

## x “Just Sex?” // Matthew 19:3–12; 1 Cor 6:9–20 // Forever Family #4y

**Matthew 19:** The **big idea** in this series is that **what Jesus taught about marriage in Matthew 19** not only revolutionizes marriage but everything connected to it, also: *singleness, dating, conflict resolution, even parenting.*

Today, **we’re going to apply Jesus’ understanding of marriage to one of the most complicated parts** of our lives: sex.

(Now, it should go without saying--this **may not be the best weekend to introduce your 2nd grader to ‘big church.’**

So if you weren’t paying attention earlier in the service, now would be a good time to *run, not walk, run*, to the lobby of your campus where a friendly representative of our family ministries will show you how to take advantage of our **awesome kids’ ministry opportunities** we have this hour (and every weekend). (13 and above should be fine, btw: in fact, they can probably explain to you a few things)

**I’m going to read the entirety of Jesus’ words in Matthew 19 again**, but that’s mainly to give you parents time to get your kids to the lobby before I say something you’ll spend...

3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” 4 He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male

Works Consulted:

*Holy Sexuality*, Christopher Yuan

“Designer Sex,” Andy Stanley

“Love and Lust,” Tim Keller

“Physical Intimacy,” Matt Chandler

and female, 5 and said, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” 7 They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” 8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” 11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. 12 For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”

**Jesus here teaches that marriage and sex** were created to address one of man’s primary soul needs--the need for companionship. It was not good for him to be alone. And in this experience of marriage he would get a taste of the love God has for us.

This by itself challenges 3 of our culture’s most deeply held myths about sex--ones people are desperately trying to believe.

Here’s the first one: **(Myth 1:) “Sex is just physical.”**

- It’s a biological urge like any other urge.
- People say, sex is kind of like **food**. You get hungry? You eat. It’s **like a sport**. You find a partner to play with you for a while. Later

on, you can switch up partners. It's like tennis, or touch football. Or, better yet, tackle football and you just stay on the ground for a while.

So, someone says, "I didn't know him or her that well, we just had some fun for a while. No big deal. No strings attached."

- "It was just a little harmless affair to break up the monotony--it was nothing serious."
- **It's like Katy Perry**, said in one of her songs, "*I don't even know your name, it doesn't matter. You're my experimental game, it's just human nature.*" (And I know you are asking how I'm up on the latest Katy Perry songs, but that's why you pay me.)
- **Woody Allen**: "*I know sex without love is an empty experience, but as empty experiences go, it's one of the best.*"
- **People think, "What's the big deal if we have a little fun?"**
- **But** most everybody, even though they go along with the myth, deep down **knows that it is not true.**

**Just ask yourself:**<sup>1</sup>

- **Why is it that many people's greatest regrets in life are sexual?** When **somebody comes to me** and says, "Pastor, I need to talk to somebody, and I've **never told anyone** this before," I know what it's going to be about. It's not usually "*I cheated on this test.*" "I haven't paid my taxes." It's almost always about some sexual regret.
- **If sex is just physical, why is it that when a child is sexually abused, when they are an adult and finally connect the dots, it is so difficult to shake off?** It's not just that "an authority figure let them down." No, it's deeper than that.
- **If sex is just physical, why is adultery so hard to get over?**
- **If sex is just physical, why is it that men with the deepest sexual issues usually had uninvolved or missing fathers?**

- **If sex is just physical, why is rape so much more psychologically damaging to a woman than other physical violence?** The National Domestic Violence center says that women are much more prone to report physical abuse than rape. There is a shame and trauma attached to rape that makes it difficult even to talk about.

**If sex is just physical, none of those things would be true.** We know sex is not just physical.

**And that's the reality Jesus points to in Matthew 19: Marriage and sex were designed by God to address one of the deepest needs of the human soul--the need for companionship; for intimacy; to be fully seen and fully known and fully loved. And in a **really mysterious way**, it would point beyond itself to our relationship with God, who sees us and knows us fully and accepts us.**

**Thus, sex, which is supposed to be the ultimate expression of the marriage relationship**, is not just a physical act, it's a soul act; more spiritual mystery than biological necessity.

