

4. How are we all guilty of lowering the bar of discipleship and often ignoring the personal implications of statements Jesus makes about denying our selves, etc.?

World: 'Follow your heart.'

Jesus: 'Follow me' (Matt. 10:38).

World: 'Love yourself.'

Jesus: 'Love the Lord your God [and] your neighbor' (Mark 12:30-31).

World: 'Discover yourself.'

Jesus: 'Deny yourself' (Luke 9:23).

World: 'Believe in yourself.'

Jesus: 'Believe in me' (John 6:35).

5. How would you answer an inquisitive 15-year-old who asks why we believe that the historical Christian understanding of marriage and sex is an expression of God's love?

6. What lessons are you being reminded of or learning in this series about how to approach Christian sexuality in conversations with others and in our own thinking?

SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

Christian Sexuality—Jesus, Sex & Gender

"Sex & Marriage"

Genesis 2:18,21-25

"So do you see how strange what you're saying sounds to us, to those of us out here in normal America? Seriously, do you know how strange this sounds to me?" (LGBTQ activist)

"Yes, I do. It sounds strange to me too. But what you should know is, we believe even stranger things than that. We believe a previously dead man is going to show up again in the sky.....on a horse." (Russell Moore)

God's designs for sex and marriage, as revealed in the Bible, is supposed to _____ in our broken world. And we need to keep it weird.

3 Questions

1. What's _____ about the historical Christian understanding of marriage and sex?

If you just start reading the Bible from the beginning, it doesn't take very long to discover that the Bible depicts a wide _____ of conflicting ideas about sex and marriage.

So how are we able to discover God's intentions and design for marriage and sex? As with most things like this, we start with _____.

Matthew 19:3-9 – According to Jesus, if you want to understand God's purposes and designs for sex and marriage, primacy goes to Genesis 1-2, and the rest of the story often reflects God's accommodations because of our hard hearts.

What's So Weird?

- Marriage is meant to be a _____ commitment.
- Marriage is meant to be between one man and one _____.
- Sex is meant to be experienced _____ in marriage.

2. Why is the historical Christian understanding of marriage and sex so _____? It runs against the grain of our _____ human nature?

“Ever since I have been open about my own experiences of homosexuality, a number of Christians have said something like this: ‘the gospel must be harder for you than it is for me,’ as though I have more to give up than they do. But that fact is that the gospel demands everything of all of us. If someone thinks the gospel has somehow slotted into their life quite easily, without causing any major adjustments to their lifestyle or aspirations, it is likely that they have not really started following Jesus at all. And just as the cost is the same for all of us, so too are the blessings.” (Sam Allberry)

“The Bible simply doesn’t talk this way. In fact, it’s striking just how differently Scripture employs the same words:

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World: ‘Believe in yourself.’

Jesus: ‘Believe in me’ (John 6:35).” (Matt Smethurst)

“The heart wants what it wants.” (Woody Allen)

3. Why is the historical Christian understanding of marriage and sex an expression of God’s _____?

Because what God created and designed is good (Genesis 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31) and out of the overflow of his _____ (1 John 4:8).

“Promiscuity doesn’t keep its promises.” (James K.A. Smith)

“Anything that has an orgasm at the end of it, you know, there’s a degree of pleasure to be had. But it takes a while to recognize the emotional cost on me, the spiritual cost on other people, the fact that it’s preventing me from becoming a father, from becoming a husband, from settling, from becoming rooted, from becoming actually whole, from becoming a man, from becoming connected. It takes a while to spot that. I think a lot of people don’t get the opportunity to break out of that pattern. I would never have spotted it had I not first been a heroin addict and gone, “Hold on a minute, you’re doing that thing again.” Same with fame and same with celebrity. ...Because I had the template and experiences [I could realize], “Oh this is addiction; you’re expecting this thing to make you feel better.” (Russell Brand)

Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week’s sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Read Matthew 19:3-10. Note what texts Jesus goes to in his answer to the question (it’s more than one). How was the biblical sexual and marriage ethic of Genesis 1-2 weird to the disciples and to most people in the Bible?
3. God accommodates our hard hearts according to Jesus. We see this with laws allowing divorce in the Old Testament (laws that mostly protected women). He also accommodated polygamy (see below) and chattel slavery (see below). How would you respond to someone who brings up these passages and accommodations as problematic?

Deuteronomy 21: ¹¹ if you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife. ...¹⁴ If you are not pleased with her, let her go wherever she wishes. You must not sell her or treat her as a slave, since you have dishonored her.

Deuteronomy 17: ¹⁴ When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, “Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us” ... ¹⁷ He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. [Note: He does not require monogamy.]

Leviticus 25: ⁴⁴ “Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. ...⁴⁶ You can bequeath them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.