

SERMON NOTES
Proverbs 5:1-23; Matthew 19:1-12
“A Word to the Wise”

Intro:

- *“Many religious teachings deny the pleasurable and positive aspects of sex, and guidelines for sex education often focus on abstinence before marriage. The reality is, young people are sexual beings, and many of them are religious as well. There is a need for pragmatism, to address life as it is and not as it might be in an ideal world. Each religion must provide guidance on sexual relationships among young people, which supports rather than denies their experiences and needs.” (Stand and Deliver – IPPF)*
- **Is it true that Christians deny the pleasurable and positive aspects of sex?**
- **Is it true that the only thing we teach young people about sex is *don’t do it until you get married?***
- **Is it true that we don’t understand that young people are sexual beings?**
- **Is it true that the most effective way for churches to show love to young people in a practical and realistic way is by installing a condom vending machine next to the Pepsi machine?**
- **Christians who uphold biblical moral values in a culture that celebrates sexual immorality are put on the defensive**
- **Our message sounds negative and repressive: *we are against everything that our culture promotes* – we are against premarital sex // against cohabitation // against homosexuality // against adultery // against divorce // against abortion // against same-sex marriage // against sex education that presents teen sexual activity as inevitable and healthy as long as condoms are used**
- **Christians often come across as being opposed to the whole idea of sex**
- **What is the most effective apologetic for biblical Christian teachings on sexuality and marriage?**
- **Our moral teachings will be credible and persuasive to the degree that people can see God’s design for sex and marriage being lived out and demonstrated in satisfying and attractive ways in our Christian families**
- **Why should young people control their urges and wait to have sex until they get married – or why should they bother with marriage at all – if they look around in the church and see adults who champion moral righteousness but are not experiencing happy and healthy and satisfying marriages?**

I. GOD'S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE (Matthew 19:4-6)

- A teenage girl was examining her grandmother's wedding ring. The girl said, *"Wow, what heavy and cumbersome rings those were fifty years ago."*
- The grandmother replied, *"That's true, but don't forget that in my day they were made to last a lifetime."*
- ***Marriage isn't what it used to be***
- The concept that marriage is for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health – *'til death do us part* – is dying in our culture
- Yet there is a longing within each of us to be involved in a loving, passionate, enduring, exclusive relationship with someone who loves us unconditionally and will always be there for us – no matter what – to the end of life
- Think of three different pictures of a man and a woman in love:
 - *First, think – just for a moment without too much detail – of a man and woman having a one-night stand as in a typical Hollywood movie or TV sex scene*
 - *Second – think of a young couple – married ten years – sitting on a park bench or on a beach blanket or at a restaurant -- gazing into each other's eyes with obvious affection and desire*
 - *Third – think of an older couple -- walking hand in hand – one supporting the other after a knee replacement surgery – enjoying each other's company and fully devoted to each other after all the ups and downs of 45 years of marriage*
- Which scene best expresses your relationship longings?
- *Some of you may choose the second scene – others the third – but I suspect few of you really believe that the first scene is what your heart truly longs for*
- **God didn't make us just for sex – he made us for love and relationship – and sex is His gift for a husband and wife to experience oneness within the security and lifelong commitment of a covenant marriage**

Matthew 19: 4-6 ⁴ **“Haven't you read,”** Jesus replied, **“that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’** ⁵ **and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’?** ⁶ **So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”**

For the purpose of a man and a woman becoming one flesh, God instituted marriage

- *God instituted Marriage for the purpose of placing sexual union and child-rearing in the context of a life-time covenant relationship*

God's purpose for marriage is to bring about the intimate union of a man and a woman at all levels of their lives - hearts, minds, souls, bodies -
-this union is expressed in and deepened through sexual intimacy

Genesis 2:24 (NIV) ²⁴For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

- *God's plan for marriage first involves leaving – and then cleaving*
- *Children must grow up – and parents must let go*
- **Parents need to give their children both roots and wings – the security of roots in unconditional parental love – and the wings to fly free and live their own life and form their own family**
- *Leaving must take place so that cleaving can take place*
- *Cleave is a commitment word more than a feeling word – because the oneness of a covenant marriage bond is based on commitment more than on feelings*
- ***For this cause a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife – and the two will become one flesh***
- *Marriage is the uniting of male and female – marital intercourse is actually the reunion of male and female flesh – for woman was taken out of man – flesh of his flesh*
 --and when marriage is consummated in sexual intercourse, the two – man and woman – become one flesh as in the beginning

God brings these two different sexual beings together in a marriage to teach each other how to love and meet each other's needs

Archibald Hart: *“God puts the opposites of his creation together for a reason. He knew that out of a man's and woman's differences, growth would take place.*

-When we look at differences in this light, we feel grateful for the unique way our mates function -- and we look to marriage as a place to grow.