**In 1 Cor 6, Paul takes this "deep soul" dimension of sex and expands on it.**

*(I want you to leave Matthew 19 and go there, because we're going to spend the rest of our time in 1 Cor 6.)*

**This is a remarkable passage of Scriptures.** Paul wrote it nearly **2000 years** ago, but it's like he's talking to people today.

**Just for context: Corinth, where the church Paul was writing to was located**, was a highly sexualized society. There were nearly 1000 prostitutes in Corinth, for a city about 1/20th the size of Raleigh.

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<sup>1</sup> Andy Stanley, "Designer Sex," from "The New Rules of Love, Sex and Dating"

- **The most famous temple was to the goddess Aphrodite**, the sex goddess, and you worshipped her by having sex with one of her prostitutes.
- **Sexual promiscuity was so common that “corinth”** became a verb in Greek – “to corinthianize” meant to become sexually deviant

Many people in Corinth viewed sex like Katy Perry and Woody Allen, as simply the fulfillment of a biological urge.

**And in vs. 13, Paul quotes a little one-liner they used**, from the Katy Perry of their day: 13 **“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food.”** This was their line, like a line from a song, and it meant, “Sex is just like any other physical desire” *You get hungry— Eat. You get tired? Sleep. You have sexual urges? Fulfill them. It’s just like any other urge.*

Paul said, **“No, (still in vs. 13) The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.”** **(to note: Sexual immorality here means any sex outside a relationship between man and woman committed to each other for life.)**

**Our bodies, he says, are so much more than mere biological machines.** Like Jesus pointed to in Matthew 19, our bodies are **vehicles** for our souls; souls *created in the image of God*; souls *created to know God* and to *know others like God knows them*.

**The stomach was created as an instrument to process food**--you don’t have a spiritual relationship with your food (though I can get pretty emotional about a Pittsburgh-style ribeye).

**But sex is not like the stomach.** God designed it to be a part of fusion of whole persons.

- It was a physical oneness that was to be accompanied by soul oneness; and a “oneness” in every other area of our lives--your futures, your **bank accounts**, your **children and families**.

**Separating physical oneness from oneness in everything else** tears apart the human being at a fundamental level.

- **I said this week 1:** What makes a **zombie creepy** is that it is a body without a soul. That and it wants to eat you.
- **Sex apart from marriage is sub-human.** It separates the body from all the other dimensions of the soul.
- **Our culture believes that Christians have too low a view of sex**, not appreciating the joy it can add to life. **On the contrary**, Christians have a really *high* view of sex, recognizing that God made it as something to be experienced by the whole person.

*Myth #1, that sex is just physical, leads to a related myth:*

### **Myth 2: Sex can be casual**

If **sex is just physical**, it can be casual. It’s not that serious. Ed of Vox: *“The question used to be how many times you would go out on a date before having sex. Now it’s how many times you have sex before feeling like you need to go out on a date.”*

Paul’s response: 16 **Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.”** When you have sex, you become ‘one body’ with the person you have sex with, and it’s **impossible to have sex and this not happen** on some level.

**Notice that Paul’s illustration for immorality** is sex with a prostitute, which is the cheapest kind of sex imaginable. It’s **with a stranger**. It involves no commitment. You’ll likely never see each other again. Yet Paul says that **even in that ‘30-min encounter there is a joining**.

Which leads Paul to say: 18 **Flee sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.**

- Other sins **primarily hurt others**, Paul says, but sexual sin destroys you. **If I walk into a room and punch you in the face**, that's a sin-- You're hurt, but me not so much.
- When you have sex outside of marriage, you're hurting yourself. It's like taking a razor to your own soul.

**Years ago I read a book called *Hooked***--it's written by a couple of neurologists, not pastors--it has not **theological agenda**--showing ***the effects of having*** multiple sexual partners, especially when you're young, **on your brain**. Casual sex, or multiple sexual encounters actually rewires your brain, they say, in a way that **makes genuine, lasting, selfless relationships** much more difficult. They say,

*"The individual who goes from sex partner to sex partner is causing his or her brain to mold in such a way that eventually accepts that sexual pattern as normal... The pattern of changing sex partners therefore seems to damage their ability to bond in a committed relationship."*

*"The kind of attachment damage that occurs after repeated sexual encounters is, in many respects, more pernicious than pregnancy or STD's, because it typically goes unperceived by affected individuals while causing ongoing difficulties in establishing a lifelong and satisfying relationship."*<sup>2</sup>

(There are a lot of dangers... but this is the biggest. Even these neurologists realize something is happening in your soul that causes you an inability...)

