

June 25, 2006 AM
#1110A

Proverbs
God's Gift Of Sexuality

Video Clip: *Purity Matters* (Raw Feed, Reel to Reel Ministries)

In his article, *Sex, Sensuality and the Sacred*, Charles Rush writes, "We are living through an architectonic shift culturally and socially. Pornography is in the backdrop of our lives for good. What impact this will have on the rising generations that have always lived that way, no one can say. The internet is bringing together the vulnerable poor and the lust-laden rich creating a new market world-wide.

It is all available, anything you want and that is not going to change. So the question is, what do you want? In my grandfather's world a man could become virtuous by never encountering sexual temptation. That era is over. You are going to have to be intentional about your sexuality, your sensuality and the sacred."

I thought that last sentence summed things up pretty well: "You are going to have to be intentional about your sexuality, your sensuality and the sacred."

We live in a world that's fixated on the sensual. There's no where you can go in our society to escape the distorted and dysmorphic view of sex and sensuality.

So the question is, how can we know truth and what's going to help us be intentional in our pursuit of truth?

Two weeks ago we began a series in the Old Testament book of Proverbs. When you look up the words wise and wisdom in the 31 chapters of Proverbs you find them used 112 times.

From beginning to end, Proverbs is about imparting wisdom.

In fact, right at the beginning of Proverbs God gives us the purpose: **Turn to Proverbs chapter 1 pg 560**

Read vs 2-5

The book of Proverbs speaks to where we live. It talks about money, relationships, children, work, our speech, and it should come as no surprise that it talks about sex.

There are 80 verses in Proverbs that give direction and guidance in the area of sexuality.

Now, we don't talk about sex much in the church. Most people's idea of sex and religion is they don't mix.

I'll guarantee you if you sat down with most people and said "If you want to have a great sex life don't read Redbook, read the Bible, they'd think you were nuts.

It's like this big secret that no one wants to expose. So we don't talk about sex. Instead we let everyone else talk about it.

From the internet, to Hollywood, to the magazines at the supermarket check-out line, everybody's talking about sex.

The problem is most of what they're promoting is totally bogus. It's this big lie that's thrust on us from every side and you know what they really sad thing is? Plenty of us buy that lie.

Inside and outside of the church the statistics aren't that much different. A majority of people have had premarital sex and many people have had extramarital affairs.

The church desperately needs to talk about sexuality because we are sexual beings.

God, our Creator made us sexual beings. *Genesis 1:27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

Nothing on earth could satisfy Adam's yearnings for a partner. Sexual yearnings aren't a part of the Fall. God created us that way. What our bodies yearn for is symptomatic of the yearning of our soul.

And God says the joining together of a husband and wife sexually is something to celebrate. It's the most intimate, personal expression of oneness humanly possible.

God doesn't want us to deny our sexuality He wants us to be intentional in our sexuality.

So how do we do that? Where do we get our bearings in a world where good is often called evil and evil good?

The first point I'd like us to think about today is this:

I. Sexual Sin Is Different From All Other Sin

Sometimes we say from the pulpit something like this, "Sin is sin. From the smallest to the greatest sin, all is a violation of God's holiness."

That's a true statement. The Bible says, *The wages of sin is death.* Romans 6:23.

It doesn't divide sins up into mortal and venial. That's a human invention. All sin is mortal. All sin brings death and separation from God.

God is holy and that means He's perfect. Heaven is perfect. If God would somehow just overlook our sins and let us into heaven, heaven would be polluted just like earth. It can't happen.

That's why Jesus Christ had to die on a cross. The only way of forgiveness for sinners is if a perfect substitute takes our sin upon Himself and pays the price.

The Bible says, *Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.* Galatians 3:10

If we fail in one point of God's law we've broken the law and we're under it's curse.

That's why Jesus became a curse for us.

James 2:10 says, *For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.*

As we've often said, "You only have to rob one bank to become a bank robber." And you only have to commit one sin to become a sinner.

That's why we need a Savior. Because we're sinners before a holy God. That's why you and I are commanded to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved.

In that sense every sin is the same.

But see, not every sin is the same in it's essence or it's earthly consequences.

If a hungry man steals a loaf of bread, it's wrong but it's a whole lot different than a greedy man embezzling \$100,000 from a company.

Even God's law recognized differences. If you stole from someone you had to make restitution but if you murdered someone you paid with your life.

So temporally, here on earth, there are differing degrees of sin.

Before we look at Proverbs I'd like us to turn to the New Testament, **I Corinthians Chapter 6 Pg 1016**

Read vs 15-20

Here's what makes sexual sin so unique. When we put our trust in Christ as Savior the Bible says the Holy Spirit comes to take up residence in our body.

