

God, Marriage, & Sex - The Design

Marriage was originally created and designed by God. When God first looks at man in the Garden of Eden, He remarks, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18), and proceeds to create woman to be a partner with man in their God-given tasks. After God’s creation of woman, Scripture gives us the foundational verse for understanding marriage: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Here, in the act of creating the marriage relationship, God also gives us the fundamental purpose for the relationship, i.e., oneness.

The text also conveys that the physical connection (sex) is the symbol for a couple binding themselves to one another in the marriage relationship. Like any symbol, sex points to something greater and deeper beyond itself. That something is the oneness a couple is to have in a marriage relationship. The physical union of a couple is meant to point to the holistic union of a couple. When it is at its best, sex is an exact representation of the oneness cultivated in a marriage relationship.

Now, sex has many other benefits to it as well (we don’t want you thinking that it’s just a symbolic act and nothing more). Relational intimacy, pleasure, and children are just some of the benefits of sexual intimacy. However, these benefits are meant to serve the purpose of creating oneness in the marriage relationship. Sex is not only meant to be the symbol for marital union; it is also designed to foster that union.

God is pro-sex. In fact, He wants you to have it and experience all the goodness that it has to offer. But God has a design to sex and He asks us to reserve sex for its design. Ultimately, sex is meant to serve and symbolize marriage, that is God’s design for it from creation. This is why, as a church, we believe sex is ultimately reserved for a husband and wife who are in a marriage relationship.

Sex Today - Our Redesign

Now God’s original design for marriage and sex, doesn’t end up being how things often play out in our world. Sin (i.e., our rebellion against God’s designed intention) has affected the way that we view and understand sex in our culture. Instead of sex being the symbol that points to the true goal of relationships, sex has itself become the goal of relationships. In fact, it has come to define our relationships. Scripture warns us against this:

1 Cor. 6:13, 18 – 20

“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.”

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

“It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust... For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore he who rejects this instruction does not reject man, but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.”

Scripture encourages us to avoid sexual sin. That simply means that we are to avoid approaching sex the way culture and the world tells us to and start approaching sex God’s way. God designed and intended sex to be enacted in the marriage relationship, which means that sex is only to be between a husband and a wife. For sex to be enacted in any way other than God’s original design is sin, and, as you can see from the verses above, sin is not in line with God’s desire for us.

The Bible calls us instead to live pure lives, which simply means we are called to live as God originally designed us to live, with sex and sexual activities being reserved for the relationship between a husband and wife. We believe that purity is the best way to prepare for marriage.

In fact, we strongly encourage you to prepare for your marriage by honoring God and pledging to keep or restore purity in your physical relationship.

Some of you have already made a commitment to doing this. We encourage you to keep and honor that commitment until your wedding day. Many of us however, have a different story.

Purity Restoration

While we strongly believe that God has called all of us to walk in purity, we recognize that, for many of us, that is not the story that we have. Many, if not most, of us come into engagement with some level of sexual baggage and purity doesn’t seem to be an option for us. However, there is good news. God does not want to leave you in that baggage; He is a God of forgiveness and restoration. He desires to restore you to a place of purity.

Psalm 103:8 – 12

“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

God is honoring to those who honor Him, and it is never too late to honor God in your relationship. No matter what you've done and where you've come from sexually, you can begin walking in purity afresh today. God is ready and willing to forgive your past and help you walk into the future of purity together. All He asks is that you are willing to repent over not having done things God's way, turn from the ways that we rebel against God sexually, and embrace God's plan for purity.

For some, this might involve some major and hard decisions in regard to how your relationship currently functions. We recognize how challenging this is in our culture today. But God designed sex, and He has a purpose in what He calls us to do, in terms of our sexual relationships. The question for us is whether we will trust Him in that.

Purity & Cohabitation

Cohabitation is currently a very prominent part of many couples' relationships. As a church, we believe that living together and having sex before marriage is not part of God's design. If you are not currently cohabiting, feel free to skip this section and continue on to our purity pledge. If you are currently cohabiting, we want to offer some thoughts and wisdom for you to consider in your journey towards marriage.

First off, we recognize that there are many reasons why couples choose to cohabitate and our purpose is not to judge you on why you made the decision to do so. However, we do believe that cohabiting is ultimately an issue of purity and that is why we want to briefly address it.

While Scripture calls us to live holy and godly lives, it also calls us to live lives of integrity. Simply stated, a life of integrity means that who we are on the inside is shown on the outside and vice-versa. People who are one thing in public but another in private lack integrity. Because we feel that the issue of purity is both a public and private matter, we want to ask you to consider that being committed to purity while cohabiting creates a situation where your integrity is brought into question. Our culture assumes that couples who are cohabiting are sleeping together and so to say you are committed to purity while still cohabiting only shows people hypocrisy. We also believe cohabiting creates an environment where purity is extremely hard to live out.

We would ask, if you are serious about committing to purity, that you would separate until your wedding or get married quickly. While we recognize there are certain situations where this could be extremely challenging or even impossible, we as a church are committed to helping couples walk in purity and are willing to aid in whatever way we can to help make this transition possible. We would also ask that you please meet with a pastor if you have any questions regarding getting married at The Chapel and cohabitation.

Purity Pledge

- In response to God's design for marriage and sex, and because we desire to walk in His ways, we pledge to live a life of purity and will seek to honor Him in the way we approach and live in our relationship.
- Because of my desire to love and honor you, I commit to show my love for you in ways that allows both of us to maintain a clear conscience before God and each other.

Signed _____ and _____

Dated _____