The authors use the metaphor of **"duct tape,"** which you have probably heard...

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<sup>2</sup> McIlhane and Bush, *Hooked: How Casual Sex is Affecting Our Children*, 48. The non-italicized portion of this quote is from the a review in the *Journal of Human Sexuality* by Christopher Rosik: [http://narth.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/JournalofHumanSexuality\\_Vol2.pdf](http://narth.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/JournalofHumanSexuality_Vol2.pdf)

They say, **"You can no more 'try out' sex than you can 'try out' birth. The very act of sex produces a new reality that cannot be undone."**<sup>3</sup>

**IOW: "Safe sex" is a joke.** You can't put the condom over your soul. STDs, pregnancy, abortions, etc. these are all good reasons to avoid sex outside of marriage. But they are **not the primary reason** God tells us to avoid sex--it has to do with the makeup of our souls.

**Like Paul says:** Even the cheapest forms of sex do something to the soul, engaging it. **Tim Keller** describes it this way in his *The Meaning of Marriage*:

*"Even if you are not legally married, (when you are having sex with someone) you may find yourself very quickly feeling marriage-like ties, feeling that the other person has obligations to you. But the other person has no legal, social, or moral responsibility even to call you back in the morning. This incongruity leads to jealousy and hurt feelings and obsessiveness if two people are having sex but are not married. It makes breaking up vastly harder than it should be. It leads many people to stay trapped in relationships that are not good because of a feeling of having (somehow) connected themselves."*<sup>4</sup>

(Isn't that **like the plotline of every episode of *Friends*** you've ever seen?).

Many people feel like **Christians are anti-sex**. Like we don't appreciate it enough. **But on the contrary**--we understand the prescriptions God gives are because of its power.

<sup>3</sup> Tim Chester in *Closing the Window*, 123.

<sup>4</sup> Tim Keller, *Meaning of Marriage*, p. 226

- It's like Tim Keller says - "Sex outside of marriage is not a sin because it is so bad, but because it's so good."
- The **analogy I always use here is fire**. Fire is an incredibly powerful force, capable of great good and great harm.
- **Do you want fire in your house?** Fire in the fireplace is awesome. Fire in your sofa, or your closet, is not.
- (This analogy produced one of my most notorious preaching gaffes, btw... *That's not what I meant.*) **I just meant it has real power--and out of proper context**, that power can be destructive.

And this is probably a good time to talk about **PORNOGRAPHY**. Pornography is a major problem--in our culture. Our city may not have 1000 prostitutes, but we have 10's of 1000's of pornographic websites accessible at our fingertips.

#### Did you know:

- Porn traffic on the web every day is more than the traffic of **Amazon, Netflix, and Twitter** combined.
- The **porn industry** in our country takes in more money than Major League Baseball, the NBA, and the NFL, combined.
- Over 30% of internet traffic is porn! "**Sex**" is the **number one word** searched for on the internet.

And it is **scarily common in the church**.

**Most people think it is not that big of a problem; it's a victimless crime**, but first of all--a lot of

**Every woman** you look at is someone's daughter.

But also, like other forms of sexual immorality, it rewires your brain in fundamental ways, **killing your capacity** for lifelong and satisfying relationships.

It does that in a number of ways: First, ***it trains your mind to start looking at the opposite sex as a commodity.***

