



BIBLICAL MANHOOD

CLASS FIVE: THE MASCULINITY OF SEXUAL PURITY

To worldly ears, sexual purity does not sound very masculine. The goal of this class is to show that sexual purity is a necessary part of biblical masculinity. A man who is lacking in sexual purity is emasculating himself in the eyes of God. Celibacy and monogamy are at the heart of true biblical masculinity.

I. Bible: Key Points

We all know that God regulates sex:

Leviticus 18; 19:10–21

Deuteronomy 21:15—23:14

Matthew 5:27–30

Ephesians 5:3–15

Etcetera

Our goal in this class is not to rehash the rules. Rather, we want to understand WHY sex is sacred. WHY does God care so much that we INDULGE IN SEX (1 Corinthians 7:1–5) His way?

Sexual purity will never be more than a set of moral commands until we understand why God created sex in the first place. That is, sexual purity begins to make much better sense when we realize what sex is all about. If we want to be pure, what we need more than a list of rules and regulations is a better grasp of the theology of sex.

To this end, we will explore 5 statements about sex by exploring key biblical passages that help to give us a bigger view – God’s view – of sex. We will then address practical issues of lust, pornography, masturbation, and same-sex attraction.

1. God created humanity to have and to enjoy sex.

Genesis 2:23–25

- No animal was a helper fit for the Man.
 - No animal was Adam’s equal in capacity or position.
 - No animal had a biological link to the man.
 - Each animal was created out of the ground.

- Woman, on the other hand, was “taken out of man.”
 - Woman is Adam’s equal in capacity and position.
 - Woman has a biological link to the man.

- “Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”
 - In other words: THEREFORE. . . Sex!
 - Of course. . . there are various and sundry other commitments and concepts of partnership intended here as well.
 - But, let us not overlook the most obvious *sexual* aspect of this verse; especially since this class is all about sex.
 - Notice the causal link (Therefore. . .) that is identified between THE SOURCE OF WOMAN (taken out of man) and THE IMPULSE FOR SEX (a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife).
 - When something good is taken out of you, the natural response is to want to put it back in.
 - This is, in its most basic form, the grounds for the sex-impulse of a man.

- “The man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”
 - Yes, this is about relational, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual vulnerability.
 - IT IS ALSO a simple mathematical statement about sexual bliss.
 - (Naked Man + Naked Woman) – Shame = Sex

- Implicit monogamy
 - God’s vision for sex is exclusive to a husband-wife relationship.
 - A man leaves community (father and mother, etc.) to be joined to an individual woman.

- Jesus defended life-long monogamy by appealing to this verse.
 - Matthew 19:3–9
 - Thus, all polygamous and polyamorous men in the Bible—including Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon—were sinning in their departure from monogamy.
- Implicit heterosexuality
- God’s vision for sex is exclusive to a husband-wife relationship.
 - A MAN is joined in a one flesh union to a WOMAN.
 - Biologically, sex is designed for the coming together of a male body and a female body.
 - It is a self-evident biological reality that a penis is made for a vagina and a vagina for a penis; a spermatozoon is made for an ovum and an ovum for a spermatozoon [full stop].
 - Two men or two women cannot fulfill God’s mandate that humanity is to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28).
 - We will see additional reasons for heterosexuality as we continue in our study.

2. God designed sex to describe His relationship with humanity.

- Revelation 19:6–9 (so also Revelation 21:1–3)
 - Revelation 19:6–9 applies Genesis 2:23–25 to Christ’s relationship with all redeemed humanity.
 - Ishah (Eve)¹ was Adam’s bride.
 - Redeemed humanity is the Lamb’s Bride.
 - Paul makes this point more explicitly in Ephesians 5:31–32.
 - “This mystery is profound, and I am saying that [Genesis 2:25] refers to Christ and the church.”
- But, surely, this Marriage Metaphor is to be understood ASEXUALLY. Right? Wrong!
 - It is common to read marital imagery between God and His people without the necessary sexual overtones.
 - However, this makes a mockery of the image.
 - A marriage without sex is not much of a marriage.

