

Living out the Gospel: Sexuality & relationships

Bible study 1 Thess. 4:1-12

The world says: Sex is essential. Sex is experience. Sex is experiment. Sex is expression of love.

- [How to find freedom from illicit sexual desire \(John Piper\)](#)
- [Keep Fighting \(Adam4D\)](#)
- [Make War \(John Piper\)](#)
- DeYoung, *The Hole in Our Holiness*
- [DeYoung on 'How far is too far?'](#)
- Elizabeth Elliot, *Passion and Purity*
- [Deepak Reju, How to break up to the glory of God: 13 wisdom principles when ending a dating relationship](#)
- Steve Timmis, *Captured by a Better Vision*
- [Porn Scars](#) – Glen & Emma Scrivener
- Sex and the Supremacy of Christ [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#) (John Piper)

The following devotion is from John Piper:

Read

²⁴ *Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,* ²⁵ *because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*

²⁶ *For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature;* ²⁷ *and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.*

²⁸ *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. **Romans 1 v 24-27***

Reflect

Disordered sexuality stems from a disordered relationship with God—specifically, a relationship in which the glories of creation are preferred to the glory of God. This exchange—perhaps most vividly portrayed in same-sex relations—applies to all our sexual sins: adultery—exchanging a spouse for an

illicit partner; fornication—exchanging God’s call to chastity in singleness for unmarried sex; lust—exchanging purity for pornography. All of them—all of our sexual sinning—is rooted in this: we don’t treasure the glory of God as supremely desirable over all things. We let the darkness of the lie persuade us that one illicit pleasure or another is more to be desired than God. In the darkness, we fondle the smooth ebony brooch hanging around our neck—not knowing that in the light we would see it is a cockroach. We think the tarantula is a fuzzy toy. We think the lion is a pet and the sound of the rattlesnake is a castanet. That’s what it means to live in the dark, where God is less to be desired than sexual pleasure.

Sexual sin grows in the soil of blindness, darkness, and ignorance about the all-satisfying greatness and beauty of God. That’s why Peter said to the churches, *“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance”* (1 Peter 1 v 14). *He is saying, Once you were ignorant of God’s worth and beauty and greatness and sweetness. But now you have been “born again” (v 3, 23), “if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good” (2 v 3).* Yes, and once you “taste” of God, the “former ignorance” of the taste of sin no longer controls your passions. The lie of sinful sexual desires is exposed.

In summary, then, the danger of sex is that because our hearts are naturally disordered vertically and God is not our supreme desire, therefore our sexual desires are disordered horizontally and we prefer illicit pleasures to godly ones. We even prefer them over God himself. The outcome of this desecration of God’s beauty and worth is the prospect of terrible punishment under God’s judgment. But the apex of the glory of the God of glory is his grace. He has made a way for sexual sins to be forgiven and for defiled lives to be made pure.

Think

- **What do you naturally blame for your inclination toward sexual sin? (Perhaps your partner, inappropriate images in the media, etc.)**
- **Think about the ways in which you are tempted toward sexual sin (in your mind as well as with your body). How is this actually rooted in an exchange of the glory of God for a created thing?**
- **How would understanding this root cause help you to fight sexual sin?**
- **What would it look like to enjoy your sexuality as a good gift, while holding God as your supreme treasure?**