

How to Have Good Sex

Rich Nathan

February 15-16, 2014

Neglected Virtues Series

Genesis 2.24-25

INTERACTING WITH THE SERMON

SYNOPSIS OF THE SERMON

Pastor Rich continued his sermon series called Neglected Virtues. Recall, a virtue is the result of a habitual practice that grows into a character quality in your life. Today's message was about sexual purity, and Pastor Rich said, no virtue is more neglected than sexual purity.

We must understand that sex as God designed it is good. Followers of Jesus need to approach this area, and every area, beginning with God's design. See, He created sex with significance and purpose. The question was asked - "do we discover the meaning of sex or do we give it purpose and meaning?"

Sex has been distorted by our western culture into a god. But we can extrapolate by way of Jesus' example that we can live a fully self-actualized life without intercourse. Jesus never had sex, yet was the pinnacle of humanity. Sex is a good gift, designed by God, but distorted us.

The World says sex or sexual release is the answer to every problem. But the Bible teaches that only God can meet all of our needs. Matthew 10.

Sex as designed by God is for commitment (Gen 2). The significance is seen in v. 24. It shows that marriage brings a change of status and a commitment. The word "united" means to "stick" to your spouse. Deut 10:20 echoes this understanding of unity. This is not just a spiritual principle, studies show that both men and women release oxytocin during intercourse. Oxytocin acts as a bonding agent when the hormone is released. When sex occurs outside of covenant marriage our capacity for deep connection with a single partner can possibly be reduced.

Another challenge we face in the western world is the "commodification of sex" which has reduced it to an economic exchange. We reduce sex, marriage, almost anything, to simple value exchanges - rather than what marriage should mean which is to take on and give away everything to the other.

The next point is that sex is designed by God to unite naked bodies with naked hearts (Gen 2:25). Sin has caused us to cover up, and we're the only creatures who do so. Sin brought shame and we needed to cover up. Intimacy exposes one's hearts and all their secrets. Only within the safety of marital vows can we show our bodies as well as our hearts.

Sex gets distorted when we "separate naked bodies from naked hearts". This breaks the purpose of sex. Rick Warren commented recently, "there is no condom for the heart".

Finally, God heals sexual sinners through his generous forgiveness. God hates sin like oncologists hate cancer. He promises to forgive and work his healing in our lives when we submit fully to him.

Reminders for SG Leaders

- **New Leaders Training: Mar 2, 9, 23, 30 - 2-5pm** - please suggest anyone you believe is ready, or almost ready, to lead a small group to deb.george@vineyardcolumbus.org

In 5 minutes or less, briefly give a synopsis of this week's sermon. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain.

GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED

These questions can be used as ice-breakers in the beginning OR interwoven between the questions below to draw the group into the discussion.

- Fun: Recall one funny, or embarrassing, Valentine's day memory from childhood.
- What was something from the sermon that challenged you this weekend?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Context - read vv. 1-11 Paul argues, in very specific ways, that the Corinthians have failed to comprehend, and embrace, all that changes because of their faith in Christ. Our disputes, our relationships, our sexuality, and our attitudes all need transformed because we have been ushered into the KOG (v. 9, 11). Paul particularly addresses sexuality in v. 9, not because sex is the worst sin, but because the Bible bears witness that sexuality runs through our core. Pastors know that sexual sin, brokenness, pain, and hurt result from the wake of our deceptions surrounding sex. So our hope is v.11. The NT is the megaphone for God's forgiveness and grace found in Jesus at the cross. Through our faith and subsequent baptism, we are justified and sanctified from whatever our pasts were about. After opening this discussion in Ch. 6, Paul evidently feels he needs to teach the Corinthians further about the proper use of their bodies. NT Wright says, "Paul makes it clear that sexual immorality is one of the most serious issues the Corinthians faced". Paul's teaching is highly relevant today as well.

Read :1 Cor 6:12-20

12 "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything. 13 You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." 17 But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

1. (v. 12) Notice the phrase is in quotes, repeated twice? This sounds quote contemporary, right. What are some cultural "Catch-phrases" that get repeated in Christian circles. (a. "do what

- feels right", "look inside to discover your destiny", "it's nobody's business what I do with my _____").
2. Rather than deny the statement, what counter-balance principle(s) does Paul offer? Consider in what ways the Corinthian "catch-phrase" is true? (a. in one sense, Paul surely agrees, the Jewish law is not binding on Gentile Christians.) Rather than an unthoughtful moral principle (i.e. "never give money to a beggar"), Paul wants these new Christians to think through what "freedom" really means. What are some things today where Christians still wrestle with Paul's principles. (a. appetites, habits, surrounding culture, etc.)
 3. (v.13) A second cultural "slogan" was being inappropriately applied, how? (a. A false practice arose from a cultural assumption that because we have sexual organs they should always be used for sex - we have them, therefore we should use them...that's the link between "the stomach for food, food for the stomach").
 4. What's Paul's response? Use your own words, perhaps use the language from the sermon, to unpack his statement. (suggestions might be - "We can't define sex on our own, we need to know God's intentions and purpose for it" or "not every sexual practice honors God").
 5. (v. 14-15a) What is body meant for? Why is this important? (a. Since resurrection is not just a spiritual event, but a bodily one as well, what we do with our bodies matter)¹
 6. (v.15b-17) For some of the Corinthians, their past included visiting temple prostitutes when worshipping other gods. But Paul introduces what distinctly Biblical truth about sexuality?
 7. Rather than give a simplistic rule about not visiting temple prostitutes, Paul challenges their whole thinking about sexuality. What might Paul challenge us with today? How can we begin thinking, and acting differently?
 8. (v. 18a) A great picture of "fleeing" sexual sin comes from the story of Joseph in Gen 39-6-12. Read it together.
 9. (v. 18a-20) For Christians, is there a distinction between our spirits and our bodies? Why? (a. because God himself, through the Holy Spirit, dwells in us. Since our sexuality affects us deeply and since we were bought at such a high price - the cross - let's honor God with our bodies).

MINISTRY APPLICATION

Below you'll see some options for ministry time with your group. We always encourage you to reserve time in your group to pray for one another and wait on the Holy Spirit.

1. Break down in small groups, by gender, and ask the question "are you in any way not honoring God with your bodies?" Invite opportunities to confess and pray for one another. James 5:13-15 says we pray for each other in trouble or in sin so that we can be healed.
2. Where in our culture do you see a severing of body from spirit? In your own thoughts and actions, where do you reflect this cultural phenomenon? What do you think God's thoughts are

¹ While resurrection remains a mystery, Paul develops the theme further in 1 Cor 15.

on this matter? Repent of your sin and pray our culture shifts toward valuing God's plan for sex to unite both bodies and hearts.

3. Ask the Lord for a vivid picture of what it really means for your body to be the Spirit's temple. How can you honor Him accordingly? Pray for one another.

If deeper needs for healing from broken sexual pasts arise, please contact support and recovery at support.recovery@vineyardcolumbus.org or visit <http://www.vineyardcolumbus.org/need-help/addiction-recovery/> for specific steps forward.