¹ We refer to Eve as “Ishah” (meaning, Woman) to highlight the name that Adam gave his wife before the Fall. It is not until after the Fall that Adam renames his wife, “Eve” (meaning, Life).

- God uses the marriage metaphor because he designed sex to teach us something about His relationship with humanity.
- Likewise, adultery and whoredom are frequent images for idolatry and a breach in covenant faithfulness by God’s people.

3. Sex teaches us about humanity’s unique intimacy with God in all Creation.

- God is the Creator of all things, but He created humanity to share a unique intimacy with Him.
 - Sex is only intended – and thus fruitful – between like kinds.
 - Birds with birds.
 - Cats with cats.
 - Fish with fish.
 - Humans with humans.
 - Monogamy communicates single-minded devotion between husband and wife.
 - God is monogamous with humanity.
 - God does not use a sexual metaphor to describe his relationship with any other creature, including angels.
 - To use a sexual metaphor to describe His relationship with us, therefore, God is making a profound statement about humanity’s unique intimacy with Him.
 - Humans will never become God.
 - However, God became a man (in Christ) and thus, we are of like kind with Him in Christ.
 - No other creature—including angels—can make this claim.

4. Sex teaches us about the life-creating power of the Gospel.

John 1:9–13

- For John,
 - Light = Life
 - Darkness = Death
- “The True Light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.”

- Jesus = True Light = Source of all Life
- As we will see, John is about to make a comparison:
 - Seed of a man = source of biological life
 - Jesus' Name = source of eternal life
- “He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.”
 - Jesus is pursuing His people like a husband pursues his wife.
 - As we will see, John is making a sexual comparison.
 - Jesus is like a husband.
 - His own people (Israel) are like His wife.
 - By not receiving Him, Israel is like a wife who rebuffs the sexual advances of her husband:
 1. There will be no intimacy.
 2. There will be no child.
- “But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of a man, but of God.”
 - Here the sexual comparison becomes explicit.
 - Receiving Christ—by believing in His name—generates life.
 - Believing in His name CONCEIVES a child of God.
 - This CONCEPTION surpasses the blood and flesh conception that comes from a man's seed.
 - This CONCEPTION is of God, the True Husband.

John 3:1–8

- Being “born from above” necessitates sexual imagery.
 - It is impossible to have a birth without sex.
 - Nicodemus understands the sexual reference but misses the superseding quality of “birth from above.”
 - “Birth from above” = conception from God
 - Jesus makes the comparison explicit:
 - “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” (by human intercourse).
 - “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (by divine intercourse).
 - Jesus explains that the Holy Spirit takes the role of the husband.
 - Like the wind, He blows where He wishes.
 - He regenerates individuals according to His will.

1 Peter 1:22–25

- This passage might be the most explicit passage of all.

- Peter begins by asserting that we have been born again. How have we been born again?
 - “Not of perishable seed” = human seed = spermatozoon
 - “but of imperishable” = divine seed = the living and abiding Word of God

- Peter mixes his metaphors here.
 - He begins with a sexual metaphor.
 - “being born again”
 - “not of perishable seed” = human seed to correspond with new birth imagery
 - He transitions to a botanical metaphor.
 - “All flesh is like grass. . . but the word of the Lord remains forever”
 - In spite of this mixing of metaphors, the driving metaphor is sexual.
 - “being born again” is superior to being born the first time.
 - The first (biological) birth, by perishable seed (i.e. spermatozoon), is like the grass and the flower. It is temporary.
 - The second (spiritual) birth, by imperishable seed (i.e. living and abiding Word of God), is like the Word of God. It remains forever.

