

What Does The Bible Say About Heterosexuality?

August 9, 2015

Good morning CrossWinds. If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. If you are a regular part of the CrossWinds family, Cindy and I thank you for allowing us to take the last two weeks for a needed vacation. We didn't go anywhere so technically it was a staycation. What did we do for two weeks? We cleaned the house. It is hard to believe how much stuff you accumulate after three kids. In addition, right before we moved to Iowa, Cindy's father passed away and we acquired all of his stuff. In October, my mother passed away. Dad sold his house and moved in with us. Now we also have their stuff. Let's say things were a little cramped. We needed an unprecedented level of deep cleaning and organizing. It took us two weeks to do it completely. I made so many trips to the Cherish Center they were going to offer me a dedicated parking spot. The good news is that today our house is clean and uncluttered. I know that many of you are jealous. That is good.

Not only do I thank you for allowing time away but I also want to thank Pastor Jordan and Pastor Stephen. They did a great job covering the pulpit while I was gone.

Today we begin a short, but very important, four-week mini-series. The title of this series is, "What does the Bible say about sexuality?" We are looking at three topics over four weeks, heterosexuality, homosexuality and the transgendered. My hope and prayer is this series helps us to live in a culture where sex is spinning out of control.

Today we will look at heterosexuality. One thing is clear to all of us. The lifestyle of heterosexual singles is very different from 20 years ago. Virginity and purity used to be a virtue. Today they are considered an oddity or even a liability. Sociologists say singles live in a hookup and breakup culture. Just read the tabloid at the checkout aisle. Look at a movies or reality television shows. Sex is casual and without commitment. Even clean, youth-orientated movies like "Princess Bride" have Wesley and Buttercup embracing and kissing because they are in a relationship. We reason that if they kiss in clean movie like "Princess Bride," it certainly can't be wrong to embrace and kiss someone I love when I am in a relationship.

Living in a culture where everyone is having casual sex or at least having some sexual type of expression toward those they date acts as a battering ram that tries to destroy the purity of even the most devout Christian singles. Teenagers and young adults, there is an all-out assault in our culture planning to destroy your virginity and ruin your purity. There is so much pressure for casual sex that the young adults in the church and even the leaders of the church are massively confused. Not in this church but in a previous church I pastored I found myself in a conversation with the children of three church leaders. These young men lived with their girlfriends before marriage. When I told them premarital sex was sinful they didn't believe me and they even began to try and correct me. Those are the children of church leaders!

Most of us in this room know sex before marriage is sin. It is not God's will for our lives. We know God wants us to save sex for our wedding nights. The

problem is many of us are unclear on sexual limits before the wedding night. While the final act of sex before marriage is sin, what about kissing? Can dating Christians kiss? Can they make out? Can they take it farther? How far is too far?

To make matters worse, when young adults turn to the Bible for guidance, they don't find talking about dating. The Bible is silent of what you can and can't do sexually when you are dating. As red-blooded young adults filled with hormones, what are you to do? How far is too far? Today we will put our finger in the Bible and find the answer.

I structured this morning's message around a series of questions. The first question is the most foundational and the most important. The answer to this question will not just help us navigate through this message but it will be the one that guides us through this series.

Why did God make us sexual?

Did you ever wonder why God made sex? Why are we not like amoebas and we just split ourselves into two when we want to reproduce? Why did God make two sexes and give us powerful desires for the opposite sex? The answer to this question is foundational to everything. I am going to give you the big idea of this entire sermon up front.

God created sex and marriage to serve as a living portrait of the relationship between Christ and the church. Sex and marriage, which were both created by God, were created to give us an earthly appetizer, to whet our appetites for the intimacy and satisfaction we were created to experience for all eternity in our relationship with God through Jesus. If you love sex and intimacy

and the satisfaction of marriage, that is good. All of it is designed to whet your appetite for the closeness and intimacy and relational satisfaction that we were created to experience with God through Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us there will be no earthly marriage in heaven. Do you know why there is no earthly marriage in eternity? In heaven we are married. We are married to Jesus and nothing can be better than our relationship with Jesus. That is why eternity with Jesus kicks off with the wedding supper of the lamb. Jesus is the groom. We are the bride. If you loved your wedding day, that was just a little taste of the much greater and more satisfying wedding day that is ours when we will be with Jesus, our groom, for all of eternity. I know this sounds strange, but it is biblical. Let's look at the text.

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:24–32 (ESV)

Paul said all the joy and satisfaction found in marriage was created to point us to the joy and relational satisfaction we were created to experience with Jesus. Earthly sex and marriage point to something much greater and even more satisfying, which is our relationship with God through Christ.

