



# BY DESIGN

## GOD'S INTENT FOR SEXUALITY

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family, and/or with a group.

**It's OK to talk about sex in the church because God talks about sex a lot in the Bible. This series unapologetically examines the topic of sexuality through the lens of the Bible.**

- 1** Churches typically shy away from addressing the topic of sexuality. Why is that?
- 2** **SEX IS from God.** We were created by God as specifically sexual beings, and God considered this to be “good.” **Read Genesis 1:26-27.** God created mankind as sexual beings—male and female. How do our different genders uniquely reflect the image of God?
- 3** Our sexuality is a gift from God to be stewarded to the glory of God. And God makes it clear early on what part of that stewardship entails. **Read Genesis 2:22-24.** God gave sex as a gift to a husband and wife. Why is the context of pledged fidelity important to truly appreciate the gift?
- 4** By design the act of sex connects more than bodies; it bonds souls. So, sex outside of God's design has great potential to wound and damage. Why is this true? What have been some of the familial and societal consequences of ignoring God's design for sexuality?
- 5** **SO DON'T cheapen it.** Our culture sees no problem with giving your body to someone you don't intend to give your heart and your soul to. But we were not designed to be able to experience intimacy apart from fidelity. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5.** How does our culture make too small a deal of sex? How does our culture make too big a deal of sex?
- 6** **SEX IS not God.** The problem with ignoring God's design is that sex becomes less important because it becomes too important. Rick said that having sex is not a basic human entitlement or essential for human fulfillment. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- 7** **SO DON'T worship it.** We were not meant to worship sex, but to worship God. And that includes not just our souls, but our bodies. **Read Romans 12:1 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.** What is the call of discipleship on our bodies?
- 8** **LOVE IS not God.** The Bible never justifies a relationship simply on the basis of love. Why is it dangerous to let our loves or desires determine our sexual ethics?
- 9** **BUT God is love!** Sin has disordered all of us in profound ways. Every one of us has failed to steward our sexuality perfectly. But God loves us where we are, not where we ought to be. That is why Jesus went to the cross. **Read Hebrews 7:24-25.** How is the gospel good news for sexually broken people?



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**1** Instead of letting our worship of sex shape our view of Jesus, we should allow our worship of Jesus to shape our view of sex. And Jesus said the greatest pursuit of our lives should be the kingdom. **Read Matthew 19:12.** Jesus held in high honor those who chose singleness for the sake of the kingdom. Why does the church today seem to fail to do the same?

**2 Churches need to be *single-minded*.** Rather than holding celibate single adults in honor, the modern church often holds them at arm's length. Today over half of the adults in our country are not married, and a much higher percentage of single adults choose not to attend church than married adults. Why do you think this is so, and how can churches be more "*single-minded*"?

**3 MYTHS ABOUT SINGLES:** Rick mentioned **three myths** churches often believe about singles: **#1 that *being single is God's plan B*, #2 that *people need someone else to complete them*, and #3 that *singles need to get "fixed" so they can one day be married*.** Which one of these—or other myths—have you heard? How do these myths suggest that the culture's worship of sex has permeated the body of Christ?

**4 TRUTHS ABOUT SINGLES: *1 is a whole number.*** Scripture never suggests that people in a relationship with Jesus were missing anything that kept them from being whole. **Read 1 Corinthians 7:7, 32-34.** Why was Paul so positive about the state of singleness, and how can singles be a blessing to the church today?

**5 TRUTHS ABOUT SINGLES: *Water is thicker than blood.*** Jesus did something revolutionary in his ministry—he de-idolized family (He did not make the nuclear family the center of God's kingdom). **Read Mark 3:31-33, Luke 11:27-28, Luke 14:26, and Mark 10:29-30.** What do these verses imply about the kingdom as the new family, and what are the implications for the church and single Christians?

**6 TRUTHS ABOUT SINGLES: *God's grace is sufficient to obey God's will.*** **Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20.** Is it reasonable in our world today to expect single Christians to live celibately? How does God's grace empower us to obey God's will?