- Peter uses graphic innuendo here that REQUIRES MATURITY if we are going to look past our sin-laden view and experience of sex to see the glory of sex as it points to the Gospel.
 - Peter’s analogy has implications on the macro-level of sex:
 - Human seed is deposited by the penetrating intimacy of a husband in sexual intercourse.
Likewise, divine seed is deposited by the penetrating intimacy of the Holy Spirit in the preaching of God’s Word.
 - Follow the analogy on a more micro-level:
 - An ovum has the potential for biological life as it floats down the fallopian tube of a woman, but it is not a living person.
Likewise, an unregenerate human has the potential for eternal life as he/she floats through life, but he/she is not a spiritually living person.

- If an ovum is not penetrated by a spermatozoon, it will be menstruated.

Likewise, if an unregenerate person is not penetrated by the Word of God, he/she will be cast away.

- If an ovum is penetrated by a spermatozoon, it will become a living person.

Likewise, if an unregenerate person is penetrated by the Word of God, he/she will be born again unto eternal life.

5. Just as monogamous and heterosexual sex in marriage is a picture of God’s relationship with humanity and of the Gospel, sexual immorality and homosexuality are pictures of idolatry and self-worship.

Romans 1:22–27

- “Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. . . they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.”
 - Humanity was created to worship God.
 - Humanity exchanged the worship of God for the worship of Creation (Romans 1:25).
- “THEREFORE, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves. . .”
 - Notice the causal link (Therefore) between false worship and the dishonouring of their bodies.
 - Sex is supposed to point to God’s relationship with humanity.
 - When this relationship is broken, the symbol of this relationship is also broken.

- The dishonouring of their bodies among themselves accurately portrays the spiritual reality of every form of idolatry.²
 - Fornication = denies God’s focussed and enduring commitment to humanity
 - Adultery = betrayal of covenant with God
 - Whoredom = occult worship
 - Polygamy = polytheism
 - Orgy = self-focussed pleasure seeking
 - Masturbation = self-worship
 - Bestiality = denial of humanity’s unique intimacy-claim with God

- **Pornography serves as a gateway to every form of this “dishonouring of their bodies,” which makes it especially poisonous to the soul.**

- “FOR THIS REASON God gave them up to dishonourable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise exchanged natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another. . .”
 - Notice the causal link (For this reason) between false worship and homosexuality.
 - Homosexuality increases in societies that are increasingly given to humanism.
 - Notice the cause and effect relationship between humanism and homosexuality (God gave them up. . .)
 - Homosexuality accurately portrays the spiritual reality of humanism (the worship of humanity by humanity).
 - When a woman is sexually active with a woman or a man is sexually active with a man, the sexual symbol of God’s relationship with humanity is perverted.
 - Sex is supposed to remind us:
 1. Life comes from God to humanity.

² Note: Heterosexual, monogamous, incest within marriage is not inherently evil. At certain junctures of human history (e.g. post-Creation and post-Flood), incest within the bounds of marriage was required for the propagation of the human race. However, Genesis 2:24 suggests that the biblical norm is to leave the family circle in order to cleave to someone outside that circle. Moreover, Leviticus 18:6–18 provides guidelines about incestuous relationships that are to be adhered to in a post-Creation, post-Flood, world where non-incestuous unions are amply available.

- 2. God (who fulfills the role of the husband) is the active penetrating partner.
 - 3. Humanity (who fulfills the role of the wife) is the passive receiving partner.
 - Homosexual sex symbolically removes God altogether.
 - 1. A woman engaged sexually with a woman, or a man engaged sexually with a man, is symbolically communicating human worship of humanity.
 - 2. The divine-human drama is subverted by homosexual sex.
- Men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.”
 - Since homosexuality accurately portrays the spiritual reality of humanism, God adds deadly Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) as an accurate portrayal of the end of humanism.
 - Deadly STDs are the due penalty for their error because humanism leads to eternal death.
 - Therefore, STDs are a divine warning to the broader culture about the dangers of humanism.
- God uses sexuality, therefore, to gauge the spirituality of people. Sexuality—personally, corporately, and culturally—is an accurate gauge of spiritual health, or the lack thereof.

