

RUF Bible Study – Dating Sex and Marriage
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Sex Part 1

Proverbs 30:18 Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand: 19 the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a virgin.

20 This is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth and says, "I have done no wrong."

We're going to spend two weeks talking about sex, because I've realized I have a lot to say about it because the Bible has a lot to say about it. It's so very important, and I don't think you often hear much in a reasoned way about this topic.

What do you mostly hear? I'd suggest you hear two themes. The first is sex as liberation. Sex is the thing that will make you happy, that you must have to be fulfilled. You should do anything to get it. American Pie, Something About Mary, 40 Year Old Virgin, and on and on. All these movies are suggesting to us that sex will save us from our dull lives. This seems to come from the sexual revolution from the 1960s and 1970s, and it's just continued full force without stop in our media and cultural identity.

On the other hand, there is also the idea of a sort of sexual bondage. That sex is a passion that enslaves us and makes us do things we normally wouldn't do – for bad. You can think of the continual sex scandals in the news over the past decades and even years. The governor whose lover was in Brazil and he had to go see her. Bill Clinton. Scores of officials in trouble because of prostitutes, affairs, pregnant women. Sex is driving them to do things they don't want to do or don't want to be caught doing. Is it love or is it sex? We cast a disparaging eye on these people. Why can't they control themselves?

I don't think the Bible or Christianity handles sex in either of these ways. But the Christian church hasn't done a great job either. I would guess many of you have either picked this up along the way or else been actually taught this in youth groups or churches.

You have been told DON'T DO IT. Many youth pastor jobs can basically be boiled down to the kids in their youth groups not having sex. That is what they're being paid to – guard chastity. So you go to True Love Waits seminars and get told about how boys are like microwaves and girls are like crockpots, and you scratch your heads and then when the time comes for you to be in an actual situation, you forget it all and just do what you want to do anyway. This is the moralistic approach. Just stop. Don't do it. Keep your hands away. Keep room for the Holy Spirit between you. No purple.

The other approach more by our society is that well, your hormones are raging so what can you do? It's pretty much inevitable, so let's hand out condoms and just allow kids to explore and they'll figure it out. I know someone who told me that at her church camp the counselors would take them to a certain spot one night of the week. The kids were expected to make out there under the supervision of the counselors. They're going to do it anyway, so we might as well be there to make sure it doesn't go too far – that was the thinking. Nice. I know of a pastor who was telling me her solution to pornography was what they used to do in the old days. A lot of making out so the boys would ejaculate and not need to look at porn. After all, they couldn't be expected to go very long without ejaculating, it just wasn't healthy or natural so the girls could help them out. I didn't think this was very good advice, thinking or pasturing.

So we get confused, don't we? We sometimes feel like we have to put our sexuality completely on hold. That we can't relate to anyone as a man or as a woman, that we have to cover ourselves completely. We feel ashamed. Other times we feel very free, emboldened, and sure of ourselves. But we get hurt. We get confused. We get defensive. We know this is something big, but we just don't know how to handle it.

In *Sex and the Soul*, Donna Freitas mentions Amy, who is a high profile college student at a small school. She is articulate, thoughtful, athletic, intelligent, meticulous, manicured and confident. She wants to excel and be counted. She's a star on her campus. But she also likes to have fun and get noticed. Freitas writes, "Amy senses that looking 'hot' gives her sexual power over men on campus. Yet she also insists that dressing sexy has relatively little to do with sex. 'This attention is not so people will desire me or want to hook up with me,' she insists. 'It is simply to give me a confidence boost and help me feel good about myself.' As Amy understands things, dressing sexy is about *her* feeling empowered and not about pleasing guys or allowing them to dictate what she wears."

But things aren't quite as fun for Amy as she thinks. She's trading sexiness for male attention. She longs for a boyfriend. Once she starts talking about her personal sexual history, Amy's composure falters. "Amy really wants to find a

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For this series, I used several books as background reading and listened to sermons by as many people as I can find, especially Tim Keller, Les Newsom, Richard Vise, Jeff Ferguson, David Jones, Ray Cortese and Jean Larroux. The reader should assume that none of the ideas expressed are original to me.

boyfriend, someone who will love her. She's tried everything she knows: hooking up, being friends with benefits, playing hard to get. Nothing has worked. Most of her efforts have produced only heartache."

Amy recounts several experiences of hooking up, oral sex while drunk and with drunk guys, of one guy she was dating telling everyone he was going to get her "V card," thereby ending her virginity, and of things we would probably call sexual assault.