Since earthly marriage parallels the relationship between Christ and the church, this means the roles played by Christ and the roles played by the church

become the roles played by a husband and by a wife. These roles are not arbitrary or reversible. Just as the church cannot die for Christ, Christ doesn't submit to the authority of the church. In the same way, a husband and wife, while equal in personhood, play different but complementary roles in marriage that take their cues from how we relate to Jesus.

How did Jesus treat his church? He loves us so much that he died for us. That is the pattern for how a husband should treat his wife. He should sacrificially love her and die to himself every day for her, just like Jesus did for his bride.

Wives, wouldn't you love to be married to a husband like that?

The way we submit to Jesus and honor Jesus in our lives, is the pattern for how a wife submits to her husband's authority, supports him, delights in him and honors his leadership in her life. Men, isn't that the picture of a dream wife? It's a wife that doesn't rebel against you but looks to you for leadership. She supports you and doesn't undermine you. The roles of a husband and wife come from Christ and the church because earthly marriage is a living picture of the relationship between us and Jesus.

Paul quoted Genesis 2:24 to remind us that it isn't just our sexuality in marriage that was created by God but the institution of marriage was also created by God. Marriage is not defined by the state or the supreme court. God created marriage. He was around before they were. He defined it as one man and one woman. The man is to leave home. He is to hold fast to his wife and then they are to be intimate.

Notice the pattern. First, a young man becomes financially independent. He holds fast to his wife, or as some older translations say, he is to cleave to her. That means he makes an irrevocable commitment for better or worse, richer or poorer, sickness or health until death. Then, and only then, does he become intimate with a woman and experience the mysterious supernatural bonding of sex. Today people get everything backward. They have sex with women without making any commitment while they are living in their parents' basement because they can't hold a job.

I want you to notice God tells us sex is not just a casual act created to relieve our bodily desires. Something mysterious happens in sex. Sex fuses people. Because sex mysteriously and supernaturally bonds people together it is to be saved for a husband and wife.

Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." 1 Corinthians 6:16 (ESV)

What is more important than the mysterious and powerful bonding of sex is the imaging of sex. Remember sex and marriage do not stand alone. They are about the much greater reality, the relationship between Christ and his church. This is why the church is called the bride of Christ. Once we understand that sex and marriage are about Christ and the church, it changes everything.

Most of the arguments that you hear for sexual purity are pragmatically based. Don't have premarital sex because you could get a STD. Don't have premarital sex because there might be an unexpected pregnancy. The problem

with each of these arguments is they assume sex is about us and our happiness. Sex is not about us. Sex was given to us to image Christ and the church.

Paul said don't have sex with a prostitute because it breaks the picture of Christ's single-minded connection to his bride. Just as Christ saved himself for his bride, we are to save ourselves sexually and wait for our husbands or wives. Just as Christ is united to his church alone, a husband is to be united to his wife alone. Just as Christ does not divorce us when we fail him, a husband does not divorce his wife when she fails him. Just as Christ has a monogamous and permanent relationship with us, we are to have a monogamous and permanent relationship with our spouses. Do you see the connection?

What we do sexually before marriage and how we treat our spouses in marriage is to consistently image of the way Christ relates to us and we relate to him. Let me say this clearly — singles, just as Christ saved himself for his bride, save yourself for your wedding night.

Life is not about us. Our sexuality is not ultimately about us or for us. We belong to Christ. Our lives and our sexuality are to bear the image of Christ. Sex and marriage are not about you and what feels good at the moment. It is all about a much higher purpose. Sex and marriage are just appetizers for the day we will see Jesus at the marriage supper of the lamb.

Why doesn't the Bible talk about dating?

With this foundation, it changes everything. For the rest of the sermon I am going to focus on Christian singles. We usually hear the Bible doesn't give clear boundaries for dating. Most people tell say the Bible doesn't tell us how far

is too far before the wedding night. Can Christians kiss? Can they have a prolonged kiss? Can they do a lot of things with clothes on? We have already learned our sexuality before marriage and in marriage is to reflect the purity of Christ for his church, but there is more.

The Bible describes three categories of relationship. They are family, neighbor and marriage.



Family Relationships

In family relationships, expressing your sexual desires toward a family member is prohibited.

None of you shall approach any one of his close relatives to uncover nakedness. I am the Lord. Leviticus 18:6 (ESV)

In our house that means the boys can't prank their sister when she is in the bathroom. There is no God-honoring form of sexual expression between relatives.

