

Life Group Questions

Feb 11th, 2024

The Gift of Sex – Pastor Vinh Doan – **Genesis 1-2**

Thank you for your dedication to lead your Life Group. **Please review the questions, selecting any you believe will be helpful for your group and adapting as needed.** You don't need to go through everything. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your group so your discussion will build everyone up to love God and each other more.

Note from Pastor Jonathan

Hey Life Groups,

Dr. Christopher Yuan is coming to Willingdon on February 17 and 18! There are four sessions and they're all free, but you'll need to register: <https://willingdon.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2121763>. Invite anyone who may be interested, especially non-Christians!

Check out my promo video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=du2hKRh8MC0>.

He has an amazing testimony of same-sex attraction, dealing drugs, prison, HIV, and God's mercy. He's now a professor at Moody Bible Institute, focusing on sexuality and gender. He does a great job of addressing these issues with a healthy blend of God's Word and compassion. His book *Holy Sexuality* is a fantastic read on what the Bible says about sexuality, singleness/marriage, and more.

Dr. Yuan and his mom will share their testimony during all three services. If you can, please go to the 8:30, because the other two will be packed and we want room for as many to come as possible.

Also in the sermon, Pastor Vinh recommends the book *Why does God care who I sleep with?* Watch the author explain why he wrote the book: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kzh5fe0bw00>.

Love you guys,

Pastor Jonathan Hsieh
jhsieh@willingdon.org

Open in Prayer

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the text, the questions, and each other.

Questions

Why do Christians tend to avoid talking about sex?

1. **How should we, as Christians, approach discussions about sex?**
2. **How does human sexuality point to the glory of God as Creator?**
3. **How does the reality of God's grace free us from the need to sugarcoat our sin struggles?**
4. **How is sexual sin both similar to and different from other types of sin?**

Opening Question

Sex is nothing new. The first successful in vitro fertilization was in 1977. Every single person born before then was born because of sex, except Adam, Eve, and Jesus. And very likely, you were born because your parents had sex and everyone knows you had to have sex to have your kids.

Why do Christians tend to avoid talking about sex?

For many of us, we were taught that sex was dangerous, being told it leads to pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and that Jesus won't love you (<https://youtu.be/bLgIecL1IdY?si=1MO-ujPIV5A3UpUY>). We may have come from cultures where the topic of sex is very private or open.

NOTE: Because sex can be a sensitive topic, it may be easier to separate by gender for this discussion. Everyone can meet up afterward to share conclusions. It may be interesting to see the similarities and differences between how women and men think. This is just a suggestion, so please do what works best for your group.

1. How should we, as Christians, approach discussions about sex?

Hopefully, your group will have some ideas. Here are some possible answers:

- **Use God's Word.** We're getting a ton of messages about sex from the world and even our own sinful hearts. How can we know what's OK and not? As Christians, we want to know what God says is good or bad and we can only know that by learning what He's told us in the Bible.
- **Be honest.** We're Christians because we admit we're spiritually sick and need the doctor of our souls to save us (Mark 2:17). We all have broken pasts and for some of us, it involves sex. Even Pastor Vinh had to confess to his wife Laura that he had a sexual history before marrying her. I'm pretty sure almost all of us have also struggled in different areas relating to sex, from lust, pornography, same-sex attraction, and more.
- **Be wise.** We should share, but some details take discernment. Adultery starts in the heart (Matthew 5:28). We don't want to share something that unintentionally makes someone stumble. That's why sometimes it's good for men and women to split up for deeper discussions on sex.
- **It's good.** Even though God made sex and we have a whole Bible book filled with sexy talk (Song of Solomon), people think Christians look down on sex. Catholics believe in "the excellence of virginity and of celibacy and of their superiority over the married state."¹ People even call anti-sex stuff puritanical. Ironically, Puritans wrote a lot about sex. One author described sex "as two musical instruments rightly fitted do make a most pleasant and sweet harmony in a well tuned consort."²
- **It's not everything.** Unlike Vinh, I didn't have sex until I got married at 36. The world around me presented sex and marriage as the magical goal to feel complete and have all my urges taken care of. Sadly, a lot of Christian culture also reinforced this view by making marriage the cure for all sexual temptations. But Jesus and Paul were never married, no matter what Dan Brown says. Our

¹ Quote from Pope Pius XII from his encyclical *Sacra Virginitas* (https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html). Pope John Paul II also repeated this sentiment in his exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html). Catholics believe giving up sex for the sake of God's kingdom is better than becoming married.

² Here's a Tim Challies article with lots of Puritan quotes on sex: <https://www.challies.com/quotes/the-puritans-and-sex/>.

church has many who aren't having sex because they're single and ready to mingle, don't have sexual desires (asexual), are attracted to the same sex, choose singleness to serve God³, or other reasons. As Christopher Yuan writes in *Holy Sexuality*, "Jesus is not affirming that singleness is *comparatively* better than marriage, as some might believe; rather, in light of the kingdom of heaven, singleness is *advantageous* just as marriage is advantageous." There are pros and cons of both being in a sexual relationship (in marriage) and being single. Ultimately we should find our satisfaction in Jesus, no matter our situation.

