



The Goodness of Sex and the Glory of God

"For you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

1 Corinthians 7:1-9, ESV

#1648 October 4, 2009 AM

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Along with the present reality of rampant sexual sin in the wake of the sexual revolution of the 1960s, there is also the reality of distorted sex as a result of being used, abused and misused sexually. The sexual revolution also provided false pictures of sexuality which promote frustrated sex—it's not as good as in the movies. But there are other forms of frustrated sex. What of those who cannot enjoy sex because of physical limitations or medical conditions? What will the church say to these?

The church has tended to respond with either legalism or license. Historically, the church has followed the pattern of legalism by telling teenagers and singles that "True Love Waits" - the Christian version of "Just Say No!" On the other hand, it has become popular today to talk about sex in church and invite congregants to enjoy sex often (perhaps a "40 Days of Sex" Campaign is lurking in our evangelical future).

The Corinthians opted for the legalistic approach- "It is right for a man not to touch a woman" (1 Cor. 7:1). Paul responded by urging them to remain as they were because of a present distress unknown to us (7:17, 25-27). If at all possible, though, Paul preferred a celibate life which allowed for undistracted devotion to Christ (7:7-8, 32-35). However, Paul recognized that not everyone has the gift of celibacy (7:7). Those who don't have the gift of celibacy have been granted another gift - marriage and the joy of sex within marriage.

The Biblical Picture

We glorify God when we fulfill our God-given roles which include maleness/femaleness (Gen. 1:27). We were created to reflect the tri-une fellowship of the Godhead in our own relationships. God's answer to man's loneliness was marriage (Gen. 2:18-25).

But we cannot talk about sex without talking about marriage. In marriage there is intimacy (Gen. 2:24-25). Sex is a one-flesh, no-shame union in which husband and wife know one another intimately (Gen. 4:1).

But we cannot talk about marriage without talking about the God who reveals Himself as the ever-faithful husband of His bride. The Lord betrothed Himself to Israel (Ezekiel 16:8-14). Yet, Israel was continually adulterous, so in 722 BC, the Lord judged Israel for her adultery and removed her from the North (Hosea 1:2-2:13), and in 586 BC the Lord judged Judah for her adultery and removed her from Jerusalem (Ezekiel 16:15, 30). Even so, God would win back His bride (Hosea 2:14-18) through a new covenant by which He would be intimately known (Ezekiel 16:59-63). The New Testament reveals that Jesus is the one who mediates this new covenant (Hebrews 8:8-12). As our faithful husband, Jesus is preparing us (Eph. 5:25ff) for His wedding day, the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9). It is by faith that we are betrothed to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2).

Conclusion: So, sex is a divine gift by which we may know God more intimately and glorify Him more fully - because our faithfulness as husband and wife in the earthly marriage covenant and our delighting in one another as husband and wife point to the intimate knowledge between God and His bride and the joys of covenant faithfulness-both His and ours. We bring God great glory when we are fully satisfied with Him in this covenant relationship.

For the single, your faithful, celibate life points to the church patiently awaiting the return of the bridegroom on our wedding day. Such delighting in God for the single and the married, frees us from the bondage of sexual temptation and sin (2 Peter 1:3-4).

Love,

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