

It's Complicated

Sex

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TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture:

Mark 10:6-9 (NLT)

6 But 'God made them male and female' from the beginning of creation. 7 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, 8 and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, 9 let no one split apart what God has joined together."

Proverbs 9:10 (NLT)

10 Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.

Proverbs 7:6-27 (NLT)

6 While I was at the window of my house, looking through the curtain, 7 I saw some naive young men, and one in particular who lacked common sense. 8 He was crossing the street near the house of an immoral woman, strolling down the path by her house. 9 It was at twilight, in the evening, as deep darkness fell. 10 The woman approached him, seductively dressed and sly of heart. 11 She was the brash, rebellious type, never content to stay at home. 12 She is often in the streets and markets, soliciting at every corner. 13 She threw her arms around him and kissed him, and with a brazen look she said, 14 "I've just made my peace offerings and fulfilled my vows. 15 You're the one I was looking for! I came out to find you, and here you are! 16 My bed is spread with beautiful blankets, with colored sheets of Egyptian linen. 17 I've perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. 18 Come, let's drink our fill of love until morning. Let's enjoy each other's caresses, 19 for my husband is not home. He's away on a long trip. 20 He has taken a wallet full of money with him and won't return until later this month. 21 So she seduced him with her pretty speech and enticed him with her flattery. 22 He followed her at once, like an ox going to the slaughter. He was like a stag caught in a trap, 23 awaiting the arrow that would pierce its heart. He was like a bird flying into a snare, little knowing it would cost him his life. 24 So listen to me, my sons, and pay attention to my words. 25 Don't let your hearts stray away toward her. Don't wander down her wayward path. 26 For she has been the ruin of many; many men have been her victims. 27 Her house is the road to the grave. Her bedroom is the den of death.

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What's the worst advice you've ever been given when it comes to sex and dating? Why is there so much confusion out there on the subject of sex?

Start **thinking**. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- **Read Mark 10:6-9.** Discuss God's plan for sexuality. How does God's plan bring simplicity? How do you pursue that plan moving forward?
- **Read Proverbs 9:10.** According to Troy, one of the greatest attributes we can have in our fight against sexual sin is the fear of God. How do we gain more of the fear of God in our lives?
- **Read Proverbs 7:6-21.** Discuss the allure of the wayward wife. How did she use all the senses to draw her victim home? What did she mean in v.14 when she said that she had fulfilled her vows? How did she remove the accountability for their actions?
- Finish reading the story in vs. 22-27. What did the 3 animals have in common? How do they resemble a person wandering into sexual sin?

Start **sharing**. Choose a question to create openness.

- Do you sense that you are being asked to be more tolerant in all areas of sexuality (open marriages, homosexuality, transgender, movies with more nudity, etc...)? Where do you draw the line? Where do you get your standard of what is right and wrong sexually?
- "Her house is a road to the grave and her bedroom is the den of death." Have you or someone you know experienced that road? What were/are the consequences and pain that come with disobedience to God's commands in this area?
- How do you protect yourself and/or your marriage from sexual sin?
- How have your views on sex changed over time? What are the primary influences that have changed those views? How do those views align with what God says?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- This week, commit to identifying those areas where you aren't being obedient to God's word on sex.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father, please guide and help us to seek your design for sex, convict us where we fall short and please strengthen us in our fight against temptation. -Amen

Start **digging**. For further study.

- Read the 2nd page and discuss it.

Question: "What does the Bible say about sex?"

Answer: The Bible reveals that sex (sexual intercourse) is God's good gift to human beings. Like all of God's good gifts, sex has been used for both good and evil throughout all of history.

God's command to Adam and Eve, delivered with His blessing, to "be fruitful and increase in number" (Genesis 1:28) implies the necessity of their having sex. Later, we read that "Adam made love to his wife Eve" (Genesis 4:1), with the result that a son was born. Besides expanding the human race, God designed sex for the physical, emotional, and spiritual union between one man and one woman for life (Genesis 2:18, 23–24; Matthew 19:4–6; 1 Corinthians 7:32–34). God's design for sex between a married man and woman is good and honorable (Hebrews 13:4). There is nothing shameful, dirty, or dishonorable about sex; in fact, in their state of innocence, "the man and his wife were both naked, and they were not ashamed" (Genesis 2:25). God created us as sexual beings, so it stands to reason that Scripture has plenty to say about sex. The Bible contains more warnings and prohibitions against its misuse than it does prescriptions for its healthy and proper enjoyment. The following is a brief review of both:

The Bible's prohibitions against the misuse of sex:

The most complete list of prohibited sexual relations is found in the Mosaic Law. Leviticus 18 contains prohibitions against sex with close relatives, with those of the same sex, and with animals (Leviticus 18:6–23). Scripture calls these sexual relations "detestable things" or "abominations" (verses 26 and 29), by which individuals and nations were "defiled" (verses 27–28, 30). Adultery (sex with a married person other than one's spouse) was punishable by death for both participants (Leviticus 20:10–12), while pre-marital sex was "punished" by forced marriage (Exodus 22:16). Rape also carried a death sentence.

The New Testament reiterates most of these prohibitions. John the Baptist condemned King Herod for marrying his brother's wife (Mark 6:18); same-sex activity is called "shameful lusts" and condemned for both men and women (Romans 1:26–27); and those who practice sexual perversion are warned they have no place in God's kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:9). Jesus condemned not only physical adultery, but also adultery in one's mind or heart, which would include pornography (Matthew 5:27–32). Prostitution is condemned in both Old and New Testaments (Deuteronomy 23:18; 1 Corinthians 6:16–17); at the same time, the Bible provides examples of forgiveness extended to prostitutes, from Rahab (Joshua 6:25) to the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1–11)—Rahab was accepted into Israel and honored for her faith (Hebrews 11:31), and Jesus forgave the woman in John 8, telling her, "Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:11).

The Bible's prescriptions for the proper use and enjoyment of sex:

The Bible's most explicit depiction of sexual love within marriage is the wonderful poem The Song of Solomon, especially chapters 4 and 5. In these chapters, the newlywed couple explore each other's bodies, uttering words of delight, wonder, and commitment. After establishing the metaphor of love-making as a garden filled with excellent fruits, the lovers are told, "Eat, friends, and drink; drink your fill of love" (Song of Solomon 5:1). God obviously approves of their sexual union.

The act of sex within marriage is also approved in Proverbs 5:19, where the husband is told, "May [your wife's] breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated with her love." The Law of Moses provided a one-year exemption from military duty for a newlywed man to let him "stay at home and bring happiness to the wife" (Deuteronomy 24:5).

First Corinthians contains instructions concerning sex from the Christian perspective. Paul says that celibacy is best, but people should marry rather than "burn with passion" (1 Corinthians 7:8–9). Sex within marriage is good and right and is a preventative of sexual immorality: "Each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband" (1 Corinthians 7:2). In the Christian view, wives and husbands have equal "authority" over each other's bodies; sex is a "marital duty" that both husband and wife should strive to fulfill (1 Corinthians 7:3–4). Any abstention from sex within a marriage should be temporary: "Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (1 Corinthians 7:5).

All aspects of marriage, including sex, glorify God and reveal His attributes—that He is love, that He is faithful, protective, sacrificial, committed, etc. (1 John 4:16; 1 Corinthians 13). That is one reason sex is not to be abused. Marriage is also the picture God uses to describe His eventual union with the redeemed as the future pure and glorious bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:32; Revelation 21:2, 9).