

## Biblical Sexuality

Worldview. Everyone has a worldview, although hardly anyone is aware of it. We unconsciously form one as we go thru life, and it resides deep in our mind controlling how we interpret and respond to the world we live in. We can change our worldview, but only with great difficulty. Unbelievers of course have their worldview. When people become a follower of Christ, they should repent of the worldview they previously held and form instead a new one, a biblical worldview, and then live it to the glory of God. This doesn't happen. Today's Christianity knows nothing of any kind of worldview let alone a biblical one. This is tragic.

A biblical worldview should be comprehensive, dealing with every aspect of modern life. It should include Scripture's understanding of government, science, culture, work, education, and lots, lots more. It should *especially* deal with sexuality. Let's try to understand here what Scripture teaches about sexuality, because God cares deeply about it.

We have allowed Hollywood, authors of novels, feminist movement activists, and sex educators in public schools to determine the modern Western understanding of sexuality. What our pagan culture thinks or does is not my concern here. My concern is that pagan sexuality is not, must not be found in the Church. So let's explore Scripture to see if we can form a biblical worldview of sexuality. Two aspects: first, sexual identity, and then sexual expression.

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I Sexual Identity. We are not a soul encased in a body. We are a person, and a person is a soul and a body, perfectly united as one living human being. Scripture doesn't reveal how the soul is generated, but we must conclude that, as the soul is immaterial, God somehow is its source. Scripture says that before we're born, God ordains the day that we'll die. The first person that God made was a male. He then made a female. It wasn't by accident that a male came first, it was intentional. Early in life, the sex we have profoundly affects our mind, our soul. So we should reasonably conclude that either before or at conception, God determines the sex of the body that we have. The sex we have is not an accident or a random event of genetics, as modern science alleges. We are either a male or a female person according to God's will for us.

In God's administration of His world, He has ordained male leadership. The head of the clans of Israel were male. Kings, prophets, priests were (are) all male. The apostles were male. Elders/pastors and deacons are male. There are, in Scripture, exceptions: Miriam was a prophetess. During the period of the Judges, Deborah was both a prophetess and a judge. Judah had one ruling queen, and she was a total disaster; she was a Baal worshipper, the daughter of wicked Jezebel, who nearly brought the nation to an end. Anna was a prophetess in the Temple when Jesus was born (Luke 2). In the early church, there seem to have been women deacons. And Luke reports in Acts that Priscilla (along with her husband) instructed Apollos in the way of the Lord; Apollos then went on to serve the Lord mightily.

Paul did not allow women to speak (to their husbands?) during a church meeting (1 Corinthians 14:33b-36). Evidently this was either disruptive or it indicated insubordination. In Paul's mind, it was disgraceful. But later, Paul heightened this prohibition (1 Timothy 2:11-15) and explained why. He forbade women from teaching or having such authority over the men in the assemblies. Evidently, this had to do with the ability to think clearly about Scripture. From the Creation narrative, Paul intended that men would have teaching authority in the churches. Adam had priority over his wife, having been created first; to Paul, this meant male leadership in the churches. But Paul continues: And Adam was betrayed by his wife, who allowed herself to be deceived. Paul's appeal to Creation makes this a universal rule.

As Scripture progresses, we see that women often give bad counsel: Sarah to her husband regarding Hagar (Genesis 21), for example, and Rebecca to Jacob regarding Isaac's love for Esau (Genesis 27). Miriam challenged Moses, God's servant (Numbers 12) and the Lord punished her for that. Jezebel wickedly, deceitfully gave her husband, King Ahab, Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21). In the very early church, Sapphira joined with her husband

Ananias, in trying to deceive the assembly (Acts 5). Scripture does not spare women from expression of the sinful nature. God's design for humanity is male leadership.

Elsewhere, Paul taught that we all should be content with our station in life, which would include being content with our sex and the roles that God intends for each. And Paul included selfish ambition in his pagan vice lists. So women should not aspire to be elder or pastor in the churches or teach in seminaries.

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul engages the issue of sexuality with greater discussion. The immediate problem is the woman's head covering in the assemblies, but he universalizes the issue. His argument is that in the Creation order of things, as is also traditional in society, there exists a hierarchy of the sexes. The man has headship over the woman. This is not something to argue about and is not related to a particular time or culture. But Paul isn't finished: "Nevertheless, in the Lord . . ." (11:11) things are different! As both are in Christ, male and female are mutually interdependent. In other words, redemption changes things, it reconfigures how they are in creation. The woman came from the man at creation, but a man come from a woman during procreation. The man owes his very existence to a woman! Thus Paul seems to be saying that, in Christ, male and female are equal although distinct, without hierarchy of being or value.

Paul grounds this doctrine on the relationship of Jesus to the Father (11:3c). As Jesus was subordinate to the Father in His earthly existence, yet He was (is) fully God, and so equal to the Father, although a distinct person. In the Trinity, there is no hierarchy; all Persons are co-equal. But the necessity of the Incarnation made Jesus (see Paul's argument earlier, in 8:4-6) humbly submissive and obedient to the Father. As Jesus was not inferior to the Father, neither is the woman inferior to the man. Paul says something similar in Galatians 3:26-28, "In Christ Jesus, you are all sons of God . . . there is not . . . male and female." Redemption changes things! We gain a new identity.