II. SATISFACTION IN MARRIAGE (Proverbs 5:15-19)

Proverbs 5:15-19 ¹⁵Drink water from your own well—share your love only with your wife. ¹⁶Why spill the water of your springs in public, having sex with just anyone? ¹⁷You should reserve it for yourselves. Don't share it with strangers. ¹⁸Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you. Rejoice in the wife of your youth. ¹⁹She is a loving doe, a graceful deer. Let her breasts satisfy you always. May you always be captivated by her love.

- ***Rejoice in the wife of your youth. Let her breasts satisfy you always. May you always be captivated by her love.***
- Any of you surprised to see those words in the Bible?
- *How about these?*

Song of Songs 7:1-8 “How beautiful are your sandaled feet, O queenly maiden. Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of a skilled craftsman. ²Your navel is as delicious as a goblet filled with wine. Your belly is lovely, like a heap of wheat set about with lilies. ³Your breasts are like twin fawns of a gazelle. ⁴Your neck is as stately as an ivory tower. Your eyes are like the sparkling pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Your nose is as fine as the tower of Lebanon overlooking Damascus. ⁵Your head is as majestic as Mount Carmel, and the sheen of your hair radiates royalty. A king is held captive in your queenly tresses. ⁶“Oh, how delightful you are, my beloved; how pleasant for utter delight! ⁷You are tall and slim like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters of dates. ⁸I said, ‘I will climb up into the palm tree and take hold of its branches.’ Now may your breasts be like grape clusters, and the scent of your breath like apples, and your mouth like the best wine.

- ***God designed a woman's thighs and waist and lower back and eyes and hair and mouth and skin and breasts not only for child-bearing and nursing – but also to satisfy and captivate and give intense pleasure to her husband***
- ***Let her breasts satisfy you always***
- That's God's Word – not Hugh Hefner's
- ***Sex is God's gift to men and women – God designed the bodies of male and female to be able to come together in an intensely pleasurable sexual union***
- ***And God instituted marriage – a lifelong covenant relationship between a man and a woman – as the optimal context for experiencing the greatest pleasure and satisfaction and intimacy and security in a sexual relationship***
- ***Of course, sex outside of marriage is also pleasurable – but there are also long-term negative consequences accompanying the momentary pleasure***

- **With married sex – there is pleasure without the negative consequences**
- *Pleasure without the guilt // Pleasure without the fears and worries // Pleasure without the health risks //*
- **God puts boundaries around sex to maximize and protect its goodness**
- God did not design sex as a concession to human sinfulness
- *Quite the opposite – it is human sinfulness that interferes with and hinders the full enjoyment of God's gift of sex in marriage*
- In fact – guess what's one of the chief hindrances to sexual satisfaction in marriage? *Premarital sexual experiences – whether with each other or with others*
- Many marriages are haunted in a negative and unhealthy way by the previous sexual activity of the husband and/or wife
- In many marriages, the problem is not too much sex – *the problem is not enough sex*
- Therefore, this word from the Lord for husbands and wives:

1 Corinthians 7:3 - 5 (NIV) ³The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. ⁵Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time...

- Gary & Barbara Rosberg: *The 5 Sex Needs of Men & Women: Discover the secrets to great sex in a godly marriage*
- **A wife's top three sex needs that if met will lead to a better sex life:**
- *(This is one of the few times a pastor can be confident that he has the attention of virtually every male in the audience):*
- **(1) Affirmation; (2) Connection; (3) Nonsexual touch**
- My extended family is getting ready to celebrate my Mom's 80th birthday in March
- *One of my sisters is putting together a Memories book of photos and stories*
- As I was getting ready to send my sister some pictures of our family – both past and present – *I came across a picture I didn't recognize*
- Turns out it was a picture of the junior high youth group when I was a part-time youth pastor in seminary
- *I didn't recognize most of the kids – but being male – my eye was drawn to this striking young woman with beautiful long hair and great legs in this picture – it was Beth*

