



## CREATED BY A LOVING GOD

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(Genesis 1:27, 28)



Our world is permeated by sexual images, ideas, and behaviors. Magazine covers, television shows, and movies are filled with sexual messages. With all this emphasis on sex, it is important that we remind ourselves that God is the creator of sexuality. When we understand God's sexual blueprint and the reasons He gave us this important gift, we realize why He pronounced it "good." Sexuality and the act of sex itself were designed by the loving Creator long before sex was used to sell magazines and products. To really appreciate sexuality, however, we must view sex from God's perspective.

### WHY DID GOD CREATE SEXUALITY?

God created people for relationships. He also created human beings with gender—male and female. According to the Bible, both genders were created in God's image and neither gender was valued above the other. Different cultures have stereotyped the roles of men and women in different ways. Although there is a great deal of debate about what is intrinsic to being male or female, the Bible is clear that both are image-bearers of God and find their completion in a relationship with Him. "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. . . . God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good" (Gen. 1:27, 31).

God gives a beautiful picture of His own nature with maleness and femaleness and their complementary interactive whole. Creating gender and opposite sexes produced the intimate concepts of marriage and family. God uses this pattern to demonstrate a very personal love relationship that He enters into with His people. He made Adam and Eve, the first lovers, incomplete without each other. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

The biblical concept of sexuality helps people understand the complexity of God Himself. It is not just a behavior (having sex) or a gender (male or female). Sexuality is a foundational part of who people are and how they learn about relating to God and one another intimately.

God planned for the sexual relationship to be experienced only between a man and a woman within the covenant commitment of marriage. The sexual union is intended to help people express spiritual intimacy, emotional bonding, passionate excitement, personal fulfillment, and genuine nurturing. One of the great mysteries of life unfolds when marital partners are made complete in the "one flesh" union that God created for them with their soul mate for life. Stepping outside that plan always brings pain because God's laws about sexuality are in place for people's own good.

### MAINTAINING SEXUAL INTEGRITY

It takes conscious choices and a disciplined thought life to be sexually faithful to one's spouse. Sexual integrity requires resisting sexual temptation. Each marital partner must make godly choices to avoid ungodly

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sexual desires that can erupt into sin (1 Thess. 4:3-7; James 1:14, 15).

Society is filled with sexual messages that can tempt people into sin. Setting healthy boundaries for one's thought life as well as for the physical expression of sexuality will help a person maintain sexual integrity. This will mean "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). It will mean treating each other like brothers and sisters in the family of God "with all purity" (1 Tim. 5:2) in the rich interaction of male and female relationships.

Sexuality has been distorted by the Fall and sexual experience has been perverted by sin. Sexual brokenness results in a loss of sexual integrity and hinders the genuineness of people's relationships to others. Marriage alone cannot cure sexual brokenness. Christ alone can redeem people's sexuality through repentance and forgiveness. Only in Him can they experience a redeemed sexuality that leads to disciplined maturity, healthy boundaries, and marital faithfulness.

### HEALING SEXUAL SINS

Sexual sins have devastating consequences, but even these sins can be forgiven by God. Jesus invites people to come to Him with their sins. The following are five tools to use in the process of healing sexual sins.

1. **Confession:** Sexual sins thrive on secrecy. To experience complete healing, people must first confess the sin to God—He hears and forgives (Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9).
2. **Repentance:** This involves recognizing and accepting responsibility for sexual sin. Repentance frees people to make the changes needed for restoration (2 Cor. 7:10).
3. **Forgiveness:** People need to forgive

themselves and the other people involved. Letting go of resentment and shame is crucial to the healing of sexual sins (Col. 3:13).

4. **Sorrow:** Sexuality misused can cause painful consequences and losses. This pain can move people to sorrow. Jesus promises healing to those who grieve (James 4:9, 10).

5. **Restitution:** Making restitution for harmful behaviors can bring reconciliation and restoration of intimacy. This may take different forms, depending on the situation. Each person should seek God's guidance regarding how to make restitution in matters of sexual sin (Ezek. 33:14, 15).

### CELEBRATING SEXUALITY

A married couple can truly celebrate their sexuality by giving pleasure to each other. This involves more than just sex. It means living honestly, sincerely, and joyfully within the covenant relationship of marriage. It is not simply a euphemism that the Old Testament uses the word "know" for sexual intercourse (Gen. 4:1). The Hebrew word for "to know" carries a deep meaning of intimacy. This foundation of covenant commitment is the groundwork for the celebration of marital lovemaking. God's plan has been right from the beginning—and it still works today.

### FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of sexuality include:

- Deuteronomy 22:13-30
- Proverbs 5:15-23; 6:20-35
- Song of Solomon 7:1-13
- Matthew 5:27-30
- 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:16

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on sexuality at Genesis 1:27, 28 on page 5. See also the personality profile of Adam and Eve on page 9.

was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

**2** Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. <sup>2</sup>And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. <sup>3</sup>Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

<sup>4</sup>This is the history<sup>a</sup> of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, <sup>5</sup>before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; <sup>6</sup>but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

<sup>7</sup>And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

#### LIFE IN GOD'S GARDEN

<sup>8</sup>The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. <sup>9</sup>And out of the ground the LORD

God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup>Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. <sup>11</sup>The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup>And the gold of that land is good. Bdellium and the onyx stone are there. <sup>13</sup>The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which goes around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup>The name of the third river is Hiddekel;<sup>a</sup> it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup>Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

<sup>18</sup>And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper

2:4 <sup>a</sup>Hebrew *toledoth*, literally *generations*

2:14 <sup>a</sup>Or *Tigris*

#### KEY PASSAGE



Sexuality

## GOD CREATED SEX

(1:27, 28)

God created sex and declared it "good." Along with the rest of creation, however, sex has been affected by sin. Scripture teaches God's plan for human sexuality:

- Sex is for both procreation (1:28) and pleasure (Prov. 5:18, 19; Song of Solomon).
- Sex is to be enjoyed only between a man and a woman married to each other (1 Cor. 7:2–5). The intimacy of sex is designed to bond the couple in a lifelong union (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5).
- Sex outside of marriage is strictly prohibited (Ex. 20:14; Prov. 5:1–11; 6:23–33; 7:5–27).
- Both heterosexual and homosexual immorality are strongly condemned in Scripture (Rom. 1:26–28; 1 Thess. 4:3) because our bodies are the "temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:13–20).

God takes great joy when His children enjoy what He has given, provided they do so within His guidelines.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about sexuality on pages 6, 7. See also the personality profile of Adam and Eve on page 9.

the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?"

<sup>14</sup>So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

<sup>15</sup>And He said, "Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

<sup>16</sup>Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to *be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

<sup>17</sup>And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

<sup>18</sup>So the LORD God said to the serpent:

"Because you have done this, You *are* cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.

<sup>19</sup>And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

## PERSONALITY PROFILE



Sexuality

### ADAM AND EVE: GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEXUALITY

(GENESIS 2:18-25)

God invented sex. He built sexuality into people's original design. When God finished His work of creation, including the creation of man and woman, God pronounced it all, "very good." Later, when Adam saw what God had created out of his own rib, he said roughly the same thing. God allowed Adam to experience what it meant to be alone; then He created someone with whom Adam could know togetherness. It was the original case of bonding at first sight. One look and Adam was smitten.

God created Adam and Eve as a relationship unit, with sex as part of the glue to hold them together. From the beginning, God designed sexuality as one aspect of a wonderful relationship between a man and woman. But, as powerful a tool against human aloneness as sex is, it cannot do its work without another vital component of the man-woman relationship. That component is called *marriage*.

When God performed Adam and Eve's wedding in the garden, He spelled out several aspects (besides sex) that make up the marriage relationship as He intended it. Genesis 2:24, 25 describes these aspects:

- > leaving other significant relationships,
- > joining to each other, and
- > becoming one flesh.

That process results in a complete disclosure of one person to the other: They are "naked" but "not ashamed." The invasion of sin into the world, however, complicated every part of life, including sex. Only Adam and Eve experienced the original version of married life. But sex continued as a lasting blessing even after the Fall. The Bible describes three important purposes of marital sex: procreation, loving pleasure, and resistance of sexual sin.

For every married couple since Adam and Eve, keeping sex a blessed part of their marriage takes work and faithfulness. When a man and woman enter and live out their marital relationship under God's guidelines and purposes, they can still expect to discover, as Adam and Eve did so long ago, that marital sex can indeed be "very good."

Learn More: Turn to the article about sexuality on pages 6, 7. See also the key passage note on Genesis 1:27, 28 on page 5.