- **And let me talk to men, specifically**, though this issue increasingly plagues both men and women. **When you gaze at pornography**, you are looking at an image of a woman whose body you just want to use.
- That **trains your mind to see women a certain way** and that's how you start to relate to women in general. When you look at pictures of women with no recognition they have a soul, your mind starts to see the real women in your life as objects.
- *You say, 'No... I can keep it separate.'* **That's where you are wrong.** *It rewires your brain, creating new pathways.*
  - *They say that in the lead-up to World War 2, **the way that many Germans got comfortable with committing the worst atrocities against Jews** was by hearing them talked about for years as sub-human. And so they became ok with the pain and suffering of Jews. They weren't monsters—at least not at first—they just started thinking of Jews in a certain way.*
  - **When the author of 2 Samuel told the story of David and Bathsheba**, he sets up an interesting contrast. Whenever he talks about her, he talks about her as someone's wife, someone's daughter, someone's mother--he's **doing that to identify that Bathsheba is a person with relationships**--a person who is loved by many for reasons apart from her physical beauty. **But that's not how David saw her.** He saw her only as an object of desire. And that led to the **worst kinds of sin** by David.
- Porn rewires your brain to think of sex as just the selfish satisfaction of an urge. **And when you train your mind that way, later, when you get married**, your ability to engage in sex like God designed it--as a fusion of souls offering themselves to each other in self-giving love--is significantly diminished.
- And if you're nursing it on the side, it's killing your sexual relationships.

## Second, pornography destroys your own capacity for sexual fulfillment.

- **Andy Stanley** says that every time you look at porn you rewire your soul to believe 3 things: A **real body** isn't good enough. **Only one body** isn't good enough. Your **wife's body** isn't good enough.<sup>5</sup>
- No woman, no matter how beautiful, can live up to what you see in porn. **Naomi Wolf** (who is a pretty radical feminist, advisor for Clinton and Gore, in fact said)--"[For most men] real naked women are just bad porn."
- **No man has ever gorged himself on porn and then put it behind him after marriage because his wife met all his porn fantasies. Instead, the opposite happens.** It retrains your appetites.
- Pornography before marriage destroys sex in marriage.

**Porn is not a past-time. It is a pathway** to change who you are. It's not over here in one little corner of your life. **It rewires you.** It leads to higher rates of depression; lower rates of sexual satisfaction has destroyed no telling how many marriages.

**Don't think you can just keep it over there in the corner** and put it away when you get married. That's not how your brain, not to mention your soul, works. "I have a fire in my house, but it's only in the closet, not a big deal."

**Men, if you have pornography, for the sake of your relationship with all future women, you need to get rid of it today.**

- **And** if you're not willing to address this in your life then I challenge you to tell your girlfriend/fiancé that you are bringing all this with you into your relationship. **She has the right to know.** Tell her that now and give her the option to opt out now before you break her heart later.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "I have also seen in my clinical experience that pornography damages the sexual performance of the viewers.... Having spent so much time in unnatural sexual experiences with paper, celluloid and cyberspace, they seem to find it difficult to have sex with a real human being. Pornography is raising their expectation and

This is **nothing to play around with.** One psychiatrist said, "**Porn is more enslaving to people than heroin.**"

- And **what's scary is that the porn industry** markets itself to 12–13 year olds. It only takes 3 days to be an addict. Can I just say,
- *Parents, if you let your kids have phones in their rooms and you have no filter on your internet, I have to think you're not being wise.* You might as well give them a loaded gun they can put under their pillow. I'm not trying to judge you or tell you how to parent your kids, I'm just telling you to wake up to what is happening.
- **My family uses a service called *Covenant Eyes***

**I directed a lot of this issue toward men, but in our society it has become just as much one for women.** Images.

- **And let me go ahead and say it:** Romance novels function like pornography for women. It's soft porn for women made mainstream. They are **not romantic or harmless fantasy**; they are destroying you. The *Fifty Shades of Grey* erotica series, sold more than 100 million copies worldwide.
- *Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.*

Now, I know at this point some of you are **feeling overwhelmed because you have made a lot of these mistakes.** I want to tell you, **that's why Jesus came,** died on the cross, and rose again. TOUGH SPOT--BEST PART OF MESSAGE IS NOT THE LAW

- Jesus said to those stained by sin, "Come, though your sins are like scarlet, I can make them white as snow." There is a fountain filled with blood...

demand for types and amounts of sexual experiences; at the same time it is reducing their ability to experience sex." – Dr. MaryAnne Layden

