

Intro:

We haven't talked about sex at Ethnos in a while, actually. Which is a bit funny because a few years ago a handful of you joked that I seemed to talk about it all the time. We do have an entire series on Sex online- we went through the sex book in the Bible- Song of Songs, in 2006.

In any case, as we again talk about sex here at Ethnos, I realize we come from different places in our experience of sex: some of us are having a great time being sexually active, some of us disdain sex because of abuse in the past. Some of us have never talked openly about it, and feel a little anxious right now, others of us are very comfortable. Some of us are married, some are single, some are young and some are old. All this obviously contributes to how we think, feel, experience sex. Added to this, there are cultural forces and religious forces that try and paint a picture of sex, and things can get very confusing as a result.

We need great discernment about this subject because I believe all of us want to make good choices about this area of our existence. Thankfully, the Bible and this book of Proverbs doesn't hesitate to talk about it, and we can find great clarity. We're going to be looking at a great, extended passage about this issue. And we're going to focus on two things from this passage: God's vision of sex, and how can live this vision in the challenging existence we have. There's a lot more to say, and I wish I could, but we'll have to let our passage guide us.

A couple of things before we jump into our passage:

- The passage is clearly written from a male perspective, but should/can be read from women perspective.
- I will be taking a PG-13 to R range for this talk, meaning I will use words that can be pretty straightforward about sex. Please be prepared for that. I don't mean to be flippant or perverted or rude or controversial. I simply want to try and let the text be as honest as it should with us today, in good taste.
- The passage will be speaking from a few moral assumptions that we'll address in the first point. Some of this will seem to jump the gun on what's negative about certain types of sex. Please note this, especially if you are new to Christianity and have never really engaged the biblical passages about this.

Sound good? Let's get to our text, then. Proverbs 5.

Two points:

God's vision:

God wants sex to be full of satisfaction, delight, and euphoria (v.15-19)

Satisfaction is seen in the imagery of drinking water from a well, a spring, a fountain. There's something refreshing and satisfying about that, and so it should be the case with sex, more specifically the sexual satisfaction we find in our spouse (the imagery points to the source of the satisfaction, which would be our spouses). And let me just note- not for the sake of being perverted or lurid, but to really drive home God's unashamed approval and delight in sex- note that the imagery is a liquid imagery. Scholars rightly note that it is so because of the liquids exchanged in sex and orgasm. God envisions satisfaction.

But there's more: check out the language of delight, joy, euphoria. (v.18-19- intoxication!). I don't think you can get as clear as these verses as to how God has a total positive and exciting view of sex! Cosmo and Maxim and a whole host of other mags and websites talk about orgasmic, tantric sex. Man, the Bible had that stuff way before they were around!

And so the vision is overwhelmingly positive, or to just kind of shock us- orgasmic. But there's a very essential second point to God's vision.

God designed all of this to be experiences in a monogamous heterosexual marriage

This is pretty clear, as v.15-18 contrast "your own" well or cistern to the public streets, as it talks about sharing sexuality with strangers in contrast to your spouse. And it's clear throughout the Bible. Now some of us may be ready to check out at this point- you're like- I knew Christians were a little weird! And I've just found out why! They are way to hung up about sex, and they're totally pent up sexually! No wonder they seemed a little different... Haha, if that's you, please track with us here, jot down some questions and

comments, and save them for our open forum time. Yes, this is what the Bible advocates, but not without good reason. And so we can discuss that later.

In any case: God has a vision of satisfying, euphoric sex within a monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

How do we live and experience this?

I mean, there are a lot of voices around us that advocate a different vision of sex, especially as it relates to sex outside of a marriage relationship. And they're around us all the time. How should we think about them? How should we deal with them? How can we live the vision of sex as put down by God in the reality of the day-to-day stuff of our sexual lives? The rest of the chapter, and our talk, is about this. 3 specific points I want to make with this section. Before we get there, though, let's establish if and how this passage is talking about sex outside of God's vision and good pleasure- we need to get this if we're going to say anything meaningful for the rest of the time.

