

THE BIG IDEA: Sex is the glue that makes one of two.

The Take-Off

It's amazing how easily we can misunderstand things, isn't it?

In fact, because as a culture we are so quick to not only misunderstand, but also sue people as a result, we've taken disclaimers to a whole new level!

Here are just some of the crazy product disclaimers out there:

[Pictures of disclaimers]

And here are a few more that I don't have pictures of. Actual product disclaimers...

Baby stroller: Remove child before folding.

Scooter: This product moves when used.

Iron: Never iron clothes while they are being worn.

Hair dryer: Never use hair dryer while sleeping.

On a bottle of drain cleaner: If you do not understand, or cannot read, all directions, cautions and warnings, do not use this product.

On a digital thermometer: Once used rectally, the thermometer should not be used orally.

Good to know!!

And while we're at it, we thought we should share some disclaimer-type stuff that might be helpful for all of us to know as we kick off this brand new series on sexuality that we're calling "SexEd."

Not that we think we'll be sued - or that we're even worried about it - but there are some foundational statements we want to make to get all of us at the same place going forward.

Instead of calling them disclaimers, we'll call them "Things that need to be said before we say anything else."

While I'm saying them, feel free to find Genesis. We'll be hanging out there this morning, first in ch. 2, then in ch. 19

1. Things that need to be said before we say anything else

- a. Unlike the radio and tv guy who says this stuff so fast no one can understand it, I'm going to take the time to say this slowly and clearly, because these things are that important. Ready? Here we go.
- b. First, I want you to know upfront that this is a hard series for me, because I know that the climate of our country means that no matter how much grace is in this, there will be those who will turn me off. The loss of future conversations weighs on my heart tremendously.
- c. I think it's a shame that most churches discuss sexuality in a way that leads to shame. Our hope is that we discuss it in a way that leads to hope.
- d. This is a sensitive subject and there's no way around the awkwardness that some will feel, but isn't it ironic that it is often the place - not the topic - that causes the uneasiness? Many will entertain sexually charged talk for hours at the movies or listening to music or watching TV, but in church we get squirmy.
- e. So to the squirmers, let me say that my heart in this series is way more pastoral than preacher. I'm not sure I'm much of a preacher, but as a shepherd, I want to include everyone in a discussion that I know at some point has the potential to make everyone feel excluded. No red-faced soapboxing here.
- f. Along those lines, there is no way that I can teach for a month on sexuality and not say some hot-topic phrase or buzzword that holds the potential of shame for people. Hear me clearly: SHAME IS NOT FROM GOD. Shame drops our heads, but God lifts them. Psalm 3:3 tells us that, and also that he is a shield around us. So you're safe here, even if at times you may feel exposed.
- g. Let's just say a couple of those words and phrases right up front: adultery, divorce, cohabitation (living together before marriage), homosexuality, porn, single parents, singleness, same-sex attraction.
- h. There. Something for everyone, right?
- i. Now, a couple more things that need to be said before we move on to what I have to say...
- j. The goal of this series isn't to fix a broken world as much as it is to heal a broken church. In fact, here are 4 reasons why we aren't doing this and 3 reasons why we are.
- k. We aren't doing it for any of these 4 reasons:
 1. To tell a sinful world how bad they are
 2. To make church people feel better about themselves
 3. To get a bunch of amens from Christians
 4. To explain the anatomy of sex
- l. We are doing it for these 3 reasons:
 1. God told us to
 2. Our sexuality cannot be understood apart from our spirituality

3. We live in a time when the church has a unique opportunity to show the world unexpected grace in discussing an uncomfortable issue
- m. So what's the win for this series? It isn't addressing or answering every hot-button issue. There just isn't time. But we do have a clear win, and this is it: seeing personal holiness increase so that public hypocrisy can decrease.
- n. This is a series about US before it's a series about THEM. It's about the CHURCH before it's about CULTURE.
- o. Quickly, listen to what Paul said to believers when he was addressing sexuality in 1 Cor. 5:9-13.
- p. Maybe you're here and you aren't a follower of Jesus or into the church thing. We're glad you're here, and I think you can learn a lot about sexuality from God's perspective. So, sit back and relax and let's talk about - from God's perspective - the purpose of sex.