<sup>6</sup> Andy Stanley, *Gentlemen's Club*

- **And after Jesus died on the cross, he rose from the dead,** showing that there was no deadness he could not resurrected. He can restore anything that sin has stolen and repair what sin has broken. (LOCUSTS. He can repair your ability to cohere)
- **He didn't come just to warn us; if so, we'd all be doomed**
- **I know your sexual sin** has caused you a lot of sorrow, but Jesus was called the "man of sorrows," because he took our sorrows into himself so he could restore us. *Man of Sorrows, what a name!*
- **My friend Matt Chandler** tells the story of being at a True Love Waits rally and the speaker was trying to show the damage sexual sin causes, and so at the beginning he passed out a rose and had everyone in the audience touch it and pass it around, and when it got back to him it was all wilted, with most of the petals fallen off, and he held it up, saying, "And who wants *this* rose?" trying to show the damage of sexual sin. But that leaves out the most important part of the Christian message: **"Jesus wants the rose."** He died for the rose, to restore the rose.
- He breaks the power of **cancelled sin...**
- In **Matthew's genealogy of Jesus**, he shows that Jesus was brought into the world through one woman who for a time in her life was a prostitute and also through the offspring of an adulterous relationship--David's in fact. ***What else is that supposed to tell you than that God's grace*** can still bring the life of Christ out of the worst mistakes. THROUGH YOUR SEXUAL MISTAKES, GOD CAN BRING CHRIST INTO YOUR SITUATION

**So, in standing up here, I have a dual purpose:** I want to show you what's at stake in sexual sin. But I also want to proclaim that Jesus heals and restores sinners.

But you need to put away the **myth that sex is casual**. The limitations God puts on sex he does so for your good.

**Many young singles don't want to wait to have sex because they are afraid they are going to "miss out on something." God tells us to wait to have sex precisely so we *won't* miss out on something.**

Yes, you can get forgiveness for sexual sin, but forgiveness is painful and the consequences can leave deep scars.

Plus, if you're sitting there thinking, "*I'll just have fun now and get forgiveness later,*" I have to **question whether you really belong to Jesus.**

- How can you **love Jesus and still pursue** what put him on the cross?

In 1 Cor 6, Paul says, **"19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."**

**How can you claim to know Jesus, to be purchased from sin by his blood, to have his Spirit in you**, and engage in this? Because he lives in you, what you do you force him to be present for, and if you love him you won't do that.

- If you know that God sent Jesus to die for you, to save you, that he gave you his Spirit, would you stay connected to sin? *Does a person overwhelmed by God's goodness want to spit on it?* No. If this is your attitude, it makes me wonder if you actually know him.<sup>7</sup>

**1 Cor 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers... will inherit the kingdom of God.**

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<sup>7</sup> Lusko

**“Marriage is honorable to all, and the bed undefiled, but the sexually immoral and adulterous God will judge.” Heb 13:4**

**Friend, God is very serious about sexual sin.** DON'T PLAY GAMES. But he does so because of his love. Because it has **such great power for good**, it also has great power for him.

In 1 Cor 6 he tells us to **18 Flee from sexual immorality.** Other temptations God tells us to endure or withstand.<sup>8</sup> But when it comes to sexual immorality, he tells us to *flee*. In 1 Peter, the Apostle Peter tells us these things wages war against the soul. It destroys your capacities for love and intimacy and destroys your ability to relate to God.

Our culture says, “It’s no big deal.” God’s word says ‘Huge deal.’ But **MAYBE YOU still DON’T GET IT...**

**So here’s my question: Do you trust God enough to do it his way?**

Do you actually believe him? This is an area where God tests you to see if you are willing to wait on him.

**MANY COLLEGE STUDENTS: WILL GET SERIOUS ABOUT GOD LATER. DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU ARE GIVING UP?**

And **God always gives his best to those** who wait and trust him.

**If you wait, you’ll be glad... I have to quote here from our friend Dr. Danny Akin**, the president at SEBTS, from his book *God on Sex* (I couldn’t get away with saying this so I’ll quote him). *“It’s not surprising that a Univ of Chicago study reports that those doing it God’s way report the most satisfaction with their sex lives.*

*When University of Chicago researchers set out to discover which religious denominations have the best sex they learned that the faithful don’t do all their shouting in church. Conservative Protestant women... reported by far the highest satisfaction. Mainline Protestants and Catholics lagged five points behind. Those with no religious affiliation were more 33% behind. And Unitarians may not wish to read any further.*

*Sexually active singles have the most sexual problems and get the least pleasure out of sex. Men with the most “liberal attitudes about sex” are seventy-five percent more likely to fail to satisfy their partners. The most sexually satisfied demographic group of them is that of Protestant married couples between fifty and fifty-nine!*

*Cosmopolitan touts, ‘Cosmo’s 20 favorite sex tips ever: we have the wall shaking, earth quaking moves that will make your bed end up clear across the room.’ However, the statistics suggest that if you are really interested in the best sex possible, find you a born-again babe and keep her around until she’s 50 because that’s when the best will come!”<sup>9</sup>*

**Do it God’s way, friend. Again, God doesn’t tell you to avoid sexual immorality** because he wants to keep you from something, but because he wants to bless you with something.

