

A Brief Tour Of What the Bible Has To Say About Sex and Sexuality

Having thought about how themes of sexuality play out in our personal lives...and in the culture around us, you might want to follow this theme through the Bible.

This section can be done on your own...slowly, and over time. I so recommend writing the insights that come to you on various passages in a journal so they have a chance to sink in deeply and come back to you later.

This section can also be done in the context of a small group, where you will find the chance to hear how others react to a passage. You might want to read a chapter of *Sex and the Soul of a Woman*...and also discuss a small section of Scripture and questions surrounding various passages. (They will not necessarily correlate, but by the time you finish both, you'll have a more complete picture of sexuality from a human...and a Biblical vantage point).

Beginning at the Beginning

Every few years I re-read the account of God's creation of the original man and woman, Adam and Eve. I pretend I am watching a drama on a stage with God...and Adam and Eve. And I ask God to show me something more of his heart, his original design for men and women. Every time—every time—I see things I hadn't seen before. Whenever I present these passages in a group setting, members of the group come up with insights that are brand new, at least to me.

So...there is a world of truth that you see played out every single day, in your life—in the lives of men and women you know—right out of the original drama of Adam and Eve. Enjoy these passages as they are meant to be savored, with wonder and humility. Ask God to show you his original intent for your life as a woman.

Genesis 1-2: 17 Read this section and marvel at the grandeur of all God created. What was his purpose for man?

Genesis 2: 18-25 Take more time here and watch the drama. What does this passage tell you about a man's need...the value of a woman...the beauty and innocence of the two of them together? What longings does this picture stir in you?

Genesis 3 This chapter describes relationships as we experience them now—not the way they were intended, but the reality of how they actually are in this moment. It is a reminder of all we lost from the sin of the garden. But it's also the basis for hope in what we can experience in relationships—in small measure—as Christ redeems them.

Why would God make anything in the garden...off limits?

Try putting in your own words the lie that Eve swallowed about herself...but especially, about God...when she ate from the tree. What shape does this same lie take in your life?

Where is Adam? What is his great omission in this story? What does he fail to do when God confronts him? How do we do the same thing with God and in relationships?

Look at this key line: "I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid myself." (Adam's words in 3: 10) How do you and I replicate this exact pattern in relationships? What does it cost us?

What does it say about God that he came seeking Adam after he ate from the tree?

Look at the specific consequences placed on Eve (women) and Adam (men). How does that consequence reveal something innate about each gender....and the issue, then, that drive us (as a man, as a woman) back to God in obedience and trust?

At a later point, read Genesis 1-3 again, as you'd watch a drama, and only ask yourself the simplicity of one question. What does this tell me about God...about men....about women (about myself) and how does this apply to my life?

Ephesians 5: 22- 33 Flip over to the New Testament, to the most classic instructions given to a man and woman in marriage. Notice that Paul refers back to Genesis. Think hard and creatively on this one: how do you see that these directives have the potential, as we follow them, to actually roll back some of the curse of the original fall of Adam and Eve? What old aches are healed, in some small measure?

Sex In The City: David and Bathsheba

What I love about the Bible is that it doesn't airbrush anybody. Here is sex-outside-the-prescribed-boundaries in detail and for public display, committed by a major character, King David.

2 Samuel 11 and 12 Very simply, what caused David to be vulnerable to the ancient wrong of adultery? And what were the consequences for himself...for Bathsheba...for Uriah...for his son...for his household?

Psalms 51 What all do you see in this intimate moment of remorse as David talks to God about what he's done? What part of this Psalm would most match the words inside of you ...and why?

Incest and Lust

Again, nearly every human experience imaginable is found between the covers of the Bible. Amnon is David's son who forces himself sexually on his half-sister, Tamar.

2 Samuel 13 What kind of insight does this story give you into the nature of lust...and what comes from it? Why do you think Amnon hated Tamar as much as he had originally desired ("loved") her? What do you learn here that has bearing on other sins of lust, like pornography or hooking up?

The Woman of His Nightmares

Solomon, the wisest man in the ancient world, had some rather astute thoughts about sex. His proverbs give a timeless take on the nature of seduction...and the vulnerability of men.

Proverbs 5: 1-6 How does this passage describe the seductive woman?

Proverbs 5: 21,23; 6: 26-35; 7: 27-27 What are the consequences of getting involved with her? How have you seen these play out in a man's life?

Proverbs 5:15-20 How is sexual desire meant to be fulfilled in marriage?

Proverbs 7: 6-27 What poor choices led to this man's affair?

Song of Solomon

This is a book in the Bible that deserves to be savored in its entirety. Read it leisurely. Notice what happens in you as you read. How does it speak to the place in you that would somehow make sex or sexual desire something separate from God? God is not mentioned in this book—but He is present. What do you sense is his attitude toward sex?

One last point. In the woman's last speech she says, "My vineyard is mine, at my disposal." (8:12) How is this key to future sexual intimacy with a husband and what would it mean in your life for those to be your words?

A Heart Restored

Isaiah 61: 1-3 When Jesus first had the opportunity to speak publicly in the temple, he spoke from this passage. What is God able to do in the places of our lives where we have known bondage and sorrow? Which phrase means the most to you...and why?

Hosea 2: 14-17 This is God speaking, God who give us a door of hope in the valley of Achor (trouble). The God we come to know as a husband (Ishi) rather than someone who just controls us (owner). As you read this passage, what parts ignite a sense of hope in you...and why?

Jesus and Sex

We mostly know what Jesus thinks about the matter by the way he treated women who had a sexual past. That is, he did not condone. He did something far greater—he forgave and he loved. Look at three individual women.

Luke 7: 36-50 (The sinful woman is most likely a prostitute or a woman with an immoral sexual past). How do you think this woman felt, weeping in a roomful of men? How can forgiveness transform someone to this extent?

John 4: 1-42 How does Jesus treat this woman's past and her longings as they are revealed by the search for a man's love?

John 8: 1-11 Why did this woman remain behind, after everyone has left? How does Jesus deal with shame—her shame, my shame, your shame?

Paul and Sex

Paul's words about what is sexually kosher, and not, between men and women take on added weight when you realize the people he's writing to. Corinth was the cosmopolitan crossroads of its day, right at the center of trading between east and west, a potpourri of everyone from everywhere living there.

1 Corinthians 5 What does this passage say about immorality in the church...and the modern notion of tolerance?

1 Corinthians 6: 12-20 Sometimes, sexual desire is viewed like any other appetite—like a good meal. This passage blows that argument apart. What does this passage treat about the body...and sex?

1 Corinthians 7: 1- 9 Imagine a first century woman who historically had no rights at all being given the “rights” to her own sexual desire for her husband! It's all right here. What new insights does this passage give you about sex and marriage?

1 Thessalonians 4: 1-8 Why do you think God puts such stringent boundaries here around the sexual experience?

Romans 1: 18-32 What does it mean to exchange your glory as a man or woman created in his image...for something “lesser than”? What does this passage teach about homosexuality?

The Bride of Christ

Purity of body and soul is about being made the bride of Christ. It's the reason why it all matters, in the ultimate sense.

Revelation 21: 1-7 What motivates you in this passage to want to live like a woman who belongs to God?