II Sexual Expression. In Scripture, sexuality finds expression only in marital sexual intercourse. Period. All else is sin. And sexual immorality is not just a form of sin that necessitates punishment, it is itself the wrath of God being revealed. Sexual immorality of every kind *is* God's judgment, according to a close reading of the critically important passage in Romans 1. For failure to honor God, to love and obey Him with gratitude, God gives people over to sexual sins (among others), thereby greatly amplifying their ultimate condemnation. Thus homosexuality is how God expresses the wrath such persons deserve because of their wicked non-response to His clearly evident self-revelation (1:19-20). There's no such thing as a homosexual who is following Jesus; it's an oxymoron.

Right at Creation, embedded in the Bible's creation narrative, God states clearly that a man and woman unite in marriage to form a one-flesh union (Genesis 2:24). From a side of that first man's body, God formed a woman. She is of the same substance as the man. During sexual intercourse, the union is re-established. The man and woman become united as one flesh, creating a new kind of permanent relationship that's more intimate than kinship. Sexual intercourse is not merely an act people engage in for pleasure (or domination or for whatever other motive there may be). Sexual intercourse replicates before God His great cosmic purpose for humanity and His will to exalt the Son. The physical, one flesh union of husband and wife during sexual intercourse mirrors or is a type of the very real, albeit invisible, union of a believer with Jesus. Union with Christ is the very essence of salvation; His Spirit unites to ours and a new creation is formed. The one-flesh union during sexual intercourse also mirrors the eternal spiritual union of the Persons of the Godhead. It is therefore sacred to God.

Paul expands on Genesis 2:24 in 1 Corinthians 6 and 7 and in Ephesians 5. Here's what he writes: Sex with a prostitute is abominable. That's because the man forms a one-flesh union with someone who is NOT his wife. So he doesn't love her, has no responsibility for her, won't bring forth children with her, and the union doesn't mirror our union with Christ. It's a counterfeit relationship, it's a parody of God's intent for sexual intercourse.

In the marriage relationship, due to the one-flesh union, the wife's body belongs to the husband and vice versa. Each person is an extension of the other. Each is to be devoted to the other. Because of the one-flesh union, an unbelieving spouse is sanctified by the one who is a believer. In marriage, each person lives to please his or her spouse.

The wife is to be subordinate to her husband (Ephesians 5:22), and husbands are to love their wives selflessly, sacrificially (v. 25). The intimate, permanent, one-flesh union in marriage is explicitly intended to mirror Christ's intimate, one-body relationship with His followers.

The issue in adultery isn't so much lack of faithfulness or the breaking of vows, but that adultery violates God's intention of one-flesh union and the relationship it generates. Same with all non-marital sexual intercourse. Self-gratification violates the spiritual reality sexual intercourse is meant to portray. What's wrong with viewing pornography? It celebrates if not vicariously participates in sexual immorality, thereby heaping contempt on God's intent for marital one-flesh union. Same for lustful sexual thoughts and fantasies.

The reason an elder/pastor must be husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:2) is because in his marriage he embodies for the assembly he leads the reality or essence of salvation, viz., being in Christ, united to Him forever. This is the creation ideal; how it's applied in today's sin-saturated world however requires wisdom and grace.

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It's impossible to discuss biblical sexuality in today's Western world without engaging the current egalitarian vs. complementarian controversy that's raging among evangelical church leaders. So I submit the following: (i) God created man larger and stronger than the woman. He was to provide for and protect the woman. And (ii) the man was made first; the woman was taken out of the man. And (iii) in Genesis 2, God spoke to the man, not to the woman. Implicit is, the man would convey to the woman what God had said. So, the man had authority from God over the woman. They were not equals.

We thus should understand that, what happened in Genesis 3 is, the woman rebelled against her husband. Satan cleverly got the woman out from under the authority of the man. If that's too difficult to accept, in 3:16, God pronounced an oracle that, due to the force of sin, the woman would seek to dominate or control the man but that the man would rule over her. In marriage, sin would see to it that there was no peace between the sexes. So the issue in these early chapters is, submissiveness vs. domination, authority over rebellion. (This issue carried over into Genesis 4, where it was sin that sought to dominate Cain, and Cain rebelled against God.)

In Ephesians 5, Paul writes that *in Christ*, the woman now has the ability to be subject to her husband. With sin having been dealt with at the cross, that Genesis 3:16 oracle has been overcome; the creational design is now possible: There is to be a hierarchical relationship between the man and the woman. They are not equals. In Christ, the rebellion is over. God's creational design was for submissiveness to the authority He delegated, and being in Christ doesn't change this. Rather, it makes it both more urgent (for Christian testimony) and possible. The woman can/should do this "as unto the Lord."

Egalitarianism is not an option. Our culture is anti-theistic, and Marxism adds a Satanic desire to destroy civilization. So the feminist movement is purposely to participate in the deliberate overthrow of the social order, by disrupting and seeding chaos in every institution in society: in the corporate world, in education, in the family and in the church. The egalitarian movement in modern American Christianity is the Serpent deploying the same strategy as in the Garden.

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We dwell in a society that has undergone a radically anti-theistic sexual revolution. And Satan has used (is using) pagan sexuality to bludgeon the Church. Our worldview must control how we think about and pursue life. We need to know the mind of the Lord so that we can be godly. That's why we developed here a biblical worldview regarding sexuality. With love in our hearts for the Lord, we now can and should rejoice at His ineffable wisdom and goodness.