**Reclaiming Biblical Sexuality**

**Key Passage**

**1 Corinthians 6:9 - 7:1-9**

**Introduction**

From the bedroom to the board room and everything in between, all Scripture is useful for instruction in every area of life (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Curiously though, when it comes to sex, there are some passages that are never addressed from our pulpits. Broaching this subject in Bible study may seem a bit taboo. Yet, when the church remains silent on the matter, we’re allowing the world to conform us into its image of sexuality (Romans 12:1-2). No wonder that even Christians are confused about such an important part of life. For heaven sakes - sex was God’s idea! Lately, though, I have noticed that this has become a central issue for discussion on Christian broadcasts. It’s about time! There is much at stake.

Maybe you are single, or widowed and thinking, “This subject doesn’t apply to me.” Or, “Where is she going with all of this?” Please bear with me for a moment. As uncomfortable as the subject is, I can assure you that there are some married and single folks you know who could greatly benefit from addressing this issue from a Biblical viewpoint. God is pro-marriage, but He has also given the gift of singleness to some. They should not be ostracized or ignored in the church because they play a vital role in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 7:10-40). We would do well to learn how they steward their sexuality in a way that is God honoring.

Once again, this is but one of a gazillion life issues that is best suited to be addressed in the context of gospel-centered discipling relationships. It is high time we bring this subject out of the shadows of darkness and into the light of God’s Word. However, as with all our lessons, this is but a tool to get the conversation started, not a thorough Biblical exposition on this rather sensitive subject--nor is it intended to be. It is, however, an attempt to glean from Paul’s letters to the saints and uncover some insights on this relevant matter.

**Biblical Sex Education**

**Titus 2:11-14**

***For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people.  It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, as we wait for the happy fulfillment of our hope in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He gave himself for us to set us free from every kind of lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are truly his, who are eager to do good.***

To be transparent, virginity was not a virtue that was highly esteemed in my family. My sex education came primarily from a high school health class, what I saw on tv, and read in secular magazines. Consequently, I had a warped world-view that led to a lifestyle of sin. Believe me when I tell you, I have many scars and shameful regrets to prove it. Oh, how I wish I had been saved before I got married and had a godly woman to disciple me. Now, in my fifties, I have learned that procreation is not the only God ordained purpose of sex (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:23-25; 18:11-13). How about you, did you have a godly woman instruct you with “the talk”?

**Titus 2:3-5**

***Older women likewise are to exhibit behavior fitting for those who are holy, not slandering, not slaves to excessive drinking, but teaching what is good. 4 In this way they will train the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, fulfilling their duties at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the message of God may not be discredited.***

**Digging Deeper**: Proverbs 5:15-23; Hebrews 13:4; Song of Songs 1:5-11; 5:1, 6:4-8:4; Ephesians 5:28-33

A few years back, something very peculiar happened at our small country church. An elderly man who’s been widowed for some time, bought a case of books for the young married Sunday School class. Would you believe his gift to us was a Christian book on marital sex? “Well, I never!”, you say. Me either, sister. The name of the book is *The Act of Marriage: The Beauty of Sexual Love*, by Tim and Beverly LaHaye. I am a little embarrassed to admit this, but I was over fifty-years old, had been married for three decades, and had three grown children when I read this book. I learned things about my body and the “marital bed” that I had never heard before. Suffice to say, the book was quite the Christian sex education and I highly commend it to you. Once I understood God’s redemptive plan for sexuality, I wanted to fully embrace the beauty of this all-important mystery of oneness in my marriage. Now, this same Sunday School class is using another book by Jay Harvey titled *Knowing the Bible Song of Solomon*. It is also a real eye opener!

Normally, our church uses a quarterly curriculum that explores a book of the Bible, and it is my preference to study the Bible chapter by chapter and verse by verse. Occasionally, I substitute teach the senior ladies Sunday school class, and I jump at the opportunity to be with these women and learn from their wisdom. On one such occasion, they were just starting the book of 1 Corinthians. To my dismay, our lesson skipped over some passages. So, I asked if they would mind reading the whole book and expounding on it verse by verse. When the Sunday came to teach 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, followed by 1 Corinthians 7:1-9, I began the lesson by asking a loaded question. I said, “How many of you are struggling with being tempted by prostitutes? They all laughed awkwardly. One of the senior saints said that she and her husband had talked about it and neither of them wanted to study it! I told her honestly – neither did I! But the more I studied and prayed about it, the more the Lord taught me. And this is what I want to share with you now.