Some churches call the room where they meet for worship "the sanctuary."

That was true in the Old Testament when God's Spirit dwelt in the holy of holies in the temple. But it's not true today.

Today there is no building that's the sanctuary (which literally means "holy place")

Believer's are God's holy place. Our bodies are the sanctuary.

And the implications of that are huge.

In sexual relations there is a joining together of two people. This is part of God's design for a husband and wife to be one flesh.

In marriage the sexual union is not only permitted it's commanded. We're to celebrate that union of oneness.

But if we take it outside the boundaries of marriage we're joining ourselves to another person in a totally inappropriate way.

There is a spiritual dimension to the sexual union.

That makes sexual sin different than any and every other sin we could commit.

The example Paul uses in I Corinthians is a guy hooking up with a prostitute. If I'm a Christian then I'm united with Christ. If I hire a prostitute then I'm joining that which is part of Christ with a prostitute.

And the biblical argument is, this can't be. It's unthinkable.

I. Sexual sin is different from every other sin.

II. Sexual sin Is Deceptive and Destructive

Turn to Proverbs 2 pg 561

Read vs 10-12a

Then the chapter goes on to list "ways of evil" that we'll be kept from. When you get down to verse 16 (**Read 16**) God's wisdom will deliver you from seduction.

Look at chapter 5:3, 7:21

Here's the problem. God has designed us to respond sexually to enticement. People that are dating need to know this truth.

God has created us as responsive sexual beings because He designed the sexual union to be the height of intimate expression in a marriage.

When we're with someone we're not married to and we put ourselves in compromising situations we're going to feel the natural pull of sexual attraction. It's not that we're abnormal when that happens, we're completely normal. It's the way God designed us. He planned for that sexual attraction to be part of the binding force between a husband and wife.

It's only when we take sex out of it's God-given parameters that we get ourselves in trouble.

Here's the problem. Sexual feelings can be so alluring, so enticing, so seductive that if we're not prepared ahead of time we can be totally deluded.

If we're not intentional about our sexuality and the sacred we're doomed.

Read 7:6-22

See, sexual sin can look so tempting and alluring that we just go down that road like an ox to the slaughter.

We think we're in control of our lives. We're running the show. The truth is, it's like there's a ring in our nose and we're being led to the slaughter and we don't even know it.

God created the sexual union to unify and bind us together in marriage. It makes us one flesh which is a picture of Christ and His church.

Ephesians 5:31-32 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Heaven celebrates when married couples join together in this God ordained way.

But look what happens when that's violated.

Proverbs 2:18-19 5:5, 21-23 6:30-35

Our culture can go on about consenting adults and 1st amendment rights and all the smoke screens that are put out there. But in the end we're not just physical beings.

If we were just cosmic accidents, chance products of some blind, mechanical evolutionary process then none of this would be relevant. Then it wouldn't matter.

But we're not. And that's why we love and have emotions and get into relationships, because we're made in the image of God.

God made the physical and that's important, but we're also spiritual beings.

Listen to this from the pen of Craig Barnes:

“Our sexual impulses tell us we are not yet complete on our own. Our sexual yearnings are essentially a yearning for God. And such a yearning makes sexual intercourse something of a sacrament.

Sacraments are visible signs of things that are eternal. When we have sex, we're not just touching a body; we're touching a soul."

That's what makes sex outside of marriage so destructive. We're dealing with the very essence of personhood. We're dealing with the soul.

And obviously there's all kinds of ramifications like disease and unwanted pregnancy, but the thing that God wants us to understand more than anything else is if we misuse sex we're destroying ourselves and others spiritually.

- I. *Sexual Sin Is Different From All Other Sin*
- II. *Sexual Sin Is Deceptive And Destructive*
- III. *God gives Us Safeguards To Protect Us*

Read 7:1-5

Don't misread Proverbs here. God isn't blaming women for all sexual temptation, but He does use case studies to illustrate the power of sexual temptation. This case study is representative for all kinds of sexual temptation. So it could just as easily be a man tempting a woman, or the temptation of an internet chat room, or a magazine, or a romance novel, or a movie, or whatever.

So here we find the warning. The temptation to live outside of God's boundaries for sex always looks better than it really is.

So if we're going to live life God's way, we need to see things as they are, not as they're often presented to us.

It all starts with thinking correctly. The battle ground for temptation is always the mind. That's why God repeatedly says in Proverbs "Get wisdom and understanding."

II Corinthians 10:4-5 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Job said, in Chapter 31 I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?

Ps 101:3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes...

