

Sex

Part 3 of the series: PMS: Power, Money and Sex

1 John 2:15-17

Sunday, March 9, 2008

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Introduction: This morning we conclude our series *PMS* with the last of the 3 great temptations we face in life: the lust of the flesh. The lust of the flesh is simply the desire to do what feels good to the body. This is called *Hedonism*. *Hedonism* is the pursuit of sensual pleasure. Our culture is a hedonistic culture. The mantra of the past 40 years is "If it feels good do it." There are no rules, or right or wrongs in hedonism only the pursuit of what will make us feel good. If it makes us feel good then it can't be wrong or harmful. The hallmark of hedonism is sexual freedom. So today I am going to be talking about sex! Yes, you heard it. Go ahead and pop some heart pills now.

A certain pastor was in despair over the poor reception his sermons were receiving from the congregation. Things came to a head one Saturday night. While preparing a sermon for the next day he burst out of his study and exclaimed, "What's the use? I might as well climb into the pulpit and talk about riding bicycles." Then it came to him that preaching a sermon on a totally unexpected subject like riding bicycles would shake the congregation out of their complacency. So "Riding Bicycles" it was. His wife was very apprehensive the next morning as she went into the nursery as she did every Sunday morning, leaving her husband to face the congregation alone. But as he climbed the pulpit steps, unknown to her, a far more brilliant idea entered his head. A sermon on riding bicycles would never wake them up. I'll preach on something more provocative. I'll preach on sex, that's sure to wake them up. And he did, and it was brilliant. It was funny and honest and moving. It came from the heart. It was the sermon of his life. Afterward, the congregation mobbed him. They came up to him, shook his hand and thanked him for taking the lid off so many problems. A woman rushed into the nursery and went up to the pastor's wife, "Your husband was wonderful. You should have heard his sermon, such a brilliant choice of subject." "Really," his wife said, "I thought it was an odd choice since he's only done it three times in his life. To be perfectly honest with you –she whispered confidentially – the first time he fell over and the second time his hat blew off.

Sex is everywhere. Ours is a sexually charged society in which sex saturates every part of our culture, and sells everything from cars to soap. We see it on online, on television, on billboards, in entertainment and music. If an alien were to come to America and observe our culture he would think all we do is have sex. I find it sad that sex is talked about so much in the culture and rarely talked about in the church. The church had better get over being embarrassed about the issue of sex and begin to deal with it from a biblical perspective. We as the church need to make sure our kids are getting their sexual education from the Bible instead of the school system.

One of the most common ways sex is portrayed in society is through pornography. Consider that pornography is a 12 billion dollar a year industry. Porn makes more money than the NBA, NFL, MLB and NHL combined. Pornography is also more prevalent than at any other time. It's only a click away on the internet. Statistics say that 50% of Christian men struggle with porn and 47% of households in America say pornography is a problem in their home. You often hear that pornography doesn't hurt anybody. But is that true? In fact pornography hurts everyone that comes into contact with it. It objectifies women, destroys the mystery and intimacy of sex and turns men and women into sex addicts and has a devastating impact on society. Pornography is linked to 80-90% of sexual abuse and rape cases. Doctors say that addiction to pornography is even worse than an addiction to crack cocaine.

So we have no doubt what Hollywood thinks about sex. We have no doubt what Nellie and 50 Cent think about sex. We have no doubt what the government thinks about sex. It's high time for us to learn what God has to say about sex.

Transitional Sentence: The Bible teaches us some very important facts about sex.

1. Sex must be confined within the boundaries of marriage.

Contrary to popular opinion God is not against sex. In fact sex was God's idea. From the very beginning of creation sex was designed by God to be enjoyed within the boundaries of marriage.

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

"Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (Heb.13:4).

Sex is God's gift to married couples and He wants them to enjoy it, but it must be confined to marriage. God puts boundaries on sex. It should be celebrated within the confines of marriage between one man and one woman. If you are living together and not married and having sex you are sinning against God. God does not bless nor condone any sexual relationship outside of marriage, including homosexual, lesbian or those who are simply living together. The only sex God blesses is married sex.

God's not squeamish about sex. He doesn't turn His head and blush when married couples engage in sexual intercourse. If you read the Song of Solomon you see a celebration of sex between husband and wife. Since the Middle Ages the church has had a long history of teaching that sex is something that is dirty and unnatural and under no circumstances should you actually enjoy it. There is even a prevalent teaching in some segments of the Christian church that married couples should only engage in sex for procreation. But what does the Bible say?

"Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer—may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love" (Prov.5:15-19).

Solomon is describing the sexual relationship between husband and wife.

"...each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The 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. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (1 Cor.7:2-5).

This passage teaches us a very important principle. We learn that God commands married couples to have sex and often. The husband's body belongs to the wife and the wife's body belongs to the husband. We are not to withhold sex from our spouse's except by mutual consent. Sex should never be used as a bargaining chip or as some sort of blackmail. What if your spouse asks you to do something you're not comfortable with? Then you shouldn't do it. Remember this principle: Lust demands, but love gives. Lust is always condemned in the Bible and love is commended. Never force your spouse to do something they are not comfortable with. Remember that the sexual relationship in a marriage is not about receiving it is about giving of ourselves completely and sacrificially.

2. Sex has consequences.

The reason that God places boundaries upon sex is because sex is so powerful. If not kept within the proper boundaries sex is a wildfire that can easily burn out of control.

"Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished" (Prov.6:25-29).