Therefore, if you want to know how you are doing spiritually, simply assess how you are doing sexually.³

³ **Important Note:** Sometimes, sexual perversions indicate personal spiritual perversions (Example, a desire to commit adultery may be the personal fruit of a heart that is straying from a commitment to God). Other times, sexual perversions indicate corporate spiritual perversions (Example, same-sex attraction may be a burden that some members of a society bear for the humanism of the society-at-large. That is to say, a Christian who struggles with same-sex attraction may not be guilty of humanism—at least not in proportion to the struggle. However, the greater society will be guilty of humanism in proportion to the corporate expression of same sex attraction.

I am not certain how to distinguish between individual struggles and societal struggles. Part of our problem in this regard is our individualistic sense of identity, which is, itself, a part of the tragedy of “enlightened humanism.” Thus, I am inclined to think that we all struggle with sexual sin because of the society in which we live. The struggles of the broader culture become our own personal struggles.

I am certain that the goal of every Christian ought to be sexual purity in order to restore sex to its rightful place in our lives, as a symbol of the Gospel and God’s relationship with humanity. Thus, by God’s active grace, life in the Church ought to temper our sexual struggles, as we corporately strive to this end together.

II. Personal Impact

Having explored a biblical theology of sex, it is necessary to connect these ideas with our personal purity as a mark of masculinity. To do this, let us address some of the more common issues that threaten sexual purity.

1. Lust

A struggle against **fantasies of fornication** is best addressed by marriage.

It cannot be managed by pornography and masturbation.

- 1 Corinthians 7:1–9

Marriage is merely the first step against fantasies of fornication. Although marriage offers a good and sacred outlet for sexual desires, marriage will not usually solve the root of the sin-sickness. A desire to fornicate will very often become a desire for adultery.

A struggle against **fantasies of adultery** must be mortified (killed) in the flesh of a man. Here are several steps to take:

First, a man ought to have more sex with his wife.

- 1 Corinthians 7:5

Second, a man must protect himself with appropriate boundaries:

- Never alone with a woman who is not his wife, including professionals and co-workers.
- Cut all access to pornography.
 - No internet
 - Internet access in public areas only
 - Covenant Eyes
 - Disney Circle
 - No cable/satellite
 - Basic cable/satellite
- Intentional and strict boundaries with regard to television, movies, *and music*.
- Cessation of masturbation.
- Other?
 - Matthew 5:27–30

Third, a man must starve his adulterous cravings, and they will grow weaker.

- Galatians 5:16–25

Fourth, a man must be vulnerable with another trusted man/men who will not likewise be tempted, confessing sin with all humility and grief.

- Galatians 6:1–5
- 1 John 1:5—2:6

2. Pornography

Pornography is fuel for lust, stoking the fires of fantasies of fornication and adultery. There is never an acceptable context for pornography; not even shared viewing by a married husband and wife.

Tim Challies makes these powerful points against pornography:

“You will never stop [indulging in pornography] until you begin to see the monstrous nature of the sin you are committing. You will never stop until the sin is more horrifying to you than the commission of the sin is enjoyable. You will need to hate that sin before you can find freedom from it” (*Sexual Detox*, 15).

“Sexual desire, then, is a gift from God, not to torment us but to motivate our obedience. When a husband inevitably feels sexual desire it is not an invitation to pornography and masturbation, but a nudge toward pursuing his wife” (*Sexual Detox*, 50).

“Sex, then, is to be shared only between a husband and a wife, and cannot be extended to others either before marriage or during marriage (Matthew 5:27–28). To introduce anyone else into the relationship, whether physically or even abstractly, such as through shared pornography, is a perversion of the one-to-one nature of sexuality” (*Sexual Detox*, 54).

“Every single act of sexual sin reduces your ability to be an effective leader and an effective lover” (*Sexual Detox*, 79).

3. Masturbation

Masturbation is an outlet for lust that is usually accompanied by fantasies of fornication or adultery. It is also a common bedfellow with pornography. For all these reasons, and others, masturbation is sexually immoral.