- It's a great feeling when you are captivated by a woman's beauty – and she is your wife – *and 30+ years later – you are still captivated by her beauty*
- By the way, guys – that's an example of *Affirmation*
- I've always been captivated by Beth's beauty – but to be honest – there have also been times when I've been *frustrated* by her beauty
- Some of you men know what I mean – *you are captivated by your wife's beauty – and you are aroused by your wife's beauty – and you look forward to satisfying that arousal – but then are turned down and end up feeling frustrated by your wife's beauty*
- Here's the problem: all it takes for a man is one look – one visual stimulation – and his imagination and libido take over – and he's got a one-track mind – *and he's ready to go*
- *No offense guys – but it takes a lot more than one look at you for your wife to be in the mood for sex*
- In fact, it is often the case that while you're in *One-Track Mind* mode – she's in *Farthest Thing from My Mind* mode
- *Women need emotional connection before sex even crosses their mind*
- Emotional connection comes from conversation and affectionate touch and words of affirmation and quality time and focused attention
- *A woman responds to the man who takes care of her heart before fondling her body*
- A wife needs tenderness before sex
- This is where marital intimacy gets interesting – and complicated: *A woman needs to feel emotionally connected in order to want sex – but a man more easily connects with his wife through sex than by talking about his feelings*
- Sexual release helps men become more open emotionally
- *Women are more motivated to have sex regularly when she is feeling connected to her husband consistently – and men are more motivated and empowered to connect emotionally to their wives when his sexual needs are being met regularly*
- Isn't it interesting how God designed males and females to help each other grow?
- *Women can feel connected to their husbands without sex – good conversation and nonsexual touch are often enough for them – but usually not enough for men*

- *Men need sex to feel connected to their wives*
- *And men need their wives to be sexually responsive and to be experiencing satisfaction during lovemaking*
- **Mutual satisfaction // Connection // Responsiveness – those are a man's top three sex needs**
- *When a husband and wife in a committed, exclusive, lifelong, for-better-for-worse covenant marriage relationship are meeting each other's needs – there's nothing as satisfying and meaningful and life-enriching in any other kind of sexual relationship*

III. WARNING AGAINST ADULTERY (Proverbs 5:1-14; 20-23)

- Does the Bible have a realistic view of human sexuality?
- *Absolutely*
- The same chapter that says to husbands: *Let your wife's breasts satisfy you always – also warns men against fondling the breasts of another woman*

Proverbs 5:20 ²⁰Why be captivated, my son, with an immoral woman, or embrace the breasts of an adulterous woman?

Proverbs 5:7-14 ⁷So now, my sons, listen to me. Never stray from what I am about to say: ⁸Run from her (an immoral woman)! Don't go near the door of her house! ⁹If you do, you will lose your honor and hand over to merciless people everything you have achieved in life. ¹⁰Strangers will obtain your wealth, and someone else will enjoy the fruit of your labor. ¹¹Afterward you will groan in anguish when disease consumes your body, ¹²and you will say, "How I hated discipline! If only I had not demanded my own way! ¹³Oh, why didn't I listen to my teachers? Why didn't I pay attention to those who gave me instruction? ¹⁴I have come to the brink of utter ruin, and now I must face public disgrace."

- **One-third of men and one-quarter of women – some say more – have had at least one extramarital sexual experience**
- *Yet adultery is often not about the sex – it's about meeting unmet needs*
- **Yes, there are the one-night stands that are all about the sex**
- *And there are sex addicts who engage in sexual relationships without emotional connections*

- But the most common kind of affair – *and most difficult to break off and recover from* – is the affair that begins with an emotional connection and meeting unmet needs and then proceeds to sex
- *These affairs are not fueled by the sex – these affairs are fueled by meeting basic needs that are not being met in the marriage*

- *“Gwen” and her husband got married as teenagers after she got pregnant*
- Then she and her husband, Tyler, became Christians and got involved in a church
- *Gwen became a super-Christian wife and mother and church member who was the spiritual head of the family*
- She became very involved in the youth ministry and found that very satisfying
- *She began spending more and more time with the youth pastor, Tim.*
- They connected well spiritually – and then emotionally
- *Tim was a strong spiritual leader and a good listener – and she began to share some marriage problems with him*
- Tim was also having some marital frustrations with his wife, Carrie
- *They both knew an affair would be wrong – and disastrous – but they allowed their emotions and passions to overpower their reason and conscience*

- Tim’s wife, Carrie, caught them red-handed in bed together
- *After several weeks, Gwen finally confessed to her husband, Tyler*
- Tim was forced to resign his youth pastorate
- *Tim broke off contact with Gwen and worked to restore his marriage*
- Gwen felt jilted and heartbroken and depressed

- *Then after several months, Tim called Gwen – and they got together – and picked up right where they left off*
- They eventually got caught again
- *This time Tyler got involved to fight to save the marriage – and he and Gwen got counseling – and are rebuilding their marriage*
- Tim’s life was shipwrecked