Before we dive into this letter, let’s get some context. In Acts chapters 17-18 we learn that Paul spent roughly 18 months in Corinth where he evangelized, made disciples and planted churches – i.e. family homes (1 Cor. 1:11). When Paul left, Apollos, a disciple of Priscilla and Aquilla, came to Corinth and did the same as Paul. Five years passed and Paul was in Ephesus when the church at Corinth sent a delegation of men to settle some issues that had arisen in this yet immature group of believers (1 Corinthians 1:11-17, 3:1-9-17, 16:15-18). The chief issue we are going to look at is the licentious and pagan sexual practices that were not only tolerated but embraced in the church at Corinth. Paul begins by referencing a, now lost, letter. Read **1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:9-20, 7:1-16**.

**He Made them Male and Female**

**Genesis 1:27-28**

***God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them,***

***male and female he created them.  God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it! Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground.”***

Hardly a week goes by that we don’t hear another story from a broken-hearted mother whose children or grandchildren have abandoned their Christian upbringing in favor of a sexual lifestyle totally opposed to God’s design. The devil, through media and government legislations, is overtly pushing a demonic agenda that our children are buying into, hook, line and sinker. Like the early church in Corinth, we are embracing and slowly molding ourselves into the image of this corrupt world. We are living in a time of wholesale sexual identity crisis that rivals Sodom and Gomorrah. How are we to respond to this? It depends on if you are dealing with a person in or out of the church. Read **1 Corinthians 5:9-13**.  It all stems from a lack of knowledge about God our creator is, who we are without Him, where we are and how we got there, and lastly, God’s remedy in Christ (Genesis chapters 1-4; John 1:1-18; 1 Corinthians 1:18-24; 1 John 4:1-19). In short, we have either missed the gospel all together, or, diluted it to a man made, man centered gospel that is good for nothing.

**Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)**

***Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.***

In his exposition on Proverbs 29:18, Herb Hodges points out the tragic implications of Proverbs 29:18. The word translated as *perish*, in Hebrew (Strong’s concordance #6544) Is deep indeed. In part, here is the definition: to loosen; to expose, dismiss; absolve, avenge, bare, go back, make naked, perish, uncover. In short, without the Bible informing us of who God our creator truly is, people throw off all restraints, go wild and naked. There is no restraining influence of righteousness, and everyone does what is right in their own sight. They are spiritually blind, and, as it was before the flood, every inclination of there hearts are on evil all the time (Genesis 6:1-7; Proverbs 5:19-23; Hosea 4:6). Case in point, let’s see what happens when people are unrestrained and in the dark about God. Even righteous people can become defiled by the world’s influence. Read **Genesis 13:10-13, 19:1, 20-38; Romans 1:18-32; 2 Peter 2:1-9.**

**Digging Deeper:** Lev. 18:22; Judges 19:22-24; Luke 17:29; Jude 7; Titus 1:10-16, 2:11-14; Revelation 2:18-23, 9:2, 18:9

Using broad strokes, we have merely scratched the surface of reclaiming sexuality as God intended. This topic has many dimensions, each demanding an enormous amount of pen and ink. Therefore, I will defer to those who are more qualified to speak with expertise on these matters. Rosaria Butterfield is one of these people. Rosaria is a pastor’s wife and mother, a writer, speaker, former professor of English at Syracuse University. She is also a *former* atheist and lesbian. In her first book, The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert, she details her radical conversion to Christ. Her second book, Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ, is a must read for anyone dealing with this subject. Additionally, you can find numerous YouTube videos where you can hear her beautiful redemptive story. The Lord has given us this sister to equip the church for such a time as this. If we are to find the heart of God in this matter and desire to reach those struggling with sexual identity, we would do well to do some research and listen to those who know experientially, from which they speak.

**Titus 3:3-6**

***For we too were once foolish, disobedient, misled, enslaved to various passions***

***and desires, spending our lives in evil and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 But “when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, 5 he saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us in full measure through Jesus Christ our Savior.***

In light of all the Lord has done to forgive us and free us from our sins, how are we to apply this truth? We will conclude with some admonitions from God’s Word. Let’s read **Romans 6:12-22, 12:1-2; 1 Peter 1:13-19 and 1 Peter 2:9-11; Ephesians 5:1-27.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let’s talk about it.

1. How many messages have you heard preached on God’s intent for sexuality? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. If you have heard messages on the subject, what specifficly was emphised, positives or negitives? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and make a list of things that discqalify a person from eternal life. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Read Titus 3:3-6. Why do you think we like to judge people who sin diffrently than we do? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Now make a list of things that God has done when He saves a person. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Why do you think it is important for older saints to instruct the younger people in Biblical sexuality? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. Read 1 Corinthians 5:5-17. From these passages, when somone in the church is living in unrepentant sin, what action sound the body of Christ take? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. Read Acts 5:1-11 and 1 Corinthians 11:30. How does God deal with those in the church who refuse to repent of sins? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
9. From Romans 6:12-22, what instructions do you see here about how a bleliver is to stewart their sexuality? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
10. Within the permmitors of marriage, are you convenced that God not only ssanctions sexuality, but He blesses it? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Memory Verse**

**1 Corinthians 6:11**