Tim Challies devotes an entire chapter to masturbation in his book, *Sexual Detox* (31–44). Here are some helpful quotations from that chapter:

“Why, exactly, is masturbation sinful? Most importantly, just like any other sin, because it violates God’s holiness. Masturbation is against God, against his ways and his purposes for how men and women are to relate to one another in a marital union that reflects the relationship of Christ to the Church.

“Masturbation is also sinful because it compromises us. We are made in God’s image. We are meant to glorify him in every aspect of our lives, and masturbation hinders us in this mission in two principal ways: by polluting our minds and by inclining us to isolation” (*Sexual Detox*, 37).

“A close examination of the Bible’s teaching on sexuality uncovers no reason to believe that God ever intended sex to be a private pursuit. Indeed, the heart and soul of sexuality is the giving and receiving of sexual pleasure between two people: one husband and one wife” (*Sexual Detox*, 39).

“Masturbation strips sexuality of its divine purpose of mutual fulfillment. Where legitimate sexual expression is meant to produce unity, masturbation produces isolation and division. As we saw in Chapter 2 when discussing pornography, masturbation is inherently self-centered” (*Sexual Detox*, 40).

“Masturbation simply cannot fulfill God’s design for sexuality, and thus has no place in the life of one who calls himself a Christian” (*Sexual Detox*, 40).

4. Same-sex attraction

It would be prudent and loving for Christians to accept that some people are simply born with a proclivity toward same-sex attraction. It is counterproductive and cruel for a heterosexual Christian to berate a Christian or non-Christian about the poor CHOICE he or she is making by having a homosexual orientation. Some people may “choose” homosexual sex in a context of sexual liberty and experimentation. Others may be willing to do anything to be rid of same-sex attraction.

Christians should be the first to recognize that we live in a fallen world. Every one of us is born with a sin-sick sexuality. Sexually immoral orientation is part and parcel of total depravity. Same-sex attraction is but one example of sexually immoral orientation, but it is not the only one. Anything that deviates from monogamous sex within the boundaries heterosexual marriage is sexual sin.

In light of this, Christian men—each of us weighed down by our own particular sexually immoral orientation—ought to be quick to extend grace to those who struggle with same-sex attraction. **We Get It.** Even if we can’t relate to homosexual desire, we have our own baggage that is heavy enough to carry.

At the same time, just as we cannot condone fornication, adultery, whoredom, polygamy, orgies, pornography, masturbation, or bestiality, so also, we cannot be permissive of homosexual sex.

What, then, should a man who struggles with same-sex attraction do?

First, acknowledge the difference between *homosexual desire* and *homosexual sex*. A man may not be able to “choose” the desire, but he can “choose” not to act on that desire.

Second, identify both homosexual desire and homosexual sex as sin. Even if the desire is genetically given and proves to be unshakable in its tenacity, a Christian man must identify same-sex attraction as sin. In the same way, a heterosexual desire for any form of sex outside of marriage is sin, even if it proves to be equally unshakable throughout the life of a heterosexual man.

Third, confess this sin to God regularly. Ask the Spirit to provide help and strength. Pray that God would remove same-sex attraction, knowing that He

may not remove it entirely (though same-sex attraction should weaken in the same way that the grip of all sexual sin is weakened when we do not indulge in the desires of the flesh but rather walk in the Spirit).

Fourth, choose celibacy or heterosexual marriage. It is possible for a man to endure a life-long struggle with same-sex attraction AND have a long, fruitful, and happy marriage to a loving woman who is aware of the struggle.

Fifth, battle same-sex attraction in the same way that all men battle lust, pornography, and masturbation (as discussed above).

Sixth, remember that God's grace is always available and sufficient to the humble and contrite of heart. Same-sex attraction need not disqualify a man from exercising godly leadership in the home or in the church, provided he is not licentious with temptation or approving of sin.

Seventh, allow the reality of same-sex attraction to drive you to Christ. No one is saved by the works of the law. The law reveals sin so that we might cry out for a Saviour. A man who recognizes a sinful sexual orientation in himself will cling to Jesus Christ as the Saviour of his soul. So also for all men who struggle with sexual immorality of any form.

