

## REAL QUESTIONS, BIBLICAL ANSWERS: What Does the Bible Say About Sexual Sin? | Various Scriptures<sup>i</sup>

### INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is so very good to see each of you this morning.

### SERIES RECAP:

We are in the middle of a teaching series we are calling, “Real Questions, Biblical Answers.” We are answering questions that were submitted by our church this summer. Today we are tackling the question, “What does the Bible say about sexual sin?” We live in a culture and a time that has sought to redefine ethics regarding human sexuality. Our society is overly sexualized, and it seems to be constantly set before us in TV shows, marketing strategies, and the internet. It has even become a regular discourse in politics. One’s preferences are now the basis of their identity or struggle with identity.

Consider the devastating impact the sexual revolution has had on society. Millions of unwanted pregnancies, shattered dreams, divorce, abortions, and rampant sexual diseases – some of which are incurable.<sup>ii</sup> Others have battled deep depression and even taken their own life. Families have been ripped apart on the basis of one’s orientation.

But as is true to Scripture regarding all topics of modernity, it brings much to bear on the topic of sexual ethics and the role it plays in human flourishing. So, this morning, I want to approach our topic in three different ways. I want to answer three questions. What does the Bible say about sexual sin, what would Jesus do, and what are practical approaches to navigating relationships? That will serve as our outline this morning.

I want to begin by saying that I think this is an important topic to talk about. I think the enemy would shame us, The Church, into silence on this issue. But two things I would say to that. 1) God created sex and it is a great gift. So, if God is the designer, then God is the definer. 2) If the Church doesn’t talk about this, then all the world will know are the world’s views. So, we can’t shy away from teaching this.

And before we dive into our study today, I want to lay some groundwork. First, while I believe the Bible is clear regarding sexual sin, all people are loved immensely by God. If God has given you breath, then He loves you! And

regardless of your struggle, God loves you and is for you. Secondly, I believe the Bible confronts us all on this subject matter. Scripture is an equal opportunity offender here. And I want to give you a warning, up front, that today will most likely step on your toes as the preparation time has for me.

And I want to, here at the start, share with you my desired outcome for today. I believe the Bible is clear. I will always stand on God’s Word unapologetically. As a believer in Jesus Christ, Scripture is my authority and my guide on all matters. Secondly, I love you way more than you will ever know. Regardless of your struggles, this Pastor loves you and desires God’s best for your life.

### MESSAGE:

So, with that groundwork, let’s examine...

#### 1) What does the Bible say about sexual sin?

Two things I want to point out in answering that question. First, the Bible says to **flee sexual sin**. 1 Corinthians 6:18. ***18Flee from sexual immorality.*** [Why?] ***Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.*** The Bible says to flee sexual immorality.

Paul here seems to suggest that sexual sin differs from other sins. I think the point Paul is making is that while it doesn’t have a different ranking in terms of offending God, because sin is sin, the consequences are indeed different. Sexual sin impacts more than our physical bodies. It has spiritual implications. But it is also something that almost always affects more than just the person engaging in the immorality. This type of sin destroys marriages, families, and relationships.

Did you know that almost every book of the Bible renounces sexual immorality? God wants us to know to avoid it. 1 Thessalonians 4:3. ***“3For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality.”*** So, the first thing I want us to know is that the Bible says to avoid this type of sin.

Secondly, the Bible says to **honor God’s design**. Flip over to Hebrews 13:4. ***4Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.***

Marriage is to be held in honor among all people, God says. Honor in the original language means to value, or to place a great price on.<sup>iii</sup> 1 Peter uses this very word when talking about the value of Jesus’ blood shed on the cross.

Perhaps we have gotten off track, as a society, because we have failed to value marriage in our culture. We diverted from God's design.