As I close, I want to hit one more myth really quickly--we’ve touched on it each week, but this myth is at the heart of Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 19, and Jesus’ answer to it is an important component of his teaching on marriage and sex.

**Myth 3: Sex is the best part of life**

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<sup>8</sup> E.g. Ephesians 6:12; 1 Cor; Revelation

<sup>9</sup> Danny Akin, *God on Sex*, 162–63.

**Our culture says sex is an essential part of life and you can't be happy without it.**

This is **why Jesus includes the part about the eunuchs** in his teaching on marriage in Matthew 19, why **eunuchs are included** (*12 For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.*)

- Remember, **eunuchs are people who, for various reasons**, can't get married.
- And Jesus makes them equal participants in his Kingdom because marriage was not the ultimate point. The family of God is.
- And soon enough, in eternity, **none of us will be married**, he says. That which is partial and temporary will have given way to what is permanent and eternal--Christ and the church.

**So if I have to endure a chapter in my life without sex**--whether that is because I am single or even because I'm not in a good marriage or something is just not going right in the marriage--**yes, that's difficult, but it's something I can endure.** More than that, I can find real joy in life.

**And if sex never becomes a part of my earthly life, that's ok, too.**

The most joy-filled, happy man ever to walk the face of the earth never had sex.

(MUSIC)

**Eunuchs--who represent single people**--can still find full satisfaction in the Family of God.

**Ironically, our culture both undervalues sex**, not recognizing it's power; and overvalues it, thinking it is essential for a happy life. But neither are true.

- **My friend Christopher Yuan** tells his story of growing up same-sex attracted. He's asked God to give him different desires, but God didn't. For a while, he pursued an openly gay lifestyle, thinking it would satisfy him. But **through a series of bad decisions**, he hit rock bottom and even ended up in prison.
- It was **there that God confronted him**--not with a change of sexual orientation, but with the offer of a forever family with his Son. This is how he puts it:
  - **"My identity is not gay, ex-gay, or even heterosexual for that matter, but my sole identity is as a child of the living God made in the image of Jesus Christ."**
  - *[In that prison cell, I realized that] a decision had to be made: either abandon God and pursue [sexual freedom]; or abandon [sexual freedom] and live as a follower of Jesus Christ. My decision was obvious. I chose to be a child of God.*
  - *I used to think that to please this Christian God, I had to become straight — I had to make myself feel heterosexual feelings — but even those with heterosexual feelings still struggle with sin and need to be redeemed; so that should not be the ultimate goal. Our goal, as Christians, no matter what feelings we have, must be holiness. And that's only found in the righteousness of Christ. Our identity must be solely in his righteousness, not in how sexually pure we feel. As I began to live this life of surrender and obedience, God called me to full-time ministry—while I was in prison of all places..."<sup>10</sup>*
  - He's SSA: Says sex will never be a part of my life, in a posture of waiting, but that's ok.
- Sex is not ultimate, it's just an echo, a pointer of what God has for you in his forever family.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/out-of-a-far-country-a-gay-sons-journey-to-god--2>

- So, if it's not something that is a part of your life, you can still live a happy, joy-filled meaningful life.

#### Invitation:

- **If you're not married**, make a promise to wait.
  - Tell someone.
- If engaged in it now, repent and get forgiveness. You may need to have a conversation.
- If there has been sexual sin
  - Receive forgiveness
  - Make a new start
  - You might want to seek counseling.
  - **Get saved... don't know what it is about sexual sin that highlights brokenness; need for forgiveness and restoration**
- Pornography: Covenant Eyes
- And especially if you think there has been abuse, please tell us so we can help you find help. We want to be a church that cares well for the abused. You don't have to walk through this alone."