

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he  
created him; male and female he created them.  
Genesis 1:27

What is God's design for sex? (Things you already know but may need a refresher)

God's commands regarding sex are not just a side issue. They are a prominent theme spanning the Old and New Testaments, especially in terms of holiness. The word "holy" literally means set apart for a special purpose." As Christians, our sexual ethic is a major way in which we are called to be set apart from the world because sexual holiness is, in essence, a sign of our knowledge of and commitment to God. It has always been this way.

**What does the Old Testament say about sexual immorality?**

Throughout Scripture, we see how God's people have been called to sexual holiness - how they are to be sexually set apart. Let's take a cursory overview through the Old Testament to see exactly how serious the Lord is regarding this topic.

I recommend reading through Deuteronomy 22:13-25 and Leviticus 18 & 20 to get a thorough overview of what God defines as sexual immorality and how seriously He takes it. One might really notice the He's really thorough in these passages. His commands regarding sex aren't just revealing sexual boundaries; God is actually describing the culture that the Israelites were coming out of and the culture they were told to conquer. God prefaces the Levitical sex laws by saying, "I am the Lord your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you" (Leviticus 18:2-3). God then proceeds to list everyone (family members) and everything (animals) with whom to not have sex. After this extensive list, He restates His original purpose for sexual holiness: "Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled" (Leviticus 18:24). In other words, This is how I am calling you to be set apart from the rest of the world! Don't mess it up, or I'll remove you just like I did them. (And if you keep reading through Judges and Chronicles, you'll see that's exactly what happens.)

Israel struggled with sexual idolatry from the start - and kept returning to it throughout its history. There are a few pockets here and there where they are faithful to God. But more often than not, they fell back into the practices of the nations whom they were told to drive out of the land.

And just in case you are still wondering how seriously God takes sexual sin, look over to Numbers 25. This is one of those Bible stories that will never be reenacted on a felt board in Sunday school, but it's an important read. Moses is giving a verbal smackdown to the entire nation of Israelite men for sleeping around with Midianite women. In the middle of his rant, some moron traipses through the crowd with a Midianite woman on his arm and disappears with her into his tent. Aaron's grandson Phinehas sees this, follows them in, and skewers them with a spear... in the middle of the deed. How does God respond? He gives Phinehas and his descendants an eternal priesthood for being so zealous for the Lord. Our sexual holiness REALLY matters to God.

### **What does the New Testament have to say about sexual immorality?**

The New Testament also has quite a bit to say on the topic. In Romans 1, Paul describes the descent of a culture down into oblivion. The passage begins with people who know God but don't really care about worshipping Him (verse 22). They start worshipping something else (verse 23), and God gives them over to what they think they want: sex. (Verse 24). A few verses later their disobedience goes from depraved to unnatural (verse 26). At the end of the whole process you are left with a group that doesn't even know what good looks like anymore.

Sexual morality is emphasized in almost every New Testament epistle, especially the ones aimed at Gentiles, who didn't have the benefit of centuries of Jewish law. Sexual immorality is not only mentioned, but it's usually mentioned first in the long lists of sins that a Christ-follower must forsake.

- 1) 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 Paul is so emphatic on sexual holiness that he commands church members *not to associate with those who call themselves Christians but engage in sexual immorality*.
- 2) Ephesians 5:3 - Paul says that there shouldn't even be a hint of sexual immorality among believers and not even in jest.
- 3) Colossians 3:5 - Believers are told to put sexual immorality to death.
- 4) Galatians 5:16-19 - Sexual immorality is contrasted with the fruit of the Spirit.
- 5) Revelation 2:13-16 - A lax attitude regarding sexual immorality is a deal breaker, even in a church that is faithful in almost every other way.
- 6) 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 - This might be the most convicting passage of all. It is God's will that we avoid sexual immorality, and "anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God."

### **The Purpose of Sex**

It should be clear what God says about sexuality. Why does God define sexual morality in such a narrow way? It seems like an arbitrary rule. If sex is so wonderful and a gift from God, why would he try to limit it so much? The answer is simple, but it won't make sense if you don't understand the power and purpose of sex.

**\*\*Parent Tip** - All conversations with our kids about sex need to include a very important concept: Sex is a married couple repeating their marital vows in bodily form.

The act of sex is not just a promise: it is a reference back to a promise that was already made. As Tim Keller says in his article "The Gospel and Sex," sex is a covenant renewal ceremony for marriage, the physical reenactment of the inseparable oneness in all other areas - economic, legal, personal, physiological - created by the marriage covenant." God doesn't place limits on sex because He wants to downplay the goodness of sex. He places limits on it because sex has meaning, meaning that our culture has lost. When something is really powerful, there are limits placed on it and also heavily guarded. For example, a nuclear warhead or prescription drugs. In fact, the more important and powerful something is, the more it is usually safeguarded. Why wouldn't we expect the same to be true of sex? Since God created sex, He is the only one who truly knows what it means, what it communicates, and how powerful it really is - and how destructive it is when misused.

### **Let's talk about Gender**

Let's start with the word "gender." The root word of gender is *gen* - which means "that which produces." I.e. genetics, genes, genealogy, genitals. Our gender is the means by which we, as humans, produce new life. We can contribute in two ways: a sperm or an egg. Those are the options. No spectrums. And our gender is determined by our *genitals*. No matter how someone feels, no matter their hobbies, if their theoretical contribution to a baby would be sperm, then their gender is male. If it's an egg, then female. No soul-searching required.

### **What does the Bible say about Transgenderism?**

This one is quick to answer: the only hard and fast rule that I can find when it comes to gender identity is in regards to people who are trying to look like the other gender. Deuteronomy 22:5 says, "A woman must not wear men's clothes, nor a man wear woman's clothing." There is frankly a lot of biblical freedom when it comes to gender expression - as long as the person isn't trying to make people believe something that isn't true - namely that they're a boy when they're not, or a girl when they're not. So basically, just respect what the Designer gave you, and then be who He created you to be!

### **Lies that the world is saying about gender and transgenderism?**

- 1) Gender is on a spectrum - While gender expression may be on a spectrum, gender itself is not. Our ability to fit in with others of our gender does not determine gender.
- 2) It is possible to change one's sex - It is possible to change your genitals. (Sorta?) But this does not and never will change your sex because you can't change your DNA. Fun fact: Dr. Alyson McGregor has an entire lecture on the differences between males and females when administering medical aid. Why? Because men and women are biologically different on a cellular level.
- 3) If you feel uncomfortable in your body, you are probably transgender. This lie is being told to our teenagers in droves. Think about when you were a teenager, emotions ruled the show. You were trying to fit in with everyone else. Teenagers are prime targets because they so desperately want to fit in with their community of people.

### **Closing Remarks**

As Christians, we belong to Christ. Our bodies are no longer our own. We are to reflect Christ in everything we do.

- 1) Ephesians 2:10 - For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.
- 2) Romans 6:6 - For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be rendered powerless so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin.
- 3) 1 Peter 2:9 - But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
- 4) Galatians 2:20 - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- 5) Colossians 3:1-4 - Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

- 6) 2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Brothers and sisters, if you are found in Christ, you are a new creation.

Resources:

Tim Keller - The Meaning Of Marriage

Matt Chandler - The Mingling of Souls

Gregg R. Allison - Embodied: Living as a Whole People in a Fractured World

Nancy Pearcey - Love Thy Body