It's pretty obvious that things revolve around the adulterous person (v.3). Who is this person? "Adulterous" (zara- v.3, 20) is more accurately translated "forbidden" or "strange." It refers to someone or something distancing oneself from something else. In this case, distancing themselves from their spouse, or from God's desire of sexuality. The other word "wayward" v. 20, is literally (nakriya) "foreign." It's used elsewhere to describe people outside of a certain group, for examples foreigners who were not ethnically Jewish, or someone outside of their family. In this context, it refers to people who operate outside of God's desire for sexuality, and so outside of God's community of the wise and discerning. This passage, then, is talking about sources of sexuality that lay outside of God's vision of great sex, sources that act as challenges to God's vision.

So how do we face these challenges? How can we live for God's vision of sex?

1. Identify the temptation and consequences of sex outside of God's vision

Temptations:

#1- Sexy talk, or flirting (v.3)

A note on flirting:

If you're married, don't underestimate this power of this. In fact, a lot of unfaithfulness outside of marriage begins with conversations and flirting, not with being attracted.

If you're single, beware- this is something that people bring into their married lives, meaning if you're a good flirt now, and you get a certain sense of love and intimacy from it now from multiple people, it doesn't just go away if and when you get married. Be aware. We're going to address this a little more later.

#2- Sexy Looks (see proverbs 6:25)

I think we're all aware that sometimes a look can become a stare, which can become a lust and obsession. But sometimes we're not as aware what it is that draws us in. I like how the verse talks specifically about the eyes- it's not his butt, or her chest, or whatever else... You ever been hooked by the eyes? I used to be a sexual addict, and something I realized as I was trying to get out of that brokenness- wow, the eyes played a powerful role in my being tempted and drawn in.

#3- Sexy Settings- times and places (see proverbs 7:6-9)

I think this is pretty self explanatory. But sometimes we can be unaware of how really tempting some places are- we have all sorts of excuses, don't we? Proverbs makes it clear- be aware of sexy settings.

Consequences:

Those are the temptations. Now for some of the consequences. They're put throughout the passage, let me mention just a few.

- Pain (v.4)
- Loss of honor, energy, money, life (v.9-14)
- God's judgment (v. 21)
- Death (v.23)

Pretty straightforward, pretty honest- we need that.

How then can we face the challenges to God' vision of sex? Identify both the temptations and the consequences of sex outside of God's vision.

2. Create Boundaries to help keep the temptations at bay.

- Where you go (v.8)
- Be in community and listen (v.11-12)

3. Delight in the right source (v. 18-19)

- Marrieds. This is huge. Learn together to find this sort of sex in your marriage. I realize this can be very difficult. Make sure you seek help if this area of your marriage is a challenge. Shoot an email to myself and my wife, and we can point you in the right direction.

- Single, and those who may be married but frustrated sexually. There is a source for you as well, a source where total pleasure can be found. The source is not a sexual partner, though. The source is God himself.

Check out Ps. 16:11

This can be totally shocking and radical for you. But let's think about it. What is it we long for in sex? It's pleasure, right? It could be pleasure through hormones, pleasure from the intimacy of relationship, pleasure of orgasm. It's not really sex- the act. It's pleasure. Isn't it mind boggling, that God would say that fullness of joy is really in Him, and not sex? What God is saying is that what we really long for, even in and through sex, is something only he can fully provide. Not to say that sex is bad or unenjoyable. Of course it is! It's intoxicating!

But there is a greater pleasure that can be access by all of us.

I'd encourage you- give it a try. Next time you feel really sexually built up- real horny, to be blunt. But you can't really act it out- you're single, perhaps, and want to follow Jesus. Or you're spouse is not in a mood. Think about this verse, and try to go to God for pleasure and relief. Start praying- God, you said this was with you, and not in this tempting force. I come to you for this, please meet me, show me how pleasurable You are.

Q and A:

Well, I've done enough talking. Do we have any questions or comments today?

Challenge:

- Embrace God's vision.
- Live out the challenge by identifying temptation, putting up some good boudaries and community, and by pursuing pleasure in the right place.
- Embrace the life and forgiveness of Jesus if you feel like you've been living out of God's vision.