- It can happen to anyone – even to pastors
- *We all need to guard our hearts and flee from temptation*

- One exercise that I would recommend for every married person is to write down a *Loss List* – a list of everything you would lose if you had an affair

- **Proverbs 5 warns of a loss of honor // a loss of financial assets // a loss of physical and mental health // a loss of inner peace // a loss of respect**
- **Others: Loss of trust with your spouse // Loss of a clear conscience // Loss of intimate fellowship with God // Loss of your marriage – perhaps – and with that, many other losses // Loss of your children’s respect // Loss of a job or ministry // Possible financial losses // Loss of Christian witness to relatives, co-workers and neighbors // Loss of godly reputation and integrity**
- **“If you take what does not belong to you, you wind up losing what does.”**

IV. ADULTERY, DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE (Matthew 19:7-9)

A golden anniversary party was thrown for an elderly couple. The husband was moved by the occasion and wanted to tell his wife just how he felt about her. She was very hard of hearing, however, and often misunderstood what he said.

--With many family members and friends gathered around, he toasted her: *"My dear wife, after fifty years I've found you tried and true!"*

--Everyone smiled approval, but his wife said, "Eh?"

--He repeated louder, "AFTER FIFTY YEARS I'VE FOUND YOU TRIED AND TRUE!"

--His wife harumped and shot back, *"Well, let me tell you something--after fifty years I'm tired of you, too!"*

- Having clearly stated that from the beginning God’s plan for marriage is a lifelong union – *‘till death do us part* – Jesus then deals with the issue of the grounds for divorce and remarriage

Matthew 19:6 - 9 (NIV) ⁶So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” ⁷“Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” ⁸Jesus replied, **“Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. ⁹I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.”**

- *Why does Jesus teach that remarriage after divorce is adultery – except in cases of marital unfaithfulness?*
- Because divorce decrees dissolve legal relationships in the eyes of the state – **but divorce decrees do not break marriage covenants in the sight of God**

- So the person who gets divorced in a court of law and then marries someone else is committing adultery in the sight of God because God holds the original marriage covenant to be still in force – *'til death do us part*
- Why does Jesus make sexual infidelity the only grounds for divorce and remarriage?
- *Because adultery violates the one-flesh union that seals the marriage covenant*
- **God's ideal for marriage is one man, one woman, one flesh – for life**
- ***And in cases where sin and hardness of heart damage relationships – God's ideal is for forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration***
- *We live in a fallen – not an ideal world – and therefore God's grace in Jesus Christ covers all our sins – including sexual sins and marital failures*
- ***When it comes to love, sex, marriage and families – is there a single person in this room who has not personally experienced something of the brokenness of this fallen world – are we not all in desperate need of the saving grace of God offered to us at the Cross of Jesus Christ?***
- **When there is adultery in a marriage, divorce is certainly not required – and forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration are always preferred – but divorce and remarriage are permitted when the spouse has engaged in illicit extramarital sex**
- Rebuilding a marriage after adultery has been committed is difficult and requires a lot of grace and a lot of hard work – but with God all things are possible
- The steps to recovery include these: *confession of sin to God and to the spouse // processing intense feelings of deep hurt – betrayal – and anger by the spouse // many questions by the spouse about the affair // much grief over major losses both by the spouse and the adulterer // a growing awareness by the adulterer of how much pain his sin has caused // a godly sorrow leading to repentance by the adulterer // a commitment by both spouses to work at saving the marriage//*
- *a commitment to meeting each other's needs better than before the affair // a long process of forgiving by the spouse // an even longer process of rebuilding trust by the adulterer // a need for ongoing counseling help and spiritual help // a need for accountability and support for both spouses // a lot of prayer and reliance on God*
- Sometimes there is simply too much hardness of heart in one or both spouses to save the marriage
- **But in many cases – by the grace of God – there is hope for restoring and rebuilding a marriage even after adultery has been committed**