Those are thought out convictions.

If you're going to be intentional about your sexuality, your sensuality and the sacred it means you don't wait until temptation hits you in the face before you think about your response.

If you do you're probably not going to think, you'll just act.

God wants us to start with a recognition of who He is. Our holy Creator.

He wants us to recognize who we are. Sinners who have been made children of God by faith in Jesus and His cross; temples of the Holy Spirit; new creations in Christ.

He wants us to so focus on His grace toward us that it would be unthinkable for us to presume on that grace.

So we have to think correctly.

And then we have to realize that God always gives us a way out.

Turn to I Corinthians 10 pg 1019

Read vs 12-13

Did you catch that? God says, "Don't think your so strong that you can't get caught up in temptation.

Here's what the Bible says: All people are subject to temptation. God won't let you go through anything that's beyond what you're able to bear. Therefore make sure you take the way of escape.

Read vs 14

Sometimes the way of escape is to get out of there.

If you find a relationship beginning to build with someone at work cut it off now. Stop calling them. Stop making excuses and saying "We're just friends" and cut it off now.

If you have a problem with stuff on TV cut back your cable to basic service. Get rid of

those channels that are the problem.

I know a man that had to leave the ministry because of his involvement with pornography. He told me it all began when his church put in a satellite dish because they showed some Christian programming.

He said on the next channel over from the Christian channel they showed pornography. He just started with a little bit. He thought he could handle it.

By the way, we have a satellite dish here we use for Christian Communication Network broadcasts. It gets the Maharishi channel, the Kurdish channel, and the Tai channel, but no pornography.

Almost everyone today has a computer and an internet connection. For some reason our government has chosen not to prosecute pornography so it's all there.

Make sure your computer is out in a room where anyone else in the family can walk by at any time. Parents check up on your kids. Husbands be transparent with your wives.

So think correctly, think ahead, and along with that if your married love your spouse.

Turn back to Proverbs 5 pg 563

Read vs 15-20

You say, Woah, I didn't know that was in the Bible! Oh, there's a whole lot more than that. Read through the Song of Solomon.

In fact I Corinthians chapter 7 gives these instructions:

Because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. (That's not the only reason for marriage, but it's the one being discussed in the context of I Corinthians 7).

Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to

fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

The distorted cultural view is that sex is for getting. It's self focused and it's all about what I can get out of it.

The Biblical view of sex is that it's all about giving of myself to my marriage partner.

God created the sexual union for husbands and wives and wives and husbands you need to give of yourself in love to your spouse.

Like it or not, we live in a world in which we're simply not going to be able to avoid sexual temptation. We don't live in granddad's world where we could be virtuous by never encountering sexual temptation. That era is over.

But we can, and must look at life differently than the culture.

We have to be to be intentional about our sexuality, our sensuality and the sacred.

We have to understand that when God created man and woman He pronounced everything He made as good. Obviously that included their sexuality.

It wasn't long though, until Satan came around questioning God. He tempted Eve by getting her to question God's authority. He said, "Go ahead and eat the fruit. God's just holding it back from you."

When Adam and Eve took that bite in disobedience to God they found out the awful truth. God wasn't holding out on them, He was protecting them.

They ate and suddenly they saw all of life through the distorted lense of sin.

Before the fall the Bible says, *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.* Genesis 2:27

As soon as they sinned, they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. Genesis 3:5

From that point on, their sexuality became a constant source of temptation and struggle.

Mart DeHann writes, “No longer controlled and protected by perfect love, human sexuality became a strategic battleground between heaven and hell.

From then on, that which was made to be enjoyed in the intimacy and pleasure of a faithful, mutually loving relationship became an indicator of the extent of human rebellion.”

“Sexual fantasy is what many people use to cope with the inescapable loneliness of a world racked with sin. It is our attempt to force our way back to Eden to recover what has been lost.”

“They try to dull some of their pain with the form, of pleasure that’s within their control. Sexual intimacy works well. It creates a false sense of life and passion that for a few brief moments lets them escape the pain of their daily lives.”

“The choice is ours. We can continue to rebel and refuse to accept the tragic reality that we can’t get back to Eden on our own, or we can turn to God for His grace.”

You know, God is good. And God wants what’s best for us. His best begins with a step of faith by which we receive His forgiveness. Then it continues as we passionately commit ourselves to living by His design.

Romans 6:13 commands, ...do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

We’re all involved in the war for the souls of men and women. We’ll either become a weapon in the hands of the evil one to rob God of glory and worship, or we’ll be a tool for good, pointing others to a God who fulfills us like nothing here on earth ever will.

Which are you this morning?