Marriage Relationships

Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 1 Corinthians 7:5 (ESV)

Marriage relationships go the opposite way. When a man and a woman are married, they are commanded to fulfill the sexual obligations they have to their spouses. You are to use your sexuality to bless your spouse in marriage, making your marriage extremely close and filled with relational joy, because our

marriage is to be a little taste of the much greater relational joy we will have with Jesus.

For some of you, this is a problem. You refuse to be intimate with your spouse or you do it begrudgingly. That may be a spiritual issue. It is probably sin. In marriage, a husband and wife are told to have physical oneness and joy. The joy of physical intimacy in marriage is part of imaging the spiritual oneness between Christ and the church. The enjoyment of sex in marriage is a necessary expression of Christ's spiritual oneness with his church. Refusing your spouse intimacy breaks the picture of Christ and the church.

Neighbor Relationships

To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. 1 Corinthians 7:8–9 (ESV)

The only other type of relationship in the Bible is the neighbor relationship. We are not to be involved sexually with our neighbors. Imagine your neighbor is an unmarried single of the opposite sex that loves Jesus. As you talk with her, you find yourself attracted to her. What should you do? Paul was clear. If you find yourself burning with passion, don't fornicate. Get married. Marriage is the only God-honoring place to express our sexual desire.

What is plainly stated here is the assumed standard for sexual propriety in both the Old and New testaments. The only God-honoring place for sexual expression is marriage. That is not just talking about the final act of sex but all expressions of our sexuality. If we are not married to someone, we treat them

like a neighbor or a family member. If you wouldn't do it with your neighbor, you don't do it with your girlfriend. That sounds harsh, but it is the biblical truth.

What constitutes sex?

Do you remember the President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky scandal? Our former President's famous words were, "I did not have sexual relations with that woman." Later we learned that meant he did not do one particular final sex act with her, but a lot happened between him and Monica besides the final act. Trust me. Hillary was not satisfied with Bill's answer. I think we all know why she wasn't. If you don't have sexual relationships with another woman but you do everything else with another woman, would your wife be satisfied?

Imagine your wife bakes a chocolate cake. It is 6 p.m. You come home from work and you see the cake on the kitchen table. Your wife tells you not to eat the cake because she is saving it for a friend's birthday. Your dinner is in the refrigerator. You can reheat it in the microwave. She needs to finish getting ready because she is taking the cake to a girlfriend's house that night for a birthday party. As she leaves the room she looks you in the eye and says, "Don't eat the cake." As you contrast a microwave dinner with a chocolate cake, staring at the cake gets the better of you. You cut a small piece of cake and begin chewing it. It tastes so good. She told you to not eat the cake so after you chew it and taste it, you spit it back on the plate. You decide that since the cake was so good, why not take another piece. Once again you chew it, taste it then spit it on the plate. You continue your way through the entire cake until there is only one final piece untouched. Now you take the chewed and tasted cake on the

plate in front of you and scrape it back into the cake pan. As you finish, your wife comes out of the bedroom and screams! I told you to not eat the cake! You tell her that you technically didn't eat the cake. You just tasted it. Besides, you left one final piece. Do you see the problem with a truncated definition of sexual relations that means you did not do one final act?

Sex is not just a final act. It is everything sexually leading up to that act.

This is why the Bible is clear about the way men are to treat young women.

...older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity. 1 Timothy 5:2 (ESV)

All sexual activity outside of marriage is off limits. Until you are married, you treat a young woman like your sister. If you wouldn't do it with your sister, you don't do it with your girlfriend. Any sexual activity, no matter how minor, is to be reserved for marriage, not just because it might lead to a time when your passions are inflamed beyond your control. The reason for absolute purity before marriage is because our sexuality is to reflect the fidelity and purity of Christ for his church. Just as Christ saved himself for his bride, we are to save ourselves for our brides.

How did people date in the first century?

Understanding sexual morality in the Jewish and Greco-Roman world explains why the Bible doesn't talk about dating. The Bible consistently tells us to avoid sexual immorality. The term sexual immorality is the English translation of the Greek work *porneia*. That is a junk drawer term for any sexual activity outside of marriage.

In the ancient world, a woman's ability to marry was dependent upon a father's ability to prove his daughter's purity for her wedding night. If a girl was not known for her purity, young men didn't want her. Fathers took great pains to protect a daughter and her reputation for her wedding. Respectable young women did not leave their houses unescorted. Young women were often cloistered away from young men to make sure they were absolutely pure for their weddings. For the fun of it you can look up on your own why the father of the bride kept the bedsheets from the wedding night.