- *When both spouses rely on God's grace and the power of the Spirit – and when both spouses are committed to doing their part to saving the marriage and even making the marriage better than before the affair – I have seen cases where after a year or so of hard and painful work – the marriage became stronger and healthier and more satisfying than it had ever been before the adultery*
- **Where there is repentance -- Reconciliation is almost always preferable to divorce – especially for the children involved**
- Most divorcing couples seriously underestimate the lasting scars of divorce
- *There is no such thing as “walking away without pain and living happily ever after”*
- Life after divorce is almost always more stressful and complicated than they expect
- *The emotional pain, the anger, the disappointment, the deep hurt – all linger*
- 73% of divorced women experience a decline in standard of living
- *Co-parenting with an ex-spouse, single parenting, step-parenting and blended families are all stressful, draining and complicated*
- Children of divorce suffer in a multitude of ways – *whereas the adults may experience some relief to be out of a bad marriage – children almost always prefer the security of an intact family headed by their married parents*
- *Almost half of children of divorce enter adulthood as worried, under-achieving, self-deprecating, and sometimes angry young men and women*
- *And though I know of some examples of second marriages being much more satisfying for a couple than their first marriages – statistically the divorce rate increases with each marriage – 40% for first marriages // 60% for second marriages // 75% for third marriages*
- The saying is largely true that *divorce as a cure is often far worse than the disease*
- ***Divorce is like an amputation – you survive, but there's less of you***
- *If you are married, unhappy, considering an affair or contemplating a divorce, consider this: **You are more likely to find happiness in marriage by rebuilding your current marriage than by having an affair or divorcing and getting remarried***

Conclusion:

Proverbs 5:1-2 ¹Dear friend, pay close attention to this, my wisdom; listen very closely to the way I see it.

²Then you'll acquire a taste for good sense; what I tell you will keep you out of trouble.

Proverbs 5:21-23 For the LORD sees clearly what a man does, examining every path he takes. ²²An evil man is held captive by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him. ²³He will die for lack of self-control; he will be lost because of his incredible folly.

- *Wisdom leads to long-term happiness, satisfaction and a life well-lived*
- *Folly leads to misery, grief, ruin and a life full of regrets*

- *The essence of wisdom is to live under God's guidance & authority – to respect those whom God has placed in authority over you – to learn from the wisdom & experiences of your teachers & elders – to accept correction - and to learn to make choices on the basis of future consequences*
- *The essence of folly is to run your own life – to reject the advice of your parents, teachers and elders – to live for the moment – to make choices based on your feelings and desires rather than God's Word and sound advice – the essence of folly is to seek immediate gratification without regard for future consequences*

- *Planned Parenthood and the Bible agree on this much: humans are sexual beings*
- *The question is: what do we do with our sexual desires?*

- *Planned Parenthood – and our culture – teach: Satisfy your sexual desires whenever and however you feel like – just use a condom to be safe*

- *The Bible teaches: The gift of sex is best enjoyed in the context of a lifelong marriage covenant that offers true intimacy, real satisfaction, faithful love, and lasting security – as well as the optimal context for child-rearing*
- *All other sexual activity – outside of the marriage covenant – entails hidden risks and the likelihood of a painful and negative outcome*
- *Folly lives for the moment and ignores future consequences*
- *Wisdom makes present choices in light of future outcomes*

- *Biblical wisdom teaches:*

(1) If you are single

- *Devote yourself fully to the Lord – whether God calls you to remain single for life or for a long time – or whether you are preparing to get married some*

day – devote yourself fully to the Lord and to growing into a spiritually mature believer who is growing in Christ-like character

- **Commit yourself to holiness, to sexual purity, and to marrying only a believer who is growing in Christ**
- **Make choices now that support that commitment rather than working against that commitment**
- **Resist the lie of cohabitation – living together before marriage significantly increases the likelihood of divorce**

(2) If you are formerly married and now single

- **Commit yourself to holiness, to sexual purity, and to marrying only a believer who is growing in Christ**
- **If you are widowed, you are free to remarry or remain single – just be sure to marry only a believer if you do remarry**
- **If you are divorced and the marriage bond was broken by adultery – you are free to remarry or remain single – just be sure to marry only a believer and to get thorough premarital counseling if you do choose to remarry**
- **If you are separated or divorced from another Christian and no adultery was involved – then you must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to your spouse**

(3) If you are married

- **Commit yourself to staying married for life**
- **When unresolved conflicts and problems arise – stay committed to the marriage and get help in resolving your conflicts**
- **Husbands and wives – commit yourselves to meeting the emotional, spiritual, and sexual needs of your partner**
- **Resist the lie that you can find happiness in an affair**
- **Extend to one another plenty of grace to cover each other's mistakes, sins, and shortcomings**

Covenant Marriage Commitment

Believing that marriage is a covenant intended by God to be a lifelong fruitful relationship between a man and a woman, we vow to God, each other, our families, and our community to remain steadfast in unconditional love, reconciliation, and sexual purity, while purposefully growing in our covenant marriage relationship.

Prayer

“The Power of Your Love”