Now, God is the inventor of marriage. Therefore, God alone is the definer of marriage.<sup>iv</sup> In order to hold marriage in honor, it must be according to God's definition. God clearly defines marriage, and Jesus repeats the definition, in Genesis 2:24, *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."*

Marriage is a foundational component to society. And only marriage between a man and a woman can be unitive, procreative and spiritual. We have enough evidence to support that marriage God's way is actually the best way to raise future generations.<sup>v</sup>

I feel like I need to interject something here. I think the Church, and when I say Church I'm talking about the Universal Church, the Church as a whole, not specifically Trinity, but I think the Church has fallen short on this topic. We tend to only refer to specific sexual sin that we want to be against. But if we are going to be true to Scripture, we have to realize that sexual immorality involves much more than just homosexuality. We cannot be Pharisaical here.

Look again at Hebrews 13:4. Pick up where we left off, *"and **let the marriage bed be undefiled**, for God will judge the **sexually immoral** and **adulterous**."* The marriage bed is to be undefiled. That means free from contamination, pure.

Here's the bottom line of Scripture. I want to be clear. **God's design for a sexual relationship is between a man and a woman in the confines of a covenant marriage. Anything outside that is sexual immorality.** Biblical clarity. Fornication, pornography, homosexuality, prostitution, gender confusion, adultery, lust, anything that is not God's original design, is sin. I think those are real struggles, no doubt. But I've heard it said, if your opinion about anything contradicts God's Word, guess which one is wrong?<sup>vi</sup> It's not God's Word.

I think it is important to point out here that God's prohibitions against sexual immorality of any kind is ultimately for our good. God is not being oppressive here. His Word is good and for human flourishing. And when we live in alignment to God's Word, there is true freedom. And that's the point. Fleeing sexual immorality is a command of God and is for our good. Holding marriage in honor is a command of God and is for our good.

Now, I understand there is way more to this conversation. And I'd love to meet with you over a cup of coffee and talk more in depth if you'd like. But I don't think the focus of this sermon needs to discuss the details surrounding the biblical stance. I want to be clear on what the Bible says, and I believe I've communicated that, but I want today to talk about a response.

We live in a culture that is headed in the wrong direction. Yes. But God has uniquely positioned us, His Church, to be a light. Right?! And I can't think of a better way to be a light than to do what Jesus would do.

So, we've talked about what the Bible says, now let's ask...

## 2) What would Jesus do today?

It is always best practice to follow Jesus. Did you know that Jesus often dealt with people caught in sexual sin? Mary Magdalene and the woman caught in adultery, what we are going to look at now. In addition to those examples, the bulk of the New Testament was written to believers living in morally depraved cities that were filled with sexual immorality. Don't ever think that the Bible doesn't address this or that Jesus never dealt with it. If we are going to be a people of hope to our depraved society, we must be like Jesus in this arena.

So, turn with me to John chapter 8. Jesus' interaction with a woman caught in adultery, sexual sin. Let's read the entire passage, verses 3-11, as we discover 3 approaches to people living in sexual sin.

*<sup>3</sup>The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst <sup>4</sup>they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. <sup>5</sup>Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" <sup>6</sup>This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>7</sup>And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." <sup>8</sup>And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup>But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup>Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" <sup>11</sup>She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."*

3 things in approaching others living in sexual sin. First...

### A) Remember our own sinfulness.

Before we ever point a finger, remember your own sinfulness. It is important when dealing with anyone to remember your own sinfulness. Last week we talked about the fact that we still struggle with sin. And the reason to begin with remembering our own sinfulness is it accomplishes 2 things. 1) It keeps us from being Pharisaical. And 2) it best postures us to love others.

In Luke 7, in the story a woman that washed Jesus' feet with expensive ointment, Jesus said that the woman had such an expression of love because she had been forgiven of much. He went on to say, the person who is forgiven little loves little. We can't help but be overcome with love for others when we remember the condition we were in when Jesus rescued us.

In John 8, Jesus helps the Pharisees remember their own sin. He bent down and wrote in the sand. It doesn't say what Jesus wrote, but we do have an idea from the context of the story. I think Jesus was writing the sins of those men that brought her and threw her down before Him. I think that because Jesus stopped writing and said *whoever is without sin throw the first stone*. Then he resumed writing in the sand. We learn that the men left, from the oldest to the youngest. Jesus forced the Pharisees to remember their own sin.