The contemporary practice of dating, where young men and women spend unsupervised time alone was unknown. Young women did not engage in time alone with young men prior to their wedding night. Women did not engage even in light sexual activity before marriage. In the pagan world, when men engaged in sexual activity before marriage, it was with a prostitute. A woman that was sexually experienced was considered a prostitute unless her husband was deceased.

I realize this level of purity is hard to fathom or achieve, especially in our culture. Maybe this kind of purity is something you were never told. The thing to remember is our sexuality was not made for us. It was given to us by God for the purpose of displaying the purity, fidelity and loving sacrifice of Christ and the church. It is to whet our appetites for the much greater intimacy we will have for all eternity with Jesus.

Our sexuality is to picture that relationship. Sex is not just about us and our own gratification. To think sex and marriage is about gratifying ourselves is

to tear the entire purpose of our sexuality away from the reason God made us sexual in the first place.

What is the problem with modern dating?

Contemporary dating confuses the moral boundaries that exist between the neighbor relationship and the marriage relationship. When modern couples date, they think it legitimizes either full sexual expression or a truncated form of sexual expression between them.



Let me show you the problem of modern dating. As I critique dating, realize I am not critiquing dating as an activity. There is nothing wrong with men and women doing things together to get to know one another. I am critiquing dating as a relational category that supposedly exists between the neighbor relationship and the marriage relationship, where we think some forms of sexual expression are legitimized.

The reason the Bible does not give direct guidance about how far is too far when you are dating is because this relational category does not exist. You are either a neighbor with no sexual expression or you are married with full sexual expression. Regardless of what you call your boyfriend or girlfriend, you are bound by the standards of purity in the neighbor relationship until the altar. You cannot do anything with the person you date that you wouldn't do with a blood relative. We intuitively know the proper levels of sexual expression with a family

member, a neighbor and a spouse. The reason we don't know the proper level of sexual expression for those we date is because this relational category is biblically non-existent!

When Christian singles begin to express themselves sexually before marriage, even in minor ways, they are using their sexuality outside of the context for which it was created. God ordained our sexuality to reflect the exclusivity and monogamous intimacy between Christ and the church. To break the boundaries of the neighbor relationship is to blur and confuse this picture. Remember that sex does not belong to us. Our bodies are not our bodies. We were bought with a price. We are to honor God with our bodies and that includes our sexuality.

Why is modern dating bad for women?

Remember I am talking about dating as a relational category, not dating as spending time with someone of the opposite sex to get to know them. If you are dating, it implies commitment. It means you are in an exclusive relationship with someone because you are now "dating." The question I have is, does dating somebody provide any real relational security? What keeps a guy from breaking up with you on Thursday so he can date a different girl on Friday? Nothing! Contrast dating with marriage.

In marriage, you are committed to an exclusive relationship even when you don't like the person. It is for better or worse. You have both names on the checkbook and the house mortgage. Like it or not, you are married. You can't

walk away from marriage. There is no other woman to compete with you in marriage.

When you are dating, everything is different. There is no security. Don't trick yourself into thinking your relationship is secure. You hear of people breaking up and getting back together all the time depending upon how their relationship feels.

A dating relationship is like a mountain climber scaling a sheer rock face. The whole time the mountain climber is climbing he thinks he is safe because he is putting anchor pins to hold his rope in the rock. The rope and the pins are his security and commitment to save him if he falls. When our imaginary climber gets to the rock face, he begins pulling his rope up and he notices the pins he put in the rock start falling. He was putting them in wrong. The whole time he was climbing he had a false sense of security. There was nothing holding him. In the same way, a woman gets a false sense of security from this artificial category called dating. They think a guy is committed but the truth is there is nothing holding him. Women, the only way you know a guy is committed is when he takes you to the altar.

The problem is that when a woman feels more secure with a man because she is in a dating relationship, she starts to give him her heart and maybe even her body. After all, it is safe. She is secure. They are dating. That must mean she is safe. Ladies, you are not safe. Nothing is stopping him from breaking your heart on Thursday so he can go out with another girl on Friday. The only safe place to open yourself to a man is marriage.

Most modern men love dating because women will give them intimacy and they don't need to make a real commitment. Women are destroyed by modern dating because of the false sense of security. Ladies, remember nothing stops a man from breaking up and moving on. The only permanent relational category is marriage.

Men, remember you are not trying to get a woman to be your girlfriend. If you are looking for a woman to be your girlfriend you are using the non-existent dating category. That is unbiblical. You are out looking for a woman to become your wife. Until she is your wife, you treat her with the level of purity and integrity you have for your sister.

