

THE BIG IDEA: Perversion is a matter of small steps now, not giant leaps later.

The Take-Off

Congrats on making it halfway through what can admittedly be an awkward month about an awkward topic.

Good job hanging in there and dealing with all the yuck that come with a topic like this, because obviously, the more we teach on sexuality from God's perspective and based on God's design, the more regret many of us can feel for how badly we've hijacked that plan.

My guess is that as the month has progressed, most of us have experienced moments either during a message or during a Community Group when we thought, "I wish I had known that earlier in my life! I would have done things differently!"

If that's you, just remember what I put on Facebook earlier this week: regrets are real; redemption is realer!

It's bad grammar, but really good theology.

Next week, we'll wrap up the whole SexEd series gaining God's perspective on what to do going forward in response to all that we've learned, and you won't want to miss that. It'll be a really good way to gain some closer for a lot of us. And just what have we learned?

For starters, we've seen that the purpose of sex is intimacy, and that God designed our bodies to release powerful chemicals that act like superglue between the people involved in sexual activities.

As crazy as it sounds, all it takes is a 20 second embrace before a woman's brain releases oxytocin.

Because sex is so powerful, God knew that it needed a secure place, and that place is marriage, and it's one of the more powerful tools we have in the marriage toolbox for maintaining lifelong intimacy.

Of course, the problem with sex is that we remove it from its intended place and make an idol of it. We use it to sell things, we make it the measure of a relationship, and we try to divorce it from the powerful emotions that God designed it to highlight.

In short, we've removed the fire of sex from the fireplace of marriage, and it's caused all kinds of problems for all kinds of people. One of the biggest is the inability to bond intimately because we've lost all the stickiness just like tape that is stuck, removed, stuck again, removed, etc.

Do that enough, and there just isn't any sticky left to bond. That's how 2 people can be married, have sex, but never feel intimate. When sex becomes the only thing, we end up losing everything.

Again, if that's you or your marriage, there's hope for you because we serve a God who can bring dead things to life and can make new things from old, but we've got one more difficult week to walk through before we get to that.

Don't despair, hope is on the way!

So, to recap:

- The purpose of sex is INTIMACY
- The problem of sex is IDOLATRY

And this morning we're going to talk about the perversion of sex, and we're going to see that it happens INCREMENTALLY.

1. What is perversion?

- a. When I say the word "pervert," who comes to mind?
- b. Jared Fogle? Pee Wee Herman? Ted Bundy?
- c. Isn't it funny how we think of the worst people? The ones with the worst rap sheet? The really bad ones!
- d. But the definition of the word pervert is simply to "alter (something) from its original course, meaning, or state to a distortion or corruption of what was first intended."
- e. Perversion is the end result of small degrees of separation from God's will.
- f. This is so important for us to understand, because church people are so quick to point to the big perversion at the end and miss the little perversion at the beginning, and honestly, most of us relate more to the small separation (even though we wish we didn't!).
- g. Let me show this to you in the Bible so you don't think I'm making it up.
- h. Turn with me to Romans 1 and let's read v. 18 through the first word of v. 24 - "Therefore"
- i. That word therefore means we need to ask what it's there for, and it means that everything that happens AFTER that word is the result of whatever happened BEFORE that word.

- j. What happened? People didn't honor God, they didn't thank God, they claimed to be smarter than they were and they stopped worshiping God and started worshiping things.
- k. How do we become perverts? We stop honoring God, stop thanking him, stop relying on him and stop worshiping him. If we stop doing that NOW, we'll end up in a whole host of perversions THEN:
 - dishonorable sexual pleasures
 - homosexuality
 - gossip
 - slander
 - pride
 - disobedient children
- l. There's no way around it, vv. 29-32 are a brutal image of perversion's final destination. Brutal.
- m. While we are quick to highlight all the hot button sins that we aren't guilty of, we need to see that there are some things in that list found quite often among church people: gossip, strife, envy, pride, disobedient children.
- n. Have you ever wondered what those have in common with homosexuality and sexual immorality?
- o. All of them assume that we have a better plan than the one God came up with.
- p. Never forget this. It's such a big deal that I'm making it the Big Idea today: perversion is a matter of small steps now, not giant leaps later.
- q. Just a small alteration from the intended design can lead to missing the mark by a mile.
- r. I need to show you a chilling interview that really explains this clearly, and then I'll come back and we'll talk about how we can keep ourselves from living perverted lives, esp. in the area of our sexuality.
- s. [Ted Bundy interview]

2. It's all about the little things

- a. I'm NOT saying that if you look at porn you'll become a serial killer
- b. I AM saying that correction ensures direction, and if we pay attention to the little things, we can keep them from becoming big problems
- c. I think Song of Solomon 2:15 says it best: "Catch the little foxes that spoil the vineyards"
- d. It's not the big things that will ruin us; it's the little things
- e. God knows that, and so he's told us 2 things that we can do to help us catch the foxes:
 - First, examine yourself and your faith (2 Cor. 13:5)
 - Second, take up our cross DAILY and follow him (Luke 9:23)
- f. These 2 actions require vigilance because we're following Jesus and can't afford to lose him
- g. This is like following a car in a city that you don't know - you do everything to keep that car in your sights!
- h. It means we're checking our mirrors, using our turn signals, fully alert to traffic
- i. In short, we're examining ourselves to see where we are in relation to where he is, and when we live like that, we find that it's a lot easier to spot the little foxes

The Landing

This week I found a story on the internet about 6 people in a church who were charged with manslaughter in the death of a 19 year old

As I read, I was grieved to see the details about how they were prating church discipline and trying to get him to confess sin and how hours later he wasn't moving. The doctors found evidence of blunt force trauma to his chest and stomach.

Is it fair to say that no one in that church ever wanted to end up with a faith as perverted as that? I think so.

And that's what made this one statement so sad to me. "We weren't originally isolated from the community," said a member. Over time, there was friction between the church and a neighboring community, she said. **"We put up the hedges," she said.**

Instead of allowing correction to ensure direction, they chose isolation which led to devastation.

I'm asking you to choose correction in order to make the changes now that will help you be on target then, because perversion is a matter of small steps now, not giant leaps later.

Let's close this morning by praying the prayer David did in Psalm 139:23-24 - "Search me. Know me. Try me. Lead me."