Freitas ends her interview with Amy this way: "Amy expresses a consuming frustration when it comes to sex and romance, and begins to seem less like a princess and more like the average college woman I met – vulnerable, burned by at least one guy and who, behind closed doors, admits to regret, shame and dismay about some of her past experiences. Amy also shares an inability to find her heart's desire: a real boyfriend, one who loved her and respected her and who would admit to their relationship in public by doing something as simple as asking her on a date or holding her hand while walking across campus. Amy can win the admiration of the entire campus in all sorts of ways, but she can't win at love. Despite her pull on the social scene, Amy is powerless to change her peers' expectations about dating and sex, so she goes with the crowd while at the same time clinging to the hope that she'll find one good guy somewhere."²

This story about Amy is so sad. How far off it is from you? What do you think are the experiences of our campus in regards to sex and sexuality? What brokenness have we in this room experienced? In the dorms every weekend, what are people going out to do and have done to them?

I think the Bible will help us and has something to say to Amy. Let's look at it.

The Designer of Sex – God

I've learned over years to read the instructions. I'm not a very handy person. I am terrible with tools. Every time I think I can do it, I find out I can't. I get a little depressed when I have to put something together because I know I'm about to fail, and I don't like feeling that way.

So I've been reading and following the instructions more closely. I know now that there is a designer of the product or the game or the thing I need to use. That designer has a reason for making what I have and for making it work the way it works. If I follow the directions, then I will be much better and happier. I know some of you are cynics and believe there are design flaws built into the system, but as long as we're not talking about Microsoft, then grant my point that at a basic level things are designed to work the way they should work.

Think of it this way: What if you see someone trying to pound a nail with a watch? What would you say? Are you crazy? That's not what a watch is for and that's not how you drive a nail. Neither one of those things was made to work that way. You will destroy your watch for sure. It is possible for a watch to do that job. It can hit nails. You can try a few times. But you're going to be much happier and more successful with a hammer. Here, try this and see how it goes.

Or what if your car gets stolen. You search and search for your car, and then you find it. It is a few miles down the road and someone has it in his driveway. He's taken the top off of the car so now it's a convertible. And he's filled the car with dirt and planted flowers in it. It's now a really big planter. What would you think? You'd be mad first of all that he stole your car. It's not yours! And it's also not yours to do what you want with it. It's my car.

So we need to consider that the designer of sex might have something in mind for it, and that we would do well to consider what that is for us. What we're rejecting is sex as mere biology. That sex is just something we have to do to survive, and we need to get over it and just be cool. Or that it's purely physical and your heart isn't really involved. Do you remember on *Friends* when Monica asks, "Can we still be friends and have sex?" "Sure," he replies, "it'll just be something we do together like play racquetball."

People don't work that way. Just look around. You can tell yourself that all you want, but it's not the way you were designed.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul writes in chapter 6: *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.*

This reminds us and sets for us that our bodies are not our own. We have been designed to work a certain way, and we need to consider how we should be and what we should do. Give your hearts to God. Give your bodies to God. Give it all to God. He loves you and wants the best for you, and in your sexuality.

Let's just say that God's design for sex is good! He loves sex. He wants you to have sex, lots of sex and great sex.

If you read the Bible, you don't get the impression that God is squeamish about sex. He's no prude. Remember Proverbs 5:15-20? It talks about cisterns and springs and breasts, which all deal fairly explicitly with sex. God created man and woman. He created the penis and vagina. He created them to work together. It's a pretty amazing system that's he's set up. He created it for our good. God created sex as the way to be fruitful and multiply. This is the way we continue *People*. It's one reason there is a huge design flaw in homosexuality. It's through sex that we procreate.

And sex is also for recreation. It's for pleasure. It's not just something to do to make babies, although that is a regular natural result. It is for fun, for enjoyment, for deep pleasure. God made that that way. It's why we like it so much, and why we want it so badly. God isn't a prude. He's not conservative about sex, thinking sex is gross or dirty.

² Freitas *Sex and the Soul*, pages 7-9

Do you think this way? Do you care about the design of sex and have you considered there is a designer?

The Context of Sex – Marriage

So God is the designer of sex. He has created it for his glory and our good. The chief end of sex is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

God tells us that the context then of sex in the way he has created it is marriage. It's not until you have a lifelong covenant commitment between a man and a woman in public with vows that you are to express yourself in the way you were intended to do so sexually. That's the place for it.

