

Sexuality and Marriage

Fight The Urge To Fit In (part 10)

Summary: We believe, on the basis of biblical teaching and together with the vast majority of Christians throughout the ages, that sex is intended by God solely for marriage between one man and one woman.

Scripture: Romans 12:1–2; Ephesians 5:22–33

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The Sexuality of She-Hulk

On the Disney+ streaming service currently, there is a new Marvel television series called *She-Hulk: Attorney at Law*.

The main character, Jennifer Walters, is a cousin of Bruce Banner, who is otherwise known as The Hulk. The pair are involved in a car crash together, during which some of his blood gets into an open wound on Jen's arm. Thereafter, she is able to transform into the She-Hulk at whim, completely in control of powers. A 'Mary Sue', in other words.¹

With these new powers, Jen does not want to become a superhero, but attempts to return to her normal life as a lawyer. In this, Jen demonstrates her naïveté and general carelessness because, of course, her life cannot return to normal when people discover she is the She-Hulk!

One area of her life where this is amply demonstrated is when she tries to complete her online dating profile. No one wants to date Jen Walters. When she ventures to create a profile for alter ego She-Hulk, she gets plentiful responses and goes on numerous dates.

One rather gorgeous and buff guy catches her attention. He is quite blatantly using pick-up artist tricks on her and they end up spending the night together. In the morning, when she wakes up as Jen, he makes a hasty exit, admitting without sensitivity that he was only interested in She-Hulk.

To make matters, she is later forced to ask this guy to testify for her in a lawsuit, to admit in a court of law that she identified herself as She-Hulk. In a public courtroom, under oath, he did not hesitate to once again humiliate and demoralise Jen by admitting he was only attracted to She-Hulk.

Isn't it interesting that he did have any qualms about admitting he had sex with the She-Hulk in such a public forum, yet she felt brutalised, even as his testimony saved her from a lawsuit.

While *She Hulk: Attorney at Law* is a fictional story, it is sadly an accurate portrayal of the modern consequences of the sexual revolution of the 1960s. The invention of consistently effective birth control devices and reproduction technologies have separated the pleasure of sex from its purpose in procreation. In the process, it has consistently and effectively destroyed people in heart, mind, soul and body.

Our sexuality is an essential part of who we are for it is a tool for fulfilling the eternal purpose of God for human persons. Sex is a useful tool within the confines of marriage; outside of marriage, it becomes a spiritual weapon in our own destruction.

What Is Essential About Sexuality and Marriage

There is so much that can be said about sexuality and marriage, but this sermon series is about identifying what is essential to believe about sexuality and marriage, so that we are not distracted or pressured into the sinful patterns of this fallen world. As persons who have placed our faith in Jesus and are committed to living a Christian lifestyle, our goal is to fight the urge to fit in; yet, on this topic especially, we have to admit there are lots of ‘urges’ we are fighting against.

All jokes aside, our statement on this topic reads thus:

We believe, on the basis of biblical teaching and together with the vast majority of Christians throughout the ages, that sex is intended by God solely for marriage between one man and one woman.

With others, I would argue this doctrine is another pillar on which others are supported. I agree with Matthew Lee Anderson, who argued,

The gender-binary at the heart of marriage is an ‘architectural doctrine’ of the Christian faith: it permeates the whole of Scripture, stands beneath the traditional naming of God as Father, is necessary for explaining Christ’s relationship to the Church, and generates an indispensable role for Mary in salvation history. Excising the doctrine would be nearer to a theological heart transplant than cosmetic surgery.”²

To be an “architectural doctrine”, what I have called a “pillar”, means this statement about sexuality and marriage permeates all of Scripture; it undergirds other traditional teachings; and, it touches on our theology of salvation.

Our statement makes three claims about sexuality and marriage.

Sex Is Intended by God

The first truth we affirm with this statement is **sex is intended by God**. This might seem like an odd thing to say, something that maybe does not need to be said at all.

Unfortunately, thanks to the latent Platonism of some people’s favourite theologian, Augustine of Hippo, some Christians have notoriously rejected sex as a common good.

So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.” (Genesis 1:27–28)³

Remember that, to put it one way, our Creator’s eternal purpose is to have a family to call his own, a people with whom to share the love and community of the Trinity. So, he created humankind and commissioned them with two jobs: 1) to fill the earth; and, 2) rule it as his image bearers, his representatives.

