

A Biblical Theology of Sex

January 20th, 2022

by Ben Mathew

God Creates; Man Falls; Jesus Redeems; God Wins. This is the story of God in connection with humanity, and it's the narrative to help us understand the purpose and plan of God in our sexuality. God created sexual intimacy as a good thing to be enjoyed between a husband and wife in marriage. But the sin and fall of mankind into sin has corrupted our view of sex, our enjoyment of sex, and our understanding of sex.

Christians tend to disengage when it comes to the discussion of sex. We see the liberties our culture has taken with this issue, and we retreat in fear, frustration, and discouragement. But in this vacuum of silence, other voices and perspectives will come in and distort God's original and good design. It is the responsibility of Christians who have the hope of the Gospel to speak truth to the issue of sexuality and provide clarity amid the confusion.

The book of Genesis provides insight for us that the creation of the universe was by the purpose and plan of God. Not only do we see the creation of light and plants, animals and trees, but we also see the pinnacle of God's creation when He makes mankind. Genesis 1:26-28 indicates that God

made mankind completely different than the rest of creation, and put him in a special relationship with Himself. While God spoke the rest of creation into existence, He 'formed' man from the dirt of the earth. This 'forming' of mankind shows how we are different than creation and how we are made in an embodied existence. This body we have is not incidental to our personhood. In fact, God gives Adam and Eve bodies as a means of working out His sovereign plan as [His image-bearers](#) on Earth.

The body that Adam and Eve have not only provides the means to do God's work, but also has certain needs that desire to find fulfillment. If our body is thirsty, we have water. If our body is hungry, we have food. These needs are not a failure or oversight on the part of the Creator God, but as a reminder that we are dependent, finite and need to find our fulfillment in God's provision

Not only do we need food and drink, but we also need companionship. Genesis highlights that everything that God made was 'good', but the one thing that was 'not good' was when Adam was alone (Genesis 2:18). So, God created Eve as a companion for Adam to help him fulfill God's commands and to fill the earth with God's image-bearers through the process of sexual intimacy. Genesis affirms that God "created man in His own image", and that He created them as "male and female" (Genesis 1:26-27). This creation of

humanity in specific genders is celebrated in the union of the man and woman in the intimacy and enjoyment of sexual union. The final verse in Genesis 2 highlights that sex is a good and purposeful part of His original design: "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed". They find companionship, intimacy, and enjoyment in the covenant reality of being a man and woman in a relationship. God intended for sex to be a good part of creation and for us to enjoy it in His plan.

God's creation in the Garden of Eden was good and was to be enjoyed by Adam and Eve and all humanity. But the temptations of Satan and their rebellion against God's plan corrupted God's good gifts. Not only does sin bring death and pain to the human experience (Genesis 3:14-19), but it also subverts the good design and purpose of sexual intimacy. The relationship between the husband and wife will now come with hardship (Genesis 3:15), there will be pain in the experience of childbirth (Genesis 3:16), and the nakedness they once enjoyed with each other before the fall, would now need to be covered up in shame and humiliation (Genesis 3:7 & 21).

The continuing story of humanity in the Bible is highlighted by the ongoing corruption of God's good and original design of sexuality. Polygamy, rape, adultery, and many other aberrant sexual practices would now plague humanity in our

rebellion against God and in our broken relationships with each other. The Apostle Paul would go on to explain that our insurrection against God is seen in our broken sexual activity and that we would rather find our pleasure in the gift of sex, rather than in the One who gave us the gift of sex. Sexual sin is but a symptom of a greater problem in our fallen relationship with God, and a greater tragedy as experienced in our lives.

Sin is real and it affects our sexuality in profoundly painful ways. But God's love is greater than our sin, and He does not give up on His creation.

To help us with the sexual sins that plague our bodies, God initiates a plan of redemption by coming to us in a body. While still fully God, the Son of God takes on a body as "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14; Phil 2:5-11). God becomes a man ([Jesus](#)), and still is God, so He can both meet the just demands of a holy God, and stand-in for humanity as the perfect sacrifice (Romans 3:26). Not only does Jesus take on a body to die for our sins, but He also rose again from the dead in a body, and lives eternally in a glorified body to be our great "High Priest" and to advocate for us while we still struggle in our own bodies (1 John 2:1; Heb. 4:15).

While we still struggle with sexual temptations and the

brokenness of our sexual expression, we now [have hope](#) that we have someone we can call to for help. Jesus knows our struggles and died to bring us to victory through the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) and the community of the local church (1 Corinthians 3:16).

With the redemption offered through the finished work of Christ, the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the support of the local church, we can now lead a life of victory as we present our bodies (which includes our sexuality) as a living sacrifice to God in worship (Romans 12:2). Our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19) and the sexual ethic outlined in the Bible is a reality that we can now live out in our lives. Not only do we have the freedom to avoid the sexual immorality that is condemned by Jesus and the Apostles (Matthew 19:9; Ephesians 5:3; Hebrews 13:4), we can also pursue holiness and our restored relationship with God by pursuing sexual integrity for our good and for His glory (Matthew 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5).

A biblical theology of sex finds its ultimate fulfillment in the knowledge that God will bring complete and total restoration to all of creation, including our sexuality.

1 Corinthians 15 gives hope to the Christian that because of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can have the assurance that we too will be resurrected to a glorified and

redeemed reality. Like Jesus, we will experience a glorified body that will not be weighed down with the sin and struggle we all experience today. Our bodies will be transformed (1 Thessalonians 4:14-18), and this future hope of physical resurrection should produce a present comfort and a longing for the fulfillment of our total salvation.

What we lost in the garden, we will gain to even a greater degree in glory. The new creation will not simply be a reset of the Garden of Eden but will be an opportunity for us to co-reign with Christ in bodily form.

Our sexuality in a glorified state will take on new meaning and significance. With glorified bodies, we will maintain our gendered reality without the need to engage in sexual intimacy. While the first mandate of sexual intimacy was to “multiply and fill the earth” (Genesis 1:28), the joy in our resurrected bodies will be that “the Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14). Our sexuality will find its ultimate fulfillment in the marriage supper of the Lamb, to which our current marriages and sexuality point to, and to which we will finally find our purpose and meaning.

A Biblical Theology of Sex

Ever since the Garden of Eden, we have been struggling in

our sin, our brokenness, and our disconnection from God. Our sexuality is a beautiful and wonderful gift from God to be enjoyed in the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman. But the rebellion from our first parents has infected the gift of sex for all humanity, and we all now suffer with the pain and struggle of sexual brokenness. But thank God He doesn't give up on us! Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we now have hope, meaning, and purpose that takes the struggle of our sexual brokenness and transforms it to point and lead us to know God and His great plan. We have hope for today and hope that one day He will make all things new, including our sexuality. Knowing the story of God can bring us hope that our sexual struggle is not the final chapter in our lives. God will finish the story, will bring us healing, and will do all this for our good and His glory.

Ben Mathew is a professor of Counseling Psychology at Emmaus Bible College and serves as the Chair of the Counseling Department. After Ben graduated from Emmaus with a degree in Biblical Studies he went on to get an M.A. in Biblical Counseling from Dallas Theological Seminary and then a Ph.D. in General Psychology from Northcentral University.

Posted in [Article](#)

Tagged with [Ben Mathew](#)