Listen, by nature, we are all sinners. Let's not be hypocrites. The best way to approach others regardless of the sin you are confronting is to remember the forgiveness you've found. Jesus said to remove the log from your own eye before you remove the speck from another's.

Aren't you grateful that all sins are forgivable? Well, with the exception of one, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which is to deny saving grace. But God can and does forgive sin; He forgives even sexual sin.

I believe there are those that truly struggle with same sex attraction, gender identity, and other proclivities. But don't we believe in a God that can rescue from any and every sin? Then let's be people that loves all people and points them to the hope that is found in a relationship with Jesus. We can be that when we remember our own sin. Secondly, ...

### B) Don't weaponize Scripture.

In the story in John 8, the Pharisees that brought the woman before Jesus referenced Scripture. In verses 4 and 5, *"they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women.'*" There is not an Old Testament Law that specifically states those committing adultery are to be stoned, there is a command that says they are to be put to death, by stoning or some other form.

My point, though, is that these men, and Jesus for that matter, had every right to put this woman to death. She's guilty, she's sinned. The Pharisees, though, you see their heart, they weaponized Scripture trying to not only trip Jesus up, but also to condemn the woman. But Jesus chose differently. Jesus chose not to weaponize Scripture. Isn't that interesting. The one person that truly had the right to condemn, chose not to condemn.

Verses 10 and 11. *"Jesus stood up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?'"* *She said, 'No one, Lord.'* *And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you.'* Now, Jesus can make that statement because later on He would die for that woman's sin. But isn't that the approach Jesus takes with us all?

In John 3:17, we all know John 3:16, but John 3:17 says, *"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."* You know what condemning someone is? It hypocritical. Because we all deserve to be condemned.

Matthew 7:1. *"Judge not, that you be not judged."* Now, this is often a misinterpreted verse. We often take this verse to mean that we have no right to tell someone what they are doing is wrong.<sup>vii</sup> But that's not what this verse means. Jesus couldn't have meant that because He spent His entire ministry telling people they were in error. In fact, Jesus summed up His ministry in John 7:7, *"[the world] hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil."* So, "judge not" cannot mean that we don't call sin, sin.<sup>viii</sup>

So, what does judge not mean? I believe what Jesus is getting at is that we should not condemn others so that we are not condemned. No one wants to be condemned. I love what Pastor J.D. Greear says about condemnation. *"It's what you do after you tell someone the truth that determines whether or not you are judging them."*

Beloved, if we are looking to the bible to give us a “drop the mic” moment toward those that are struggling in sexual sin just so that we can win an argument on Facebook and put them in their place, then we are condemning people and not operating in the ways of Jesus. Let’s not weaponize Scripture. Jesus didn’t

This brings me to the third thing we learn in John 8...

### C) Lovingly point in a godly direction.

Instead of condemning people, let’s lovingly point them in a godly direction. Isn’t that what Jesus did? Verse 11. *“She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”*

If God loves us, and God stands ready to forgive us, to redeem us, and to save us, then can’t He work in someone’s heart to go in the right direction. I think the problem we have here is that we want to be other people’s Holy Spirit. Don’t be. You and I make a terrible Holy Spirit. But God does what we cannot do.

What would Jesus do? He would love them, not condemn them, and he would lovingly point them in the right direction. Let’s be Jesus.

So, we’ve talked about what the bible says and what Jesus would do. In the time we have remaining, I want to talk about...

### 3) How to navigate relationships?

Because this is the hard part, right? Practically speaking, how do we navigate that which seems to be so divisive today. The world would like for us to be backed into a corner. To make us believe that there are only two options; to condone sexual sin or to condemn people. The world says you must condone my sin, affirm it, because it defines me. To not condone it is to condemn me.

But there is another option. Jesus didn’t condone the woman’s sin, and we know that He didn’t condemn the woman, instead He had compassion on her. To have compassion toward someone is to say I see you, it’s not okay, but I see you, and I’m going to walk with you through it. Listen, it is not loving to see someone caught in sin and leave them there. It is actually unloving to consider what the Bible says about sexual sin and not help them in their struggle.