Let me step back for a second and mention that the Bible also says you are to marry a Christian. It's only another Christian that can understand who you are and what you're all about. No one else can understand the direction of your life, the passions of your heart, the reasons you say yes or no to things except a Christian. If God is the Lord of your life, you must be connected to someone else who also has God in the center.

Tim Keller put it this way: Imagine this fantastic scenario that isn't real but is trying to get you to see what it's like. You go to a party with your spouse and there are 20 people there. You come back and your spouse says, Wow, I can't believe there were only ten people at that party. You know there were 20 people there, but your spouse just can't see the other 10. So what do you do? You can't talk about the 10 he doesn't see. You can only talk about the 10 you both agree on.

That's what it's like when you marry someone who isn't a Christian. You have a lot of things to talk about. You can agree on many things. But ultimately you do not see the world in the same way. You have a different world view, and that is a huge difference. You cannot find agreement on the very deepest things of your soul. That will cause you so much trouble. Seek to marry someone who agrees with your view of God, the Bible, and the church.

Once you do that, you get to go at it. Once you have the papers, you get to have sex as much as often as you want to. You have committed your whole life to that person, everything about you is handed over into the life of the other. You need to give all of yourself – soul, mind, checkbook, schedule, future – in order to feel the safety to give your body to that person. This is what true love is. It's a life commitment to someone no matter what. In sickness and in health. In plenty and in want. Till death do we depart.

Do you see how that is the place for vulnerability? This commitment is the place where you finally are safe to take your clothes off, be naked and unashamed, to give all of yourself, to open yourself up and place yourself into such a life? God designed this to be in the place of a covenant commitment. Not a hook up. Not a date. Not dating. This is using each other for our own pleasure, not caring for the other person in love and commitment.

It is true that you were made to have sex. Your bodies have been ready for sex since you were 14. There are girls, and I'll bet many of you are some of them, who start their periods at 12. I almost passed out when my daughter told me, "I can have babies now!" She was excited, and I was excited for her, but I also wasn't sure what to do or think about.

You are facing a very big pressure, and I understand that. I get how sexualized our society is. When you factor in how ready you are, the images and messages you get every day, and the situations you put yourself in, it makes for a dangerous situation. I'm asking you for wisdom and also insight as you commit yourself with walking with God in this area. That you would not be thinking that Christianity is a way to ruin your fun or stop you from happiness, but it actually points you toward the very way you were made in your heart and your soul as well as your body. That following God as the designer for sex is to submit yourself to his goodness because he loves you and cares for you and knows how you tick. He made you that way. He gets it. And he embraces and loves sex. He wants you to experience it in marriage.

This is where you should learn about sex – from your spouse. The only naked person you should see and touch is your husband or your wife. In an article in Salon Magazine, the author writes, "The problem is that thinking that you can learn to make love to a woman from watching porn is like thinking you can learn to drive from watching 'The Fast and the Furious.'" You can't learn to have sex by watching porn, talking to your friends, or even having sex with people who aren't your spouse. In fact those things won't help you but they will hurt you in the long run.³ There is a regular, consistent goodness of sex that is only found over time with your spouse as he or she deepens as your best friend.

Sexuality outside of this context weakens our love and trust for our spouse. This is not something you want. Sex is to be in marriage because marriage pictures for us and is for us the place of a love commitment, of giving all of ourselves to another person.

"Sex is as good a site as any to observe the slide away from generosity, through self-gratification, profit maximizing, and selling and bartering, to nasty warring. Watch any current popular TV series – Sex and the City or Desperate Housewives for example – and it would never occur to you that sex might be a gift two people in a lifelong covenant give each other, a

³ "The heterosexual icon [Hugh Hefner] ... had trouble finding satisfaction through intercourse; instead, he liked the girls to pleasure each other while he masturbated and watched...porn." This statement may seem either shocking or trivial. But it points to that which Hefner's detractors have been saying for years: Pornography stifles the development of genuine human relationships. Pornography is a manifestation of arrested development. Pornography reduces spiritual desire to Newtonian mechanics. Pornography, indulged long enough, hollows out sex to the point where even the horniest old goat is unable to physically enjoy the bodies of nubile young females." Mercer Schuchardt, *Hugh Hefner's Hollow Victory: How the Playboy Magnate Won the Culture War, Lost his Soul, and Left Us with a Mess to Clean up*. Found in David Jones' sermon on this topic.

