

Group Resource

Sermon Notes – Sunday, March 16, 2014

Love, Sex + Godly Relationships

Message: Building intimacy on the foundation of Godly love

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

- I. In this series, we have examined the questions, (1) **“What is real love?”** (2) **“How do we accept and live in God’s perfect and real love?”** and (3) **How do we reflect God’s love in our actions towards others?** In part 4 of this series, we examine how intimacy and relationships are designed to be built on the foundation of Godly love.
- II. Many of us have encountered the question of whether sex is about love or pleasure.
 - a. This question, however, introduces a logical fallacy. A false dichotomy is committed when “the arguer claims that his conclusion is one of only two options, when in fact there are other possibilities. The arguer then goes on to show that the ‘only other option’ is clearly outrageous, and so his preferred conclusion must be embraced.”
 - b. If we reason that sex is either about love or pleasure, we may then conclude that God wants us to experience pleasure, so we should enjoy sex in any way that we like.
 - c. While social commentators have proclaimed that everyone’s idea of sex needs to be liberated from the prudish understanding of sexual expression, they haven’t disclosed the effects of such a choice. Sexual liberation, including increased acceptance of sex outside of traditional heterosexual, monogamous relationships has been rationalized under the maxim of “if it feels good do it!”
 - d. As followers of Christ, we are called to be wise! This means that we have an obligation to examine our opinions about sex and sexuality and understand whether these opinions line up with the Word of God. For example, the idea of sexual liberation involves much more than the act itself.
 - i. It affects how we understand gender (male and female)
 - ii. It affects how we understand power
 - iii. It affects how we understand true intimacy
 - iv. It affects how we define commitment and covenant
 - v. It affects how we pursue marriage and divorce
- III. The idea of separating sexual expression from a commitment of love and marriage is dangerous.
 - a. While many find themselves gratified by sexual expressions outside of the marriage it doesn’t determine whether these actions fit within God’s design for sexual expression.
 - i. Weirsbey says “There may be excitement and enjoyment in sexual experience outside of marriage, *but there is not enrichment*. Sex outside of marriage is like a man robbing a bank: he gets something, but it is not his and he will one day pay for it. Sex within marriage can be like a person putting money into a bank: there is safety, security, and he will collect dividends.”
 - b. Sex is the apex of intimacy! Marriage was designed to be consummated through the act of sexual intimacy. Sex involves more than just a physical exchange. Rather, it involves exchanging of body, mind, and Spirit
 - c. The Apostle Paul noted the gravity of the sexual union.
 - i. *1 Corinthians 6:15-16 - 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.”*
 - d. What some view as just casual ‘hooking up’ is an act of uniting ourselves with our sexual partners.
 - e. Blomberg writes in the NIV Application Commentary that, “Because sex reflects the most intimate of interpersonal relations among humans, it should be reserved for the most permanent of interpersonal commitments.”
- IV. So what is our responsibility as Christian believers who have made Christ the Lord of our lives?
 - a. We recognize and accept the redemptive work that Christ has done on the cross for our sins

- b. We make the choice to honor God in our body and the things that we do with our body
 - i. *God the Father created our bodies; God the Son redeemed them and made them part of His body; and God the Spirit indwells our bodies and makes them the very temple of God.*

V. How do we honor God with our body and our relationships?

VI. **1 - We seek healthy relationships as a part of God's will for our lives while prioritizing those relationships so that we are not mastered by them.**

- a. The Corinthian people had many sayings:
 - i. "Everything is permissible for me" and "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"
- b. Paul refuted the two misconceptions
 - i. Some advocated that Christian liberty meant that God is not concerned with how we live out our relationships but only with whether or not we are happy. Christian liberty does not mean I am free to do what I please, but that I have been freed to do what pleases Christ. Intimacy and freedom always carry responsibility
 - ii. Others had reasoned that God wouldn't put a desire in us, if he didn't want it satisfied. Sex was viewed as an appetite to be satisfied and not as a gift to be cherished and used carefully. Any kind of bodily abuse dishonors God. Just because we have certain normal desires, given by God at Creation, does not mean that we must give in to them and always satisfy them no matter the cost.

VII. **2 - Sex and sexuality cannot be divorced from our identity in Christ**

- a. God designed mankind both with sexual desire AND with the ability to exercise self-control. While we have feelings, emotions, desires, and urges, we are also given the choice of how to manage them.
 - i. *GENESIS 1:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."*
 - ii. *GENESIS 1:26-28 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*
- b. When we create our own understanding of gender, sex, and sexuality – we reject the beauty of God's design. God places great value on the bodies that we are given.
 - i. *VERSE 13 - The body 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?*
 - ii. The way that we care for the body, the way we dress the body, the places we take the body, the deeds we do in the body all reflect whether we affirm the value that God has placed on our body.

VIII. **3 - God-honoring relationships and intimacy are built on the foundation of Godly love**

- a. Too many of our relationships, both with friends and with those of the opposite sex, are formed without a foundation of Godly love.
- b. You cannot experience the fullness of God's design for intimacy and relationships without laying a foundation of phileo and agape love.
 - i. For those who desire to be married – Singleness is a great season to learn how to express brotherly (phileo) and selfless (agape) love towards others. Marriage is not just the experience of eros love, but it is the culmination of all expressions of love.

IX. Ultimately, what we think about sex and sexuality is a decision of Lordship. If Christ is truly Lord of our lives, we make a decision to honor and love him through these two expressions. If pleasure is the Lord of our lives, we make a decision to withhold our sexuality from God.

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Let's Talk Notes – Sunday, March 16, 2014

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Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

- 1) In 1 Corinthians 6, the Apostle Paul addressed some of the common slogans of the day. What are some common expressions of your day? For example, YOLO (you only live once). What truths are these slogans advocating? Are there any errors in these slogans?
- 2) As you reflect back on last weekend's sermon, what one principle or insight stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful or difficult to grasp? Were you challenged in any area of your personal walk with God?
- 3) What does Christian freedom mean to you? **Read** Galatians 5:13. What responsibilities come with Christian freedom? **Read** Galatians 5:19- 25. How can we differentiate between the acts of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit?
- 4) How and where did you develop your thoughts regarding sex and sexuality? Have any of these ideas changed throughout the years? How has your relationship with God affected your ideas and expectations about sex and sexuality? Do you have any difficulties in reconciling your identity in Christ and your idea of sexuality?
- 5) How does the creation account in Genesis reflect the unique ways that God designed you? (Genesis 1:18-28) What are the dangers of demonizing or divorcing sexuality from your identity as a follower of Christ?
- 6) The Scriptures reveal that God places great value on your bodies and specifically that He created your body for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Our choices reflect whether we choose to honor or dishonor the bodies that God has given to us. What are ways that you can make God-honoring decisions with how you steward over your bodies?
- 7) How can you build or rebuild a foundation of Godly love in your relationships?