Sex outside of the biblical boundaries has the unique capacity to torment emotionally, spiritually and physically. It affects not only the persons involved but also the entire community. Sexually transmitted diseases are spread because people transgress the boundaries God places on sex. Unwanted pregnancies take place because people transgress the boundaries God places on sex. I find it interesting that the government spends millions of dollars on sex education, treating STD's, and dealing with unwanted pregnancies when the Bible has given us a sure-fire way to forever eradicate these issues. You often hear from the government and public education practitioners that abstinence before marriage is unreasonable so we need to distribute condoms at school. But what about tobacco? You don't here these same pied pipers saying that you can't expect kids not to smoke cigarettes. No, there is a zero-

tolerance policy for tobacco. If for cigarettes why not for sex which has the potential to do much more damage?

When sex is removed from its proper context it becomes a plague on society. Think of pedophiles that are driven by their lust to rape children, or men who lie in wait in public parks, malls and airport bathrooms seeking to seduce boys and men. When a Jewish male was born he was circumcised when he was 8 days old. There were two things required for the circumcision: there had to be as many men from the community as possible present, and it had to be done in daylight. The reason is because the circumcision was symbolic of the fact that everything done with the male sexual organ affects the community. God knew the damage that sex could bring so He designed it to be experienced within the confines of marriage.

"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (1 Cor.6:15-20).

This passage teaches us some very important things about sex.

- Every time we have sex with someone we become attached physically, emotionally and spiritually to that person. God's design was one sexual partner for life. Every time you have sex with someone you take a part of them everywhere you go and vice versa. Once the two become one to become two again causes a tearing that was never meant to happen. Not only do you become attached to that person but you become attached to every person that person has had sex with. Society tries to tell us that sex is only recreational but we ignore the true power of sex. We also open ourselves up to demonic powers that may be operating in the life of your sexual partner.

- Sexual sin is worse than other sins because of the unique consequences it has on your body. It affects you emotionally, physically and spiritually in a way that no other sin possibly can.
- We must flee from all sexual sin. The Greek word for immorality used here is the English word “pornography.” Anything that incites lust. Don’t debate it and try to justify it run from it! Joseph is a great example of someone who ran from sexual sin. I can hear some of you saying that you would never be tempted in the area of sexual immorality but I would caution you to be very careful. Consider the fact that Sampson, David and Solomon all fell into sexual immorality. If the strongest man, the most spiritual man, and the wisest man who ever lived fell into sexual immorality what makes you think you are immune?

Transitional Sentence: The antidote to sexual immorality is integrity. We stay clean in a dirty world through integrity.

1. Integrity is wholeness.

Integrity means I am exactly who I appear to be; what you see is what you get. Integrity means I don’t compartmentalize my life. Integrity means I am complete and whole. The dictionary defines integrity as “The state or quality of being entire or complete; wholeness; unbroken state.” Often when church people are caught in acts of sin people wonder how in the world that person could do that and be a Christian. But we can be surrounded by a church atmosphere and “churchy” things and still act in sinful ways. The problem is that we try to have holiness without wholeness. Wholeness must precede holiness and when it doesn’t sin will usually result. Many Christians are saved but they aren’t whole. They are broken and incomplete and messed up people often do messed up things.

In Luke 17:11-19 we see ten lepers that beg Jesus to heal them. Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priest and as they went they were healed. One of the lepers came back praising God and thanking Him, and Jesus said, “Your faith has made you whole.” Now the lepers had already been healed and were going to the priest to be cleansed but only one was made whole. Jesus came not just to save us from our sin but to make us whole; to bring us to an unbroken and complete state.

Do whatever it takes to become whole. If that means seeing a Christian counselor go and do it; if that means dealing with baggage in your life do it. God wants you to be whole and only when you are whole will you be fruitful and effective for God's kingdom.

2. Integrity flows from the heart.

Many times we tend to see integrity from the perspective of following a moral code. Integrity is not following a moral code it is living a crucified life.

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal.2:20).

Integrity flows from the heart. Integrity means that our heart is turned toward God. David's sins are well-chronicled. We know that David was a deeply flawed man, who committed grievous sins but listen to what God says about him,

"As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father..." (1 Ki.9:4-5).

God called David a man of integrity because his heart was turned toward him. Where is your heart today? Jesus said that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Matt.12:34). Is your heart turned toward the things of the world or toward God? Not that you are perfect and never sin but where is your heart? You can't fool God. Integrity is absolute honesty between yourself and God.

"Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life" (Prov.4:23 NLT).

When your heart is fixed upon God integrity is the result. Integrity then becomes a guard that protects your life.

"May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in you" (Ps.25:21).

There are many traps that the enemy seeks to set for you but integrity keeps you from falling into those traps. The reason people fall into sin is because their integrity has failed which means that they have turned a deaf ear to their heart and conscience. In a very real way integrity is like an umpire in a baseball game. During a certain little league baseball game the score was tied with the bases loaded, two outs and a full count on the batter. The pitcher went into his windup and threw his best curveball. The batter was completely caught off guard and didn't swing. The pitcher was sure it was a strike and the batter was sure it was a ball, but the umpire made no call. The crowd began to chant "It was a strike," and "It was a ball." The umpires call could win the game for one of the teams. Finally the catcher asked the umpire, "So is it a strike or a ball?" The umpire replied, "It ain't nothing till I call it."

You don't know what a ball or strike is until the umpire calls it. You don't know if a player is safe or out until the umpire calls it. Integrity enabled you to discern the difference between a strike and a ball, between what is safe and what is out of bounds. Integrity tells you yes or no. We must allow integrity to call the shots in our life if we are going to be pure in this world. Integrity will keep us from falling into sin. The only way to have integrity is to have a renovation of the heart. You can't just walk out of the building today and have integrity. Integrity is not a gift it is a victory. Integrity takes time. It takes repentance and transformation on a daily basis and eventually integrity results.

Conclusion: How can you live clean in a dirty world? By developing a heart of integrity. Begin your renovation of the heart today!