This image bearer aspect of God’s eternal purpose is highlighted in our reading from *The Letter to the Ephesians*:

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord ... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church ... For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one

flesh. This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:22–33a)

The submission and love shared by a man and woman, within the bonds of marriage, is a display of unity based on a shared faith in Jesus and a Christian lifestyle. And it is this unity which is the ultimate expression of the mystery of God.

We bear the image of God in the world by first ruling ourselves, ruling our homes together as one, and ruling our churches, displaying the unity which arises from dwelling in peace with each other, in all of our relationships. In this way, a godly marriage is a vibrant witness to the salvation of God.

The second part of our commission was begun when God placed the first man in the Garden, to work it and watch over it, then instructed him to name the animals (Gen 2:15, 19). This was an expression of human rulership; however, the man could not fulfil the second part of our commission, to fill the earth, without a helper. So God created the first woman (Gen 2:18, 20–22).

Certainly, you do not need me to explain how the two would “fill the earth”. I will let the Bible spark your imagination,

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame. (Genesis 2:24–25)

In light of the eternal purpose of God, this verse clearly indicates that men and women bind together in marriage, then are naked together without shame, for the purpose of procreation through sex.

Sex Is Pleasurable

Since God intended sex, it goes without saying Christians should have the best sex! I will say it again: Christians should have the best sex. Why? Because sharing a faith in the forgiveness of God and our purification by the blood of Jesus means we can be naked without shame.

Unlike the She-Hulk who is willing to jump into bed with 3 different men after the first date, and is abandoned by each of them the next morning after their tryst. Is her behaviour a sexual liberation compared to what is enjoyed by married Christians? Not on your life!

Sex is meant to be pleasurable and it is described as such in the Bible. Hear a husband’s description of his wife:

Your lips are like a scarlet cord, and your mouth is lovely ... Your breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, that feed among the lilies. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, I will make my way to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense. You are absolutely beautiful, my darling; there is no imperfection in you. Come with me from Lebanon, my bride; come with me from Lebanon! (Song of Solomon 4:3–8a)

Hear now a wife’s description of her husband:

I have taken off my clothing. How can I put it back on? I have washed my feet. How can I get them dirty? My love thrust his hand through the opening, and my feelings were stirred for him. I rose to open for my love. My hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with flowing myrrh on the handles of the bolt. (Song of Solomon 5:3–5)

In the Bible, parents give advice to their son:

Drink water from your own cistern, water flowing from your own well.
Should your springs flow in the streets, streams in the public squares? They should be for you alone and not for you to share with strangers. Let your fountain be blessed, and take pleasure in the wife of your youth. A loving deer, a graceful doe— let her breasts always satisfy you; be lost in her love forever. (Proverbs 5:15–19)

Even the apostle Paul encouraged couples:

But because sexual immorality is so common, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman should have sexual relations with her own husband. A husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. A wife does not have the right over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, a husband does not have the right over his own body, but his wife does. Do not deprive one another—except when you agree for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Corinthians 7:2–5)

There is no denying sex is pleasurable for both spouses and the Bible is not backward in coming forward with its descriptions of sex, so that we would know the pleasure of sex was the intention of our good, creator God all along.

Sex Is for Procreation

Of course, we do not need the Bible to convince us of how pleasurable sex is. We need only look at the mechanics of our own bodies and how they are designed for procreation.

David C. Geary is a Curators' Distinguished Professor in the Department of Psychological Sciences and the Interdisciplinary Neuroscience Program at the University of Missouri. He wrote for *Quillette*, an Australian based online magazine, that

Sexual reproduction is a milestone in the evolution of planetary life and it is found in one form or another in nearly all eukaryotes (organisms whose cells contain a nucleus)...

Early eukaryotes were unicellular organisms, typically with two mating types that produced gametes of about the same size. Competition to merge with the gametes of the other mating type set the stage for the evolution of smaller (sperm) and larger (egg) gametes...

The result was the evolutionary emergence of individuals who either produced small gametes (sperm, males) or large ones (eggs, females) ... In other words, sexual reproduction has independently evolved in different groups of plants and animals and has always arrived at the same solution—two sexes distinguished by the size of the respective gametes they produce.⁴

In simple terms, the life that first emerged on this planet was single-cellular. Evolutionary competition resulted in the emergence of two sexes in plants, animals and humans. One sex, the male, produces sperm and the other, the female, produces eggs. Sperm fertilises an egg, so both sexes are needed for procreation.

