and you become intimate with them anyway, you are sinning, you are dishonoring your Creator, and you are placing your soul in peril of eternal damnation. Married people, if you want to be with somebody, be with your spouse. If you get with anybody else, you too are sinning, dishonoring your Creator, and placing your soul in peril of eternal damnation. Sexual sin is like antifreeze. It might taste good, but if you drink it, it will kill you.

Similarly, all Christians need to be aware of the dangers of LUST. Jesus warns us about these in Matthew 5:27-28. Here too, to make sure that nobody is left in the dark, let's define our terms. Lust is unlawful sexual desire. It is when you allow your mind to dwell sexually on somebody you don't have a right to be with. This

could be somebody you know in real life, or it could be somebody you've only seen online.

It is no secret to any of us, I think, that pornography, which exists to excite lust, is one of the scourges of modern American society. Tens of millions of people in our country use porn on a regular basis. In fact, as I wrote recently on the church blog, rates of premarital sex in America are actually going down, in part because of the prevalence of pornography.

Once again, let's make no mistake about this. Lust is sin. Porn use is sin. It will kill our souls just as dead as fornication and adultery will.

In some ways, lust is even more dangerous than fornication and adultery because it's much easier to keep secret. If we have a porn habit, the worst thing that can happen to us is not that we get found out. It is that we don't get found out. I shudder to think of all of the apparently faithful Christians who will lose their souls on the day of judgment because they loved pornography more than they loved Jesus.

Don't let that be you. If you're struggling with porn, get help. Tell your spouse. Tell one of the elders. For that matter, if a brother feels comfortable coming to me, I'd be happy to help him. It's much better to forfeit your pride than to forfeit your soul.

Finally, let's consider the subject of DIVORCE. We see the Lord's teaching on this in Matthew 19:7-9. Here, He's warning us about another one of the counterfeits of God's plan for marriage. It's when somebody divorces their spouse and marries another. Regardless of what the physical marriage license might say, that's no marriage in God's eyes. Every time those two people come together, they are committing adultery.

There's one exception to this rule, and one exception only. If and only if your spouse cheats on you do you have the right to divorce them and remarry. Only physical adultery can dissolve the marriage bond.

This is certainly one of the hard sayings of Jesus. I've studied with married people who didn't have the right to be together on multiple occasions. It's hard to tell such people the truth, but here as elsewhere, only the truth can save souls. It's even harder for them to put away an unlawful spouse, but I've seen courageous Christians do exactly that. They can rest assured that however they suffer here, they will be more than repaid eternally.

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