Appendix: My Wife's Plea to Christian Men

By Aileen Challies

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<https://www.challies.com/articles/my-wifes-plea-to-christian-men/>

Over the weekend I could see that Aileen had something on her mind. We spoke and she told me about reading the news, about seeing more Christian men fall into scandal, and, in the face of it all, her confusion, her despair, the crumbling of her hope. I asked if she would write about it. Here is what she said.

How long ago was it now? Was it ten years? Twelve? How long has it been since I faced it for the first time? It was a whispered rumor here, a shaded suggestion there. Then it was the devastated wife weeping in my basement as I tried desperately to draw on some wisdom, some biblical truth, that would help her. Little did I know, all those years ago, that this was simply the tip of the iceberg. But I had hope.

Six years ago, Tim wrote *Sexual Detox*, and I followed up with *False Messages*. The number of letters we received shocked us—heart-breaking, soul-crushing emails from guilty men and women married to unfaithful husbands. I wrestled and fought to understand it all from a biblical perspective. Why do so many men, and even so many Christian men, have such weakness when it comes to sexual sin? But even then I still had hope: hope in the truth of the gospel, hope in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the years since, I have listened to more stories of more Christian men falling, wept with more women, and prayed a whole lot. I have tried to explain to women how their husbands think about sex: Your husband doesn't just want it, he wants you. I've tried to tell them that sex is a good gift that God gives as a means of grace in marriage, a means of bonding a husband and wife together. I have counseled single young women to pursue purity. I have been teaching all the right stuff. And I have believed it all. I had hope.

Then came Ashley Madison and the suggestion that hundreds of pastors would have to resign after being caught with accounts on this website that glorifies adultery. And it's not just pastors—hundreds of other Christian men, both single and married, have been caught up in the scandal. Now there are more broken homes, more devastated churches, more weeping wives, more mocking of God. And I have to tell you, this week, today, I am struggling to find hope.

I have fought to understand the struggle men face. I have fought to have compassion. I have encouraged wives to extend forgiveness, to willingly and joyfully give themselves to their husbands. But you know what? I just don't know how I can keep doing it. Not when so many husbands are deceptively defiling the marriage bed. Not when so many young, single men are recklessly defiling the future marriage bed. Not when so many men seem just plain unwilling to change.

Is it really that difficult? You would almost think that this one sin is beyond the power of the Holy Spirit.

Men, you are supposed to be modeling holiness before the world (Titus 2:6-8). You are supposed to be cherishing your wives as Christ cherishes his church (Ephesians 5:25). You are supposed to be abstaining from all sexual immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:3). You are supposed to be fleeing youthful passions (2 Timothy 2:22). Why are so many of you failing at these basic tasks? Is it really that difficult? You would almost think that this one sin is beyond the power of the Holy Spirit.

You who keep choosing to sin, you who keep visiting those websites, you who have secret lives you keep hidden from your friends and your wives: Why won't you stop? You know that God loves to give victory over every sin. You know that God calls you to pursue sanctification. You know that the Holy Spirit equips you to succeed. God has given you everything you need in the gospel. So why do you keep failing? **The only conclusion I can come to is that you are so consumed with self-gratification that you are not willing to fight, and I mean really willing to fight, this sin. If it's not that you can't, it must be that you won't.**

I plead with you. I plead with you on behalf of your wives, on behalf of your future wives, on behalf of Christian women everywhere: Stop. Just stop.

Stop believing that this is a special sin that women just can't understand—we do understand sin. This isn't a special sin, it is just sin: God-belittling, Christ-mocking, Spirit-despising sin. Stop pretending like there are no future consequences to your actions. Stop putting your selfish desires first. Stop engaging in activities that bring shame on the gospel. Stop doing things that leave us picking up the pieces of your devastated wife. Stop indulging in your sin, and start thinking and acting like a God-honoring, Christ-praising, Spirit-glorifying man. For the love of God and his church, stop.