That description does not sound very pleasurable at all, does it? Just because we can procreate does not mean we will want to. For that, we need sexual desire, for as my friend Dr. Patricia Weerakoon describes,

Sexual desire is what makes the world go round and makes the ride worthwhile. Where would we all be without it? Actually, we wouldn't. Nobody would want to make love. Men wouldn't have erections. Women would have no need to care about their looks or makeup. There would be no sex, no pregnancies and no babies.⁵

No one can talk quite so openly and casually about sex as does Aunty Pat ☺ A medical doctor-turned-sexologist, Patricia tells us,

The most sexual part of your body is definitely not between your legs but between your ears. Locked deep in a network of nerve cells and pathways are your sexual memories, the dos and don'ts of sex you picked up as you moved through life and all those hidden and unrecognised sexual impulses that pop up when you least expect.

And pop up they do! Both men and women have "sexual thoughts, fantasies and interest in sexual activity". Men have thoughts about sex as much as they do eating and sleeping, which is about once or twice an hour; women half as much. Men do have "a higher frequency of sexual fantasy than women". Apparently, women "prefer to read about it rather than see explicitly pornographic imagery".

Either way, sexual desire starts in the brain for

All you see, hear and do from childhood is stored in your brain, and this affects how you respond sexually as a teenager and an adult ... at that moment of desire, the stimulus sets loose chemicals that get your pistons firing.

At the moment of desire, "the sizzle you feel is the dopamine racing to the emotion centres in your brain ... Once switched on, your brain is primed to interpret messages as sexual". Despite this super-charged chemical rush, Patricia assures us

where sexual desire is concerned, you always have control of what happens. Uncontrolled sexual behaviour is either because a person is zonked out of their brain with alcohol or drugs, or has made a conscious choice to behave that way.

Whether we engage or disengage in sexual behaviour is determined by "all the factors that were fed into our brains from childhood and continue to feed in every day". Yet, in the end, we choose whether to stay or go.

Sex is pleasurable because it creates a mind, body and spirit connection between a man and a woman. It is a "whole-body experience of eroticism". According to Patricia, "it is in letting go, in trying to give these emotions and feelings to your partner, that this unity and eroticism is reached". That is what it means to be naked, yet without shame.

Yet the chemicals do not stop with orgasm. According to Patricia,

Sexual intimacy bonds a couple at brain level. The brain chemicals oxytocin and vasopressin ('cuddle hormones') increase when a couple have sex. An orgasm sends oxytocin levels through the roof.

The more you make love, the closer you feel, and the closer you feel, the more you make love, forming the basis of a 'one-flesh' relationship (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:8).⁶

Our bodies and brains are hardwired then to attract men and women to each other, to couple, and to remain coupled. Sex is pleasurable so that we will have more of it and thereby increase our chances of having babies, which fulfils our purpose to fill the earth and rule it.

We are designed for procreation, so sex is intended by God.

Sex Is for Marriage

The next truth we affirm with our statement is **sex is for marriage** because along with sexual desire, our bodies and brains are also designed for marriage. Speaking further about those chemicals, Dr. Weerakoon notes,

Sexual intimacy, therefore, is never a ‘casual’ act. The apostle Paul stresses this in 1 Corinthians 6:16 ‘Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”’ ...

It is also why breaking up with a lover is traumatic, and many divorcees find it hard to forget an ex—even when they no longer love them.

The chemicals which attract men and women to each other then bind them together.

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)⁷

The sexual liberation movement has encouraged the development of birth control devices and reproduction technologies, which are not in themselves bad when used in ethically appropriate circumstances. They are misused and abused when they convince us to separate the pleasure and procreative aspects of sex, as if they are not related to one another necessarily.

To engage in the pleasure of sex is always to risk the consequence of procreation, but even to call it a “consequence” is to adopt the patterns of thinking of a fallen and sinful world. To procreate is to fill the earth as per God’s commission for humankind; to treat procreation as anything other than a blessing is to reject the eternal purpose of God.

In a sick twist of fate, the She-Hulk’s naïve and careless sexual behaviour, which left her demoralised and humiliated in public, ultimately resulted in procreation because one of her partners stole her blood so as to spawn villain Hulks.

Because the pleasure necessarily produces the procreation, sex is for marriage because that is the only institution that cares not only for the children born but even for the man and woman themselves.

