

Daily Devotionals: Dear Church | August 28, 2022

Week 1 | A Christian vision for sexuality

Dear Church,

When I was growing up in church, the topic of sexuality never came up much.

And if it did, the conversation revolved more around what was prohibited. All I remember is the “don’ts”.

- Don’t have sex before marriage.
- Don’t watch pornography.
- Don’t get a divorce.

And so on.

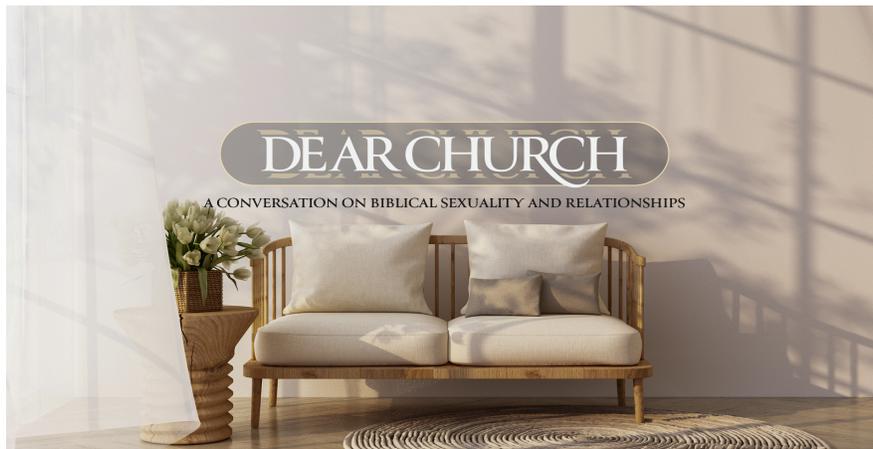
From what I can recall we never spent much time on God’s *vision* for us as sexual beings (how God created us as sexual beings, how we all experience sexual brokenness, how God entered into our brokenness through the incarnation of Jesus, and how Jesus redeems and restores us through his work on the cross). Nor do I recall spending much time on *why* God’s vision of sexuality is better than the world’s vision.

And I think a lot of people are in that same boat.

Mark Regenerus, a prominent sociologist in the field of American sexuality (especially as it pertains to millennials and Gen Z), writes in one study that: “The majority of religious youths with whom we spoke...could articulate nothing more about what their faith has to say about sex than a simple no-sex-before-marriage rule. **For most of them, this is the sum total of Christian teaching on sex.**”

If what Regenerus says is true, then we will lose the war for the hearts and minds of people in our culture on the topic of human sexuality.

Philosopher James K.A. Smith asks, “What is it that we want when we want to have sex? More starkly: what are we hoping for when we imagine happiness looks like having as much sex as



possible? What story are we buying into when we believe a dominant narrative that tells us fulfillment looks like the multiplication of orgasms? What does it feel like to live into that story?"

Those are the kinds of questions Christians need to be addressing. As I wrestle with the topic of sexuality, I find myself asking similar ones. Questions like...

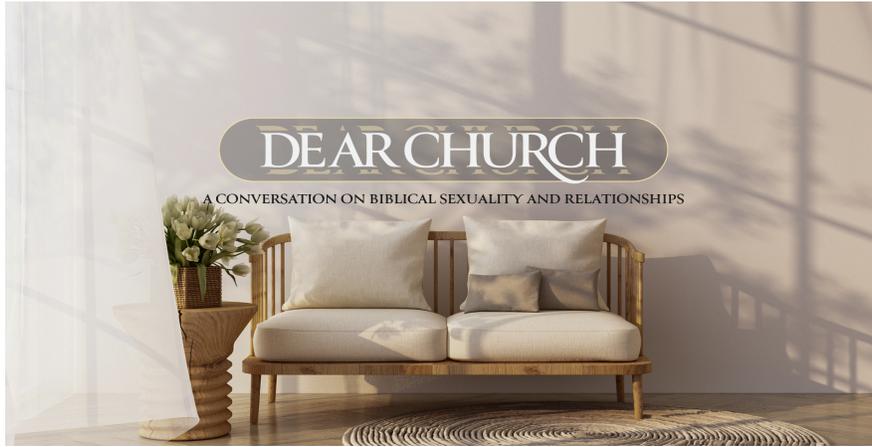
What IS a Christian vision of human sexuality? What is Christianity's view of sex? Why does Christianity hold that view? Does Christianity offer any explanatory power for the sexual brokenness that we experience? Is it better than what the world has to offer? Does a Christian view of sexuality align with reality? And what does it feel like to live into a Christian vision for human sexuality?

Obviously, there's a lot to think about. But as I've delved into this topic myself, and because I'm a Christian who holds to the authority of the Scriptures for my life, I started with just these four questions.

1. What does Scripture say about our sexuality?
2. How has my life experience shaped my views on sexuality?
3. In what ways has my view on sexuality been shaped by the culture at large?
4. Have my views on human sexuality changed at all over the years? If so, have they grown to align more with Scripture or in more alignment with the world?

I'm not sure where you are when it comes to the topic of sexuality, but I think it's deeply helpful to consider these questions no matter where we find ourselves. Below you'll find three steps to help you in that process as you pursue God's vision for holy sexuality.

1. Read the following passages – **Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:18-25; Genesis 3:1-20; Matthew 5:27-30; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Ephesians 5:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; and 1 Timothy 1:9-11.**
2. Prayerfully – emphasis on *prayerfully* (i.e. do this *with* God) – reflect on those same four questions that I listed above. Jot down any significant elements that come to mind. Then, think through how those experiences may have shaped how you think and act out your sexuality today.



3. Lastly, if you'd like some additional resources on this, here are a few I'd recommend:

- *Mere Sexuality* by Todd Wilson (available on Sundays for purchase at a discounted rate!)
- I loved a 2018 sermon from Jon Tyson, a pastor at a church in New York City, on sexuality. Find it by searching The Controversial Jesus | Sexual Formation – Jon Tyson on YouTube.
- I also found a conversation between John Mark Comer and scholar Nancy Pearcey really enlightening as well. Enjoy it by searching Live No Lies Podcast | Episode 4 with Dr. Nancy Pearcey on YouTube.

Grace and peace,
Emerson