How can I get to know someone of the opposite sex?

So far we spent most of our time reframing your thinking about how to honor God when we date. The problem is most of us think that if we followed this practice we would be single and 70. Let me provide guidance on how to meet and marry someone and honor our God-given sexuality along the way.

Pursue a dating friendship.

To help you do this I would like to propose some new terminology. It is called a dating friendship. This is a friendship with someone of the opposite sex where you do things together. It is just that, a friendship. Take away all the romantic and sexual overtones that usually accompany a typical dating relationship. The goal of a dating friendship is getting to know someone as a friend and explore the viability of a marriage while preserving the purity of a neighbor relationship. If you are in a dating friendship and it doesn't look like

things are working out, that is OK. Just go back to being normal friends. If a man in the dating friendship wants more than a friendship, he asks the woman to marry him.

There are four elements to this kind of relationship that will help you.

Maintain the sexual and romantic boundaries of a neighbor relationship.

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases. Song of Solomon 2:7 (ESV)

Make a commitment to not inflame one another's sexual passions but to focus on friendship. Keeping your passions at bay is hard. Here are some practical helps.

1. **Get accountability.** Sin thrives in isolation. Have someone that cares about you and is spiritually mature check up on you every week. Have them pray with you. Tell them to ask you the hard questions on a weekly basis. Don't just give them the right to ask hard questions. Make them promise to ask hard questions. Hard-nosed accountability is helpful.
2. **Avoid time alone.** We don't need help when it come to sexual sin. It comes quite naturally. Avoid dating contexts that push you toward intimacy. Avoid time alone in one another's apartments. Avoid alone time in the car. Keep your dating friendships public or around other people. The purity that is easy at the beginning of a relationship becomes much harder as a relationship matures.
3. **Keep an outward focus.** A healthy relationship isn't always focused on itself. A healthy relationship engages the world and spends time helping other

people, not just focusing on each other. If your relationship is always focused on one another and cannot focus beyond itself, that is a warning that something is not healthy.

4. **Begin a dating friendship when it can go somewhere.** Too many people start dating when they are too young. Too many singles get too serious in high school when they are not in a position to do something about sexual desires because they are too young to get married. The relationship is hard because it is one foot on the brake and another foot on the gas. Don't start a dating friendships where you are looking for spouse until you are in a position where you can propose or will be able to propose in the near future. If you are in college, and you meet the right person, it is better to marry while in college rather than fornicate your way through college. Many singles feel no pressure to marry because they are sleeping together before marriage. When you get the milk for free, there is no reason to buy the cow. It is better to marry than burn with passion.
5. **Keep the dating friendship short.** Once you begin a dating friendship, don't stay in one longer than necessary. If after six to 12 months, you are unsure if your dating friendship will move forward, it is time to move on.
6. **Make a straight line to the altar.** When you get engaged, keep the engagement short. Engagement is for one thing — it is the time to prepare and plan the wedding. Waiting a year or more makes purity hard, especially if you spend lots of time together.

One of the great benefits of a dating friendship without sex is it lets you see the real person. The more sexually involved you become with someone before the wedding night, the more you tend to see them through rose-colored sexual glasses and the relationship becomes harder to objectively evaluate. After the wedding, the glasses come off and you see a person for what they really are. If you keep your dating friendship free from sexual distractions you can judge a relationship on its own merits apart from sex.

Be clear on your boundaries and intent.

This morning, if you are single, chances are the next person you date will not be in this room. They will expect to follow the typical patterns of modern dating. They will expect sexual benefits. Everything we talked about this morning will be foreign. When you begin a dating friendship it is important that at the beginning of the relationship you explain what we talked about this morning. Explain you are looking to be friends. You are not looking for anything more until the altar. There is no mysterious dating category with fringe benefits. You are only friends getting to know each other to see if you could get married.

Men, this is ultimately your responsibility. You need to explain this to a girl. When you know you want more than a dating friendship, you need to let the woman know you are thinking marriage instead of friendship. This way she can tell you if her feelings reciprocate. If not, both of you can separate without hurt.

Ladies, if a guy refuses to take the lead in this area, you have the right to ask his intentions. You are not interested in being somebody's girlfriend. You are not interested in giving all or parts of yourself away. You are interested in getting

married and being a wife. Until you meet and marry the right man, you are no more than a friend to any man.

Conclusion

One of the great benefits of dating friendships is this helps you save yourself for your wedding night. Just as Christ saved himself for his bride; men, save yourself for your bride. Just as Christ gave himself away once, in similar fashion our goal is to fall in love and give ourselves away once.



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