sacrament of their lasting love. Instead partners randomly “hook up,” each hungry to sexually satisfy some inchoate craving that has not definite object and can never find rest. They crave chocolate, they grab a chocolate bar; they crave sex, they just grab the most willing partner. Worse still, wars are waged with sex. Sex can bring status and define who belongs and who doesn’t. It can serve to inflict a sweet revenge or to reward cooperation, or it can be a tool to manipulate or dominate. By having sex, we can easily do almost anything other than truly give and receive – give and receive pleasure and give and receive each other as treasured lovers.”⁴

We’re able to give ourselves generously to another person in the context of marriage. Sex is powerful. It’s like a fire. If you come to my house in the winter, I’ll probably have a fire in the fireplace. You’ll marvel at its beauty and warmth. But if I were to pull it out and start it on the floor of the living room, you would be disgusted by the smoke, and very, very concerned because the carpet would catch fire and the house may burn down. Same fire. Different places.

The Mechanics of Sex – uh

Let’s pause now and talk then about what is and what isn’t sex. There seems to be some confusion on this point. On the one hand, I don’t want to delineate every situation for you and act like these are the rules for you to follow and you’ll be good to go. I’m not going to be the morality police for you. I’d be happy to talk with you about what I think would be appropriate, and how you should act. Remember I said that you should generally go with what you can do on the South Oval.

But that doesn’t seem to cut it. So on the other hand, I feel like I need to talk about this and just be plain. Some of you don’t really care. You’re going to go as far as you want to go no matter what I say. Others of you are Pharisees. You have rules and you follow them and you look down on everyone who doesn’t. But some of you really want to know.

So let’s talk about it.

You have to realize that your bodies and your souls fit together. God made you a physical and spiritual nexus. They come together. One of the places that is the most evident is in our sexuality. There is something very spiritual about the physical. We just know it. That’s why we crave it and want it so badly. It touches heaven in many ways. It gets us out of our selves. Something happens and we want more, more of whatever it is.

Recognize this power then and respect it.

We can talk about sex very specifically and technically. Many people define sex as only penis in vagina intercourse. And of course this is sex. This is how we procreate and also get pleasure. But sex is I think obviously broader than this – there are other things we do to get and receive pleasure. It will not do to think that God says that is the only thing we can’t do outside of marriage.

Don’t just take my word for it. Jesus says in Matthew 15: *18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.*

Again Paul writes in Ephesians 5: *1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. 3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.*

The word sexual immorality there is the word *porneia*, which is where we get the word pornography. This word translated “sexual immorality” means *anything* you would do sexually that is not with your spouse. If you would be mad at your husband or your wife for doing this with someone else, then that qualifies for sexual immorality and *porneia*.

I don’t think you would be very happy with a definition that only includes intercourse and makes everything else okay once you were married. If you have an orgasm, it’s sex. If you take off your pants, it’s sex. Oral sex is sex.

One of my former students bravely wrote this to me in thinking about this topic.

The destruction comes from the seeking, not necessarily the finding. Oral sex is another way that the insidious nature of that kind of sin shows itself. The devil is a pragmatist. Can't go all the way? Fine....What's the next best avenue for you to tell the same lie to your girlfriend? Have her take you in a way that makes her feel almost as useless afterwards, but still allows her to call herself a virgin. It is still entering one another metaphorically, as well. The devil, then, still has your heart. When I was looking at porn, it was not only the porn that was wearing away my soul, it was the constant need to go look and see more. Seeking the approval and permanence of another person is what any kind of nakedness does. It still says, "I'll be here forever," and, "All of you is all OK with me," without any real commitment whatsoever.

So there you go. That seems pretty specific and non general. These seem like pretty specific guidelines that could clear up a lot of things. You shouldn’t be doing those things with anyone who isn’t your spouse *ever*. There aren’t any circumstances where those would be acceptable by God.

But wait. It’s pretty tough to just stop right at those places. Many of you know firsthand the frustration, confusion and anger that comes when you get right up to those lines and then stop. It’s difficult. It’s terrible. You don’t always do it. That’s because your bodies were made to be going a certain direction toward sex and it’s simply not natural for you to stop. You are swimming upstream against how you are made.

⁴ Volf, *Free of Charge*, 15

Making out gets you ready for – sex. That’s the way your body was designed. So when he touches your breasts or you make out or you lie down or you start to rub against each other it’s not inevitable that you will end up having sex, but you are not being wise or respectful for the way things work.

Some of you think your body and your sexuality is like an elevator. There are ten floors, but you only want to go up to floor five or six so you punch it in and get off at the right time. Not a problem.

But really you are much more like an escalator. One of those huge escalators at a stadium or the new Cowboy stadium. It takes you up not just one floor but four or five stories. Once you get on, you’re going to the top, and people are not going to be happy if you start going the wrong direction.