The advice that I would have for those of you trying to navigate your way around a friend, a child, or a family member that is in sexual sin, is to let compassion be your guide. Allow me to give a couple examples here.

### ILLUSTRATION: Ted

A friend of mine, I’ll call him Ted for this illustration, we became friends in college. He was a guy everyone loved being around. He truly cared about others. He was always there for me. He encouraged me, helped me, even prayed for me. He was a true friend.

He graduated a year before me, but we continued to stay in touch. One night, he called a few friends of ours because he needed to tell us something. He informed us that he was gay and that he was in a relationship. I would be lying to you if I didn’t tell you that the news was shocking.

But what was unique was how each person responded to Ted. One of my friends was very upset and hurt. He told Ted that he couldn’t believe it and that this has changed their friendship. He condemned Ted

Another friend had the complete opposite reaction. He said, “Bro, whatever makes you happy.” He condoned Ted’s sin.

I took a different approach. Had to be the Holy Spirit’s leading because I’m not a smart human, I only have 2 brain cells. And I am certainly not perfect on this.

When Ted said what he had to say, I just listened. Truth, I didn’t know what to say I just said, “Do you know what I believe about that?” He said, “Yes. You believe it’s wrong.” I asked, “Do you know why I believe it’s wrong?” He said, “Yeah. The Bible says it’s wrong.” Yeah the Bible says it’s wrong.

But then I said something else following that. I asked him, “Do you know that I love you?” To which he said, “I hope that’s true.” I told him, “Well it is true. I love you man, and I would like to continue the conversation if that’s okay with you.” And he agreed.

Two years passed. I had gone onto Seminary and Ted was becoming established in his career. One evening my phone rang. It was him. I picked up the phone and said, “What’s up, bro?!” He was sobbing on the other end of the line. He asked me if I could meet up with him. I said, “I’m on my way.”

We met up at a restaurant and he told me that he had been convicted of his sin. He said that I was the only one he could think of that would listen and point him in the right direction.

Ted battled. And he rode a roller coaster for the next several years. But here's what I learned in that situation, there is a third option. When the world tries to force us to either condone or condemn, we must choose compassion instead.

Real quick, a couple other practical applications of our discussion today. If you have a family member that is living a lifestyle that is opposed to your biblical convictions, trust the promptings of the Holy Spirit. You might choose to not expose your kids to that kind of life, and there is probably wisdom there. But the piece of advice that I'd have for you is **hold your conviction but find common ground**. The way you do this is for every no you have, find a way to say yes.<sup>ix</sup>

A couple hypothetical scenarios on how I'd put this into practice. If I'm ever invited to a same sex wedding, I'm not going to go. To attend a wedding is to affirm the union. Remember in the old days when preachers would ask, "If anyone should have reason to believe these two should not be married, speak now or forever hold your peace." If I'm at that wedding, and that is said, I'd have to speak. Right? I don't want to be in that position.

But, if I say no to attending the wedding, then I need to be able to say, "While I won't be in attendance, I'd love to meet up for dinner." For every no, find a way to say yes.

For a family member, I probably won't be in attendance for Thanksgiving, but I should be willing to meet up another time. Do you see what I mean by, "for every no, we should find a way to say yes?"

I don't know what exactly that would be for you, and you might differ from me. But my point is that if we are going to communicate that we don't condone, nor do we condemn, we must be willing to find a way to communicate compassion. So, as you seek how to navigate this, trust the prompting of the Holy Spirit, don't compromise your biblical conviction, but find a way to show compassion.

## CONCLUSION:

As we conclude this morning, I want to remember the desired conclusion I mentioned to begin our time. Please hear me say, the Bible is clear on the issue of sexual sin. **Anything** outside of God's design of a man and a woman in the confines of a covenant marriage relationship, is a sin. We should not feel the need to be apologetic of what the Bible says.

But the second conclusion I want us to come to is the fact that God loves sinners of all kinds. And because of that, we love sinners of all kinds. We will not compromise our biblical convictions, but we must respond in love.

