

SEXUAL IDENTITY

Our generation is experiencing an increased level of interest and confusion with regard to sexual identity. When addressing same-sex attraction, gender identity concerns, or a transgender disposition we must approach these circumstances with understanding, truth, and compassion. We are complex humans made in the image of God. In an effort of respecting all persons as they deserve, please note that the following article is simply a starting point to lay a foundation for this conversation in spirit and truth. Please dive into the resources given for a more in depth study on this important subject.

SEXUAL WHOLENESS

Wholeness begins for us when we realize we were made to belong to God. Only through a relationship with Jesus will we discover who we really are. He brings us fulfillment and wholeness in a way that no earthly relationship ever will. However, on the issue of sex, a holistic approach begins with the realization that sex is first a noun describing who we are biologically (assigned by our sexual reproductive organs) rather than a verb (describing what we do.) Each of us has been created by God to reflect His image, and He made us “male and female” (Genesis 1:26-28). This is important, and God created us individually, uniquely, and on purpose to experience Him as either a man or a woman. The concept of marriage in the Bible leads to a man and woman committing to love each other and coming together intimately and producing life. Ephesians 5:31-32 says, ‘As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.” This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.’ Marriage in its foundational design is a metaphor for the kind of relationship we, as Christians, should have with Christ. The ultimate calling of any Christian, single or married, in regard to sexuality, is to reflect the purity of the Gospel as they live their lives. Biological sex was created by God, and our expression of individual personality is a unique gift from God, and neither should be demeaned down to a social construct.

COMMON STRUGGLES

Confusion over sexual identity can be common during puberty as an influx of hormones can throw the body and emotions out of balance. This is not a good time to panic or make life-altering decisions. As we grow and develop, under normal circumstance, within a safe and loving environment, the confusion clears. However, those who are encouraged to act upon short term feelings or those who receive strong backlash over straying from culture’s “gender norms” and not behaving as an authority figure thinks one should behave (sinful behavior notwithstanding), can have a perpetual and intensified struggle into adulthood. No one should feel pressured to declare they are anything except what God made them to be.

Processing our personality alongside our sexuality should be safe in healthy, godly environments and encouraged and supported with a foundation of Scripture. Remember, our desires do not dictate our identity.

Christianity recognizes that human affections can become disoriented due to the effects of the fall. As the Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the church at Rome, "And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't." Every person feels desires that run counter to our intended design including a variety of sexual struggles. But Paul does not leave his thought there. He concludes, "And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord." Through the grace and power of Jesus, we can live above our desires.

A REDEMPTIVE APPROACH

The emotions associate with same sex attraction and gender identity are both real and complex. Unfortunately, some people who claim Christianity have approached these issues unkindly, in anger and aggression and fear, instead of the way Jesus approaches all of us, with grace and truth. Christians should love others too much to perpetuate lies that undermine sexual wholeness, but should also love others too much to insult and cut down those for whom Christ died. We must strive to become agents of redemption in the midst of an increasingly emotional debate.

Regardless of our current posture or perspective, the best starting place is to explore what it means to be created male and female in God's image and how we can find sexual wholeness as intended by our Creator.

The journey to discovering truth and solidifying what we believe may be a long process, but it's not one we have to walk alone. Seek wisdom from those who have been where you are. Let them help you discover the joy and health that comes from pursuing God's love, and His purposeful, beautiful design for each of us. If you would like to be connected to someone at the church who you can talk to, please contact us at info@freedomfamily.us! Others share their own journeys in some of the resources below!

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

CENTERFORFAITH.COM

The center for faith, sexuality, and gender

People to Be Loved, why homosexuality is not just an issue.

Preston Sprinkle

Gay Girl, Good God, the story of who I was and who God has always been
Jackie Hill Perry

Single, Gay, Christian, a personal journey of faith and sexual identity
Gregory Coles

*An Impossible Marriage: What Our Mixed-Orientation Marriage Has Taught Us About
Love and the Gospel*
Matt and Laurie Krieg

Book:

When Homosexuality Hits Home: What to Do When a Loved One Says, "I'm Gay"
Joe Dallas

Podcast:

Theology in the Raw, Preston Sprinkle

Honest, raw, Biblically sound conversations about the questions we're asking.