My kids love to go the wrong way on the escalator for some reason. They run up and down the other side, and do this until they get in trouble. But we’re not kids anymore. We understand that the escalator has a purpose, and if we don’t want to go up, then we shouldn’t get on. Going down the wrong way is way more trouble than not getting on at all.

As Tim Keller asks, Why are you getting on the escalator if you don’t want to ride to the top? Why are you asking how far is too far? Do you want to see how much you can sin without sinning? Out bodies are to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Are you glorifying God with your boyfriend and your girlfriend? Are you glorifying God with your body? Or are you using your body for attention or to get attraction or to fill an ache in your heart? Are you using your body for sexual immorality or for the Lord?

Would you be okay with your wife sleeping the in same room or in the same bed as another man? This are not okay. This is not wise. This is not respectful or kind or loving.

I’m not trying to give you more rules but to get you to think about it. Think about how sex works and why it works. It’s joining two people together in a way unlike any other way. Sex then is supposed to be just a part of a marriage, of a joining together of lives. When you only have one part of the picture, you make something out of proportion and kill the thing itself.

Let’s broaden it out even a little further. In his book *His Needs, Her Needs*, William Harley identifies the top five female needs and male needs in marriage. In other words, as a couple commits themselves to life long togetherness and intimacy, what comes out as the top needs of both the man and the woman?⁵

First the woman’s needs:

Affection – she needs to be treated romantically and made to feel special and valued.

Conversation – it affirms her importance to be let in on your life, men. I would say that you don’t have a relationship unless you and your wife have at least 10 minutes of face to face, uninterrupted conversation every day.

Honesty/openness – a woman tends to be more inward or relational in her social orientation. She has to get the sense that she knows you more deeply than anyone else does...including your drinking buddies, guys! Does she know what goes on during your day? Does she know your heart/

Financial support – women tend to see money as security. Men see money as a conquest. When a man loses his job, prepare for some real testing to go on.

Family commitment – men, you must communicate that the family is more important than work or recreation. Why? Because this is her domain, this is her primary source of emotional strength.

Men, do you hear the themes coming out here? You can sum all this up in Ephesians 5 by hearing the Apostle Paul say, “Husbands, love your wives.” It is LOVE that she desires, not praise, not presents, but love.

So what are the man’s needs?:

Sex – this is not dessert; it is the meal, the place where men feel important. To mock him in this area is the end of your marriage...period.

Companionship – find things you can do together. A man loves knowing that he can do things with his companion “at his side.” (Note: “talking” is not an activity.)

Trust – show him you trust him, that you honor his efforts to provide for you.

Domestic support – the world world buffets men, forcing them to feel competitive and to feel inferior. He needs to know that he has a soft place to land.

Admiration – someone needs to be his fan club. Communicate to your husband, ladies, that you think he’s the greatest thing since sliced bread, and he’ll never leave you.

These needs all start working together into a complex, organic life. Things need to be tended to with care, like a garden. You can’t just let it go untended. It takes work. It takes pruning. It takes mulching and weeding. If you do those things, it will grow into something truly beautiful and live giving. Sex is a part of that. It’s not the only part. It’s not the most important part. But it is a part and it fits into the rest of a whole life together. In other words, our genitals are not the only things about us. Our physical bodies, our brains and our hormones, our lives all affect our lives and our marriages. They all start to work together. You are wise to understand both how sex is different and yet also how it is the same and connected with the rest of life.

⁵ From Les Newsom’s sermon on this.

Let me finish with two important thoughts.

The first is You Can Do It!

I ran my second marathon last weekend. Julie and I actually ran it together. It was her first marathon ever, and she did a wonderful job. I really enjoyed running with her. When people find out I ran that marathon, almost all of them show me a lot of respect and admiration, which of course I love. They are really impressed. 26.2 miles is a long way.

But 90% of the time there is a second reaction after the first. Almost always the person will say, "I could never do that." It's an understandable but curious thing to say, I think. After all only 1/10th of one percent of all Americans have completed a marathon (so Jeff Galloway says). 1/10th of one percent. That doesn't sound like very much. But actually that is 300,000 people! When you think of it that way, it's a ton of people who have done this.

When I went to my first marathon, I stayed at a hotel in Dallas to run the White Rock. The night before I was milling around and looking at all the people, and I kept thinking, "Okay where are all the runners? These have to be the spectators." No one fit my profile of what a runner or an athlete should look like.