Here's how I want to end this morning. If you are here and you'd like to have further discussions about this, please come by after the service and let's set up a time to go to coffee. If you're here today and you have a prayer need, our elders will be here at the front and would love to pray with you and over you.

But if you're here today and you don't have a relationship with Jesus, I want to encourage you to come to Him today. I'd like to ask for every head to be bowed, and every eye to be closed for just a moment. I'm going to lead us in a prayer of salvation. If you desire to make Jesus Lord today, just repeat after me, silently, between you and The Lord. And if you pray this prayer, would you come find me after the service? Simply let me know that you prayed this prayer. Let's pray.

Lord, I admit today that I am a sinner. I have fallen short of your holiness. But I believe Jesus died for my sin. I believe he rose on the third day. I give you the reigns of my life today. Thank you for saving me. In Jesus name, Amen.

If you prayed that prayer, let me know. I want to come alongside of you and walk with you through this new journey of life. Others of you come this morning.



## ENDNOTES:

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- <sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation of this message: Carl R. Trueman, *Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution*, Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 2022; Rosaria Champagne Butterfield, *Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ*, Crown & Covenant Publications, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 2015. Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, *Biblical Answers For A Broken World*, Booklet published by BGEA, 2019; Robert Jacobs, *What's The Big Deal With Sexual Sin*, article published by Living Hope Ministries, 2020, accessed online: <https://www.livehope.org/devotional/whats-the-big-deal-with-sexual-sin>; Trustworthy Word, *What Does The Bible Say About Sexual Sin?*, article published on Trustworthy Word website, accessed: <https://www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-sexual-sin>; Got Questions, various articles: *What is Sexual Immorality?*, *If Homosexuality is a Sin, Why Didn't Jesus Ever Mention It?*, *What Makes Sexual Sin Such a Big Deal?*, accessed online: [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org); Living Out, *What Does God Really Say?*, and *Isn't God Being Unfair?*, accessed online: [www.livingout.org](http://www.livingout.org); J.D. Greear, *Preaching Like Jesus to the LGBT Community*, message delivered at the ERLC, published by J.D. Greear Ministries, May 26, 2016, accessed online: <https://jdgreear.com/preaching-like-jesus-to-the-lgbt-community>; Andy Wood, *You Asked For It: What Does The Bible Say About LGBTQ+?*, sermon preached at Echo Church, April 30, 2018, accessed online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UM5mSu0BWU>; Christian Sexuality Course, various parts, accessed online: <https://christian-sexuality.com>; Skip Heitzig, *Dealing With Sexual Sin*, article by Connect with Skip, published by LightSource May 11, 2018, accessed online: <https://www.lightsource.com/devotionals/the-connection-devotional-with-skip-heitzig/dealing-with-sexual-sin-connect-with-skip-heitzig-week-of-may-11-2018-11791049.html>; Nelson Walker, *Homosexuality: A Biblical Perspective*, taught at Calvary Albuquerque, Wednesday, June 8, 2022, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/series/323/sermon/4682>; Sean McDowell, *Homosexuality: Compassion and Clarity*, taught at Calvary Albuquerque, Wednesday, August 27, 2014, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/series/305/sermon/4274>; Skip Heitzig, *Jesus Loves Homosexuals Parts 1 & 2*, taught at Calvary Albuquerque, Sunday, March 8 and 15, 2015, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/series/115/sermon/1589>.
- <sup>ii</sup> Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, *Biblical Answers For A Broken World*, Booklet published by BGEA, 2019.
- <sup>iii</sup> Bible Hub Interlinear Bible, Strong's Concordance, 5093, timios.
- <sup>iv</sup> Idea taken from Connor Bales and Todd Kaunitz, *Gospel in the Home: Turning Chaos Back into Order*, Lucid books, Houston, Texas, 2016, pages 16-17.
- <sup>v</sup> Inspired by a quote I came across by Matt Staver.
- <sup>vi</sup> Rick Warren.
- <sup>vii</sup> Taken from J.D. Greear's message to the ERLC convention.
- <sup>viii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>viii</sup> Examples taken from J.D. Greear's podcast, *Ask Me Anything Podcasts*, episode posted November 12, 2018.