2. The purpose of sex

- a. I'll give this to you right up front, and then we'll talk through it. The purpose of sex is intimacy.
- b. If sex was just about physical pleasure, than prostitution would be the world's most popular profession.
- c. But it isn't, because sex is about so much more than a physical act. It involves all of who we are.
- d. Before you write that off as something a preacher SHOULD say, let me give you a quote from a fascinating book I read in prep called "Hooked" that studied the effect of casual sex
- e. It's a book written from the medical side of sexuality, not the religious side, and the findings are solid
- f. "Abstinence culminating in a lifelong committed relationship has long been perceived as a religious position rather than a suggested course of action based on scientific reality. But now, with the aid of modern neuroscience and a wealth of research, it is evident that humans are the healthiest and happiest when they engage in sex with only the one who is their mate for a lifetime."
- g. How does science point to that conclusion? It's all about 2 chemicals called oxytocin and vasopressin
- h. Without going into a full biology lesson, suffice it to say that these chemicals are like bonding agents that are released through romantic touch and sexual activity and specifically bond the partners together.
- i. Sex is like superglue, and the problem (which we'll deal with more later) with taking it casually is that over time, by bonding with multiple partners, we lose our ability to bond.
- j. As the authors put it, "the inability to bond after multiple sex encounters is almost like tape that loses its stickiness after being applied and removed multiple times."
- k. God knew this, and set the whole thing up to allow us to bond with one person for life.
- l. Look at Genesis 2:20-25
- m. Adam couldn't find a mate, something many of us can relate to.
- n. But God chose who would be the perfect fit for Adam. Adam didn't choose. When Adam saw God's design, he said she was flesh of his flesh. Verse 24 says the man and woman would become "one flesh."
- o. Not surprisingly, this is the God who designed Adam and Eve with vasopressin and oxytocin to seal the deal through sexual relations.
- p. Think of it like this, and this is our Big Idea: **Sex is the glue that makes one of two.**
- q. How connected are sex and intimacy in God's design? Humans are the only species that procreates face to face.
- r. If the purpose of sex is intimacy, then the place for sex is - like science is proving - in a lifelong, committed marriage relationship between a man and a woman.
- s. Think of it like fire. Fire is always good for warming us up, but fire is only good in a fireplace or fire pit. Anywhere else and it becomes dangerous, even though it's still able to warm us.
- t. Sex outside of the place where God ordained it is like making s'mores on a fire that's burning down your house. They'll still taste good, but at what cost?

3. The result of living out that purpose

- a. If the purpose of sex from God's perspective is INTIMACY IN MARRIAGE, then what happens when followers of Christ live our lives true to that purpose?
- b. Maybe we can answer that by answering the opposite. What happens if we don't?
- c. The answer is found in a bizarre story in Genesis 19.
- d. Backstory is that the city of Sodom was wicked, and there was all kinds of sexual perversion there. God has decided to destroy it and has sent 2 angels to warn Lot of the impending doom.
- e. Now, Lot isn't the most righteous person here. In fact, when the men of Sodom demand to have sex with the angels (v. 5), Lot offers them his virgin daughters instead.
- f. Ok, Lot isn't winning any Father of the year awards here, right?
- g. Like I said, this is a jacked up story, and it's been used for years to teach on why God should destroy America. Classic church deflection: make things about the sinners and keep the attention off of us.
- h. But what I want us to see is what happened when Lot was sent to warn his family about the coming doom.
- i. When he warned them, they thought he was joking.

- j. What happens when the church doesn't live out our sexuality in line with God's purposes?
- k. We lose our voice in culture at the time when culture needs to hear it the most.
- l. We lose credibility. Look at verse 16. even after he warned his family, LOT HESITATED TO LEAVE!
- m. If we hesitate in our obedience to purity in our sexuality, we lose all credibility with others.
- n. But if we do what Paul commands in 2 Timothy 2:22 - "FLEE LUST and PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS" - then we'll have AUTHENTICITY IN CULTURE.
- o. We live at the perfect time to share God's purpose in sex. 93% of high school students answered yes to the question, "should high school students be taught abstinence."
- p. Many of us have friends and family who are ripped to shreds from being glued to too many people and they want to know if true fulfillment is possible in relationships.
- q. Believe it or not, they're looking to us for answers, and we need to live true to the purpose of God before them so that we have the credibility to share the promises of God with them.

The Landing

As we bring part 1 to a close, let me read Matthew 7:1-5 and then call us to a response.

Culture loves to quote verse 1 to us - "Don't judge!" - but the point of this passage is that we need to deal with our own stuff (the plank) so that we can then see clearly to deal with their stuff (the speck). (v. 5)

This whole series is about that - raising our personal holiness so that public hypocrisy is lowered - and it starts with children loved by their Father asking him to forgive them for cheapening his purposes and thanking him for cleansing us of all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

This is the promise and the power of the cross.

The promise of the cross is that Jesus' act there is able to save us and heal us, and that's critical because for a lot of us here, realizing God's purpose for sex - to bond two people as one flesh - makes us regret past choices.

Shame lowers our head, but God lifts it, and we want to end this morning responding to the hope we have in Christ's work on the cross.

It holds us like an anchor in our soul.