Marriage Is Between a Man and a Woman

Which then leads to the final truth we affirm with our statement: **marriage is between a man and a woman**.

To put this all another way: sex is pleasurable, we are designed for procreation, men and women fill and rule the earth together, as God intended.

So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate. (Matthew 19:6)

The bond created by the sexual act is deeply physical, emotional and spiritual, which is why the apostle Paul discouraged its abuse when he wrote,

Don't you know that anyone joined to a prostitute is one body with her? For Scripture says, The two will become one flesh. (1 Corinthians 6:16)

I believe it is fair to say that the sex act is an act of binding oneself to another person. It is a physical and emotional and spiritual commitment between a man and a woman and should not be treated lightly nor misused.

And there are so many ways to misuse our sexuality noted in the Bible:

- Adultery⁸
- Lust⁹
- Promiscuity¹⁰
- Prostitution¹¹
- Homosexuality¹²
- Bestiality¹³

And like all sin, these sexual perversions disqualify us from the kingdom of God.

Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or males who have sex with males, no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom. (1 Corinthians 6:9–10)¹⁴

If you need further convincing of how marriage is a binding of two people into one, look at the devastation of divorce.

An example can be seen in the divorce of celebrity actors Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt. The couple met on the set of *Mr. And Mrs. Smith* in 2005. They married in 2014. They raised together 6 children, some of whom are adopted.¹⁵

The couple divorced in 2019, but had bought together the country house and vineyard Château Miraval, in the south of France, on the property of which they married and was therefore special to them both.

Earlier this year, Pitt filed a lawsuit against Jolie because she broke a condition of their divorce that she not sell her interest in the winery without consultation. This week, Jolie submitted documents to the court in which she reveals to the public that Pitt acted violently toward her and the children on a flight in 2016.

Domestic violence is bad, always and everywhere, but why raise this single incident in a public court deciding on whether she broke her contract not to sell a shared property? Was it to humiliate her ex-husband and curry favour with the public for her sale of the vineyard?

The dysfunction in this relationship between Pitt and Jolie is on full display, and even though the children are now all teens and young adults, the destruction caused to their lives is incalculable and being ignored by the two celebrities.

That is how destructive the misuse and abuse of sexuality and marriage can be.

Thankfully, the promise of God is such that

And some of you used to be like this. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

The intention of our creator God was that a man and woman would marry, their sex would be pleasurable, and it would lead to procreation. That is the good, pleasing and perfect will of God.

Conclusion

When love breaks down, it is a tragedy, but forgiveness is offered for sexual sin just as it is offered for any and all sin. In Christ Jesus, God redeemed, rescued and reconciled fallen humanity to himself. Let us therefore confess our sin and trust he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin...

Endnotes

- 1 *Wikipedia*, <https://replug.link/541a1710> (accessed 6-Oct-2022).
- 2 Matthew Lee Anderson, as quoted by Trevin Wax in "Is Marriage an "Architectural Doctrine" of the Christian Faith?", *The Gospel Coalition*, 29-Feb-2016, <https://replug.link/58f16900> (accessed 6-Oct-2022).
- 3 Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are taken from *The Christian Standard Bible* (Nashville, TN, USA: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017).
- 4 David C. Geary, "The Ideological Refusal to Acknowledge Evolved Sex Differences", *Quillette*, 1-Sept-2022, <https://replug.link/34131750> (accessed 7-Oct-2022).
- 5 Patricia Weerakoon, *Let's Make Love: Part 1 – Sexual Desire* (Australia: Hampress, 2012).
- 6 Patricia Weerakoon, "Eros on the Brain", 20-Oct-2016, <https://replug.link/66c56860> (accessed 7-Oct-2022).
- 7 See also Mal 2:15; 1Co 6:16; Eph 5:31.
- 8 Ex 20:14; pp Dt 5:18; see also Heb 13:4.
- 9 Mt 5:28; see also Eph 4:19; 5:3; Col 3:5; 1Pe 4:3.
- 10 Dt 22:13-21; Ro 1:24.
- 11 Lev 19:29.
- 12 Ro 1:26-27; see also Ge 19:4-7; Lev 18:22.
- 13 Ex 22:19.
- 14 Rev 21:8; 22:15.
- 15 Julia Jacobs, "Angelina Jolie Details Abuse Allegations Against Brad Pitt in Countersuit", *The New York Times*, 4-Oct-2022, <https://replug.link/46c2b450> (accessed 8-Oct-2022).