Sure enough, when we lined up, those people were the runners! All sizes. All ages. All abilities. There really wasn't a "type" out there at all. I was getting passed after 15 miles by 250 pound women, and I couldn't figure it out.

So many of us think we just can't do it. You could never do it. But that's what I used to think too. I had never ever run more than 5 miles before 5 years ago. It's not like I just loved running. It's deciding to do it because you have a vision of something you want to do. You look at something ahead of you and you train and you work and you know you can do it if you get help and keep pressing forward. My dad ran a half marathon, which is 13.1 miles. He's 64. He had never ran more than one mile before he started. He joined a group of other runners, and they ran together, supported each other, and they made it together.

That's true with your body not only for a marathon, but also for sex and sexual identity. You can do it. There is no "type" of person who is more holy or less holy. We all come into things with different sets of issues (just like running), but we are all still called to holiness. You can run this race and make it through. We'll help you. Jesus says he'll help you, but you have to have a vision before you. On the one hand, you have to look step by step, minute by minute. Keeping faithful to the plan. On the other hand, you need to look ahead to the goal in mind and remember why you're doing this – it's for your good and for God's glory.

Set some things in your heart. Commit to faithfulness to your spouse. Commit to chastity now. Do not use others or allow yourself to be used in that way any longer. Stop looking at porn. Stop reading those magazines that don't help you. Go head and walk out of some movies. Make some reasonable rules for you and your boyfriend or girlfriend that keep you off the escalator. Don't be a fool.

There is another sword and a shield for this battle – it's called first a ring and then the bed. Don't get married in order to have sex, but wouldn't it be nice to walk to class or work and say, "I had sex this morning"? Wouldn't it be great to not have to leave late at night sexually frustrated and guilty and ashamed. God says that is possible – get married. That is the place for those desires to be fulfilled.

But there's something else. You can do it! Yes. But you also can't do it. You haven't done it. Bummer. You fail. You have failed. You have touched, looked at, kissed, watched and done things you shouldn't have done. There is pain and anguish in your heart. You may even fail in the future. What can you do? What hope is there?

Thankfully, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners! He saved you not because of the righteous works you had done but because of his love and mercy. God is rich in mercy. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God so that no one can boast! God shows loves for us in this – while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!

I want you to repent today, and I'll give you three categories.

First, some of you need to repent of you pride. Some of you haven't messed up very badly. Maybe you've never kissed anyone before and you're saving yourself for your wedding day. That is awesome, really. But are you reaching out to others in love or are you judging others who haven't had the same blessings or made the same choices as you have? Repent of your pride in your good works. Do not be an older brother or a Pharisee. Cling to the work of Christ and reach out to others.

Second, some of you need to repent of your sexual sins. That may mean you need to talk about them and get them out in the open. We have a few venues for that, and you should take advantage of them. You may also need to talk about your sexual confusion or how this has affected your identity. You may not know how to relate to men anymore without showcasing your body. You may not know how to have same sex friendships. You may not be clear as to what is and what isn't wise. Repent and be honest and get help.

And come back and hear about what sex means next week.

Thirdly, all of us need to repent of something both wider and deeper. Throughout the Bible, God talks about sin, and one of the metaphors he uses is sexual imagery. He calls his church a whore. She takes in other lovers. In James he talks about a spiritual adultery, saying that when we sin we are sleeping with, giving ourselves to, taking in lovers besides our spouse, which is God.

It's an interesting and graphic way to talk about sin. It is distasteful to us. *We* are whores? *We* are adulterers? God says yes, yes we are. We have not been faithful to him. We have sought out the affection of other gods, other things, and we have given them the things we should only give God.

In this metaphorical sense, and also in a real sense, we are all broken sexually. None of us have escaped. Your heart has been touched. Do you want to be cured? Do you want to be healed?

This is way more than "just say no" – it's just say yes. Yes to God's wisdom and design. But even more... Yes again and again to salvation in Jesus. Christianity is more than good advice. It is good news for you because we serve a God who comes after and pursues failure with undying love and passionate affection. He wants to forgive and heal and renew.

Yet God loves us. He calls us back to be his bride. He calls us away from that and to faithfulness to him. He calls us to enjoy him and glorify him forever. It's in light of that love and redemptive power that we should honor him with our bodies and our souls.

The gospel says that Jesus came and loved the sexually immoral (1 Cor 6:10-11). He washed them, sanctified them and justified them. He sent his Spirit for them and that Spirit resides in them. They are clean. They are forgiven and set free. By Jesus. Trust in him today.