**7 TRUTHS ABOUT SINGLES: *Following Christ as a single takes radical faith.*** In a world that puts the wrong price tags on everything, it takes radical faith for singles to find their worth in Jesus. What are some of the special challenges facing single Christians, and what can they do to remain "Christ-minded"? What can we do to help?



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- 1** **Read Matthew 19:4-6.** When confronted with a controversial issue, Jesus took his questioners back to Genesis 1 & 2. What does this tell us about Jesus' view of scripture? What can we learn from the living Word about the place the written Word should have in our lives?
- 2** **GOD defines marriage.** **Read Genesis 2:22-24.** God designed marriage as a heterosexual, monogamous, and permanent union. What does this design tell us about the purpose of marriage? What does it tell us about God?
- 3** **MARRIAGE depicts God.** What we say about marriage matters because of what marriage was designed to say about God. God cares that his design is honored. **Read Hebrews 13:4.** What are some of the ways that marriage comes under attack in our culture?
- 4** **JESUS defends marriage.** When it came to marriage and sex, Jesus was far less tolerant than his contemporaries. **Read Matthew 19:7-12.** Jesus gave his questioners two options: stay married, or stay single and celibate. Why were his disciples so shocked by his answer?
- 5** **Read Mark 8:34.** Culture endorses many forms of sexual expression outside of God's design. One way many disciples are called to carry their cross is by denying their sexual urges. For whom will this be particularly hard? Jesus made the creative design the standard for the stewarding of sexuality. How can we as fellow believers help one another steward our sexuality to God's glory?
- 6** Many would contend that the Bible does not carry the same authority in our culture and even in the church that it used to carry. Do you agree or not, and why?
- 7** **MARRIAGE declares Jesus.** One reason God cares about marriage is because it's about more than marriage. **Read Ephesians 5:31-32.** The Bible starts and ends with a marriage. How should our marriages point to Christ?



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**1** God's design is perfect; God's people are imperfect. And when God's church tries to hold on to both it gets messy. Only one person has ever held onto God's perfect will and God's imperfect people perfectly. Jesus was full of grace and truth, and could hold the tension between the two in perfect harmony. **Read John 8:1-11** and discuss how this story illustrates his ability to do that.

**2 LEANING IN: Grace is truthful.** In a culture where "judging" is the greatest sin, we must affirm that Jesus would call out sin and call people out of sin. **Read Titus 2:11-12.** Grace and holiness often seem to be incompatible. How should they work together?

**3 LEANING IN: Truth is graceful.** Jesus could call out sin because he was first willing to be called a friend of sinners. How should this impact the way we interact with people we disagree with on moral issues?

**4 LIVING OUT: Let us treat all people with dignity and respect.** Jesus treated with dignity those he came to change before they changed. What are some things Christians may need to repent of in this area? What is one thing specifically that you need to be mindful of in this area?

**5 LIVING OUT: Let us truly honor those living a single and celibate life.** The failure of many churches and Christians to do so reflects a sad accommodation to our culture's worship of the idol of sex. What is one or two things

we can do as a church and as a follower of Jesus to honor those who answer this call?

**6 LIVING OUT: Let us genuinely support fellow believers who struggle to steward their sexuality according to God's design.** Every one of us struggles with disordered sexual desires that must be surrendered to the lordship of Jesus. How can we create a culture in the body of Christ where we can be more honest about our struggles?

**7** Those who deal with same-sex attraction have a special challenge most of us do not understand. How can we better support our brothers and sisters who deal with same-sex attraction?

**8 LIVING OUT: Let us recover and affirm the call to sexual holiness.** God does not apologize for His standards; He is not embarrassed by His design. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.** Why is sexual holiness so important to God? What can we do to encourage each other to line our sexual ethics up with God's design?

**9 LIVING OUT: Let us offer the hope of the gospel to those who have not honored God's design.** The gospel is good news for those who have not stewarded their sexuality perfectly—and that's all of us! **Read John 3:16-17.** What is the message here for those who struggle with guilt and shame because of their sexual past?