2. How does human sexuality point to the glory of God as Creator?

Hopefully, your group will have some ideas. Here are some possible answers:

- **Decider.** Since God created the world and everything in it, He gets to define what it's for. We see as God creates the world, He gives His creation parameters or purpose. We honor God as the Creator when we use sex in the way He created it to be.
- **Image.** All human beings are made in the image of God. That means every Costco shopper has inherent dignity and value. When we value a person simply for sexual purposes, we violate that dignity. From one-night stands to pornography, we easily reduce image-bearers into objects for our pleasure, instead of God's creations. When we properly honor people, including their sexuality, we honor their Creator.
- **Not Alone.** God declares that it's not good for Adam to be alone. God made humans to live in community with one another. Adam needs someone to come alongside him to fulfill what God wants him to do. It's easy for people to try to do things on their own, including fulfilling sexual urges. When sex is placed within marriage, it demonstrates the beauty of the system God created. And those who don't have a sexual relationship can still find community, support, and love in the church family.
- **One Flesh.** God created a man and woman to be united as "one flesh". As Pastor Vinh noted, it's not just sexually united, but physically, mentally, and spiritually. When we become united physically without the other areas, we fall short of God's design. By being fully united, a couple can serve and glorify God in unique ways that single people can't. (As noted above, being single has its advantages as well.)
- **Thanking God.** Ultimately, we can all thank God for His good gifts, sex being one of them.

3. How does the reality of God's grace free us from the need to sugarcoat our sin struggles?

Hopefully, your group will have some ideas. Here are some possible answers:

- **We're (probably) all guilty.** Unless we have asexual (people who lack sexual inclinations) members, we're all guilty. Even sexual desires and thoughts about non-spouses are adultery in God's eyes (Matthew 5:28). We've at least had thoughts that weren't in line with what God wants.
- **God still loves us.** Jesus loved us so much that even though we were dead in our (sexual and non-sexual) sins, He died for us (Romans 5:8). God let Rahab (the formerly pagan prostitute) be in the lineage of the Messiah. Jesus cared for the Samaritan woman who had five husbands and was living

³ Check out Dr. Kuruvilla (<https://voice.dts.edu/article/a-professors-singular-focus-choosing-to-be-celibate-for-christ-kuruvilla/>). He was a professor at DTS where Pastor Richard and I went to. He's a professor **and** a practicing dermatologist.

with a guy who wasn't her husband (John 4). Prostitutes were among the people who came to Jesus and were saved (Matthew 21:31-32).

- **God heals.** God says that if we confess our sins, He will forgive us and cleanse us (1 John 1:9).
- **God provides support.** God gives us the church family to support each other (Galatians 6:1-2).

4. How is sexual sin both similar to and different from other types of sin?

Hopefully, your group will have some ideas. Here are some possible answers:

Similar

- **Still Sin.** It's a sin and goes against God's design. All sin makes us fall short of God's righteous standard (Romans 3:23).
- **Forgivable.** As mentioned in the previous question, God can forgive sexual sins.
- **Not Unique.** Most Canadians think sex outside of marriage and same-sex relationships are acceptable (<https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/opinion/opinion-poll-gauges-views-on-matters-of-morality-in-canada-5363285>). Statistically speaking, a lot of people who come through our doors every Sunday also have a less than perfect sexual history.

Different

- **Babies.** Off the top of my head, I can't think of any other normal sins that lead to the creation of life.
- **Sexually transmitted diseases.** Having sex with multiple partners increases the risk of certain diseases.
- **One Flesh.** Sex connects two people in a way that should be unique and reserved for only one relationship (1 Corinthians 6:15-17).

5. How does the cross of Christ liberate us from guilt and fear and enable hope and obedience?

Jesus knows all the sins in our hearts (Psalm 44:20-21), including our sexual sins. But out of love, Jesus still died to pay for all our sins (Romans 5:8). There are no sins that He cannot forgive if you believe in Him. Jesus is willing and eager to forgive us and clean us (1 John 1:9). Jesus welcomed and loved sinners with tainted sexual pasts (e.g., the Samaritan woman and prostitutes). Because we are forgiven by Jesus, God will not condemn us for our sexual sins (Romans 8:1).

Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit who convicts us (John 16:8), making us aware of our sins. The awareness of our sins is already a sign that God is at work. The Holy Spirit helps us to pray and even prays for us when we don't know how (Romans 8:26-27).

No matter what situation we are in, whether married or single or in a sexual relationship or celibate, we can glorify Jesus.

God, Sex & Church: A Theology of Healthy Sexuality

(<https://www.mennonitebrethren.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Study-Guide-2015-letter-sized.pdf>)

All single people and married people live with sexually limiting situations. No one should ever feel cast out from the community of Christ because of their sexuality. All God's people belong. All Jesus' disciples are called to a covenant relationship with other Christ followers, regardless of whether they have a spouse or not. All belong because of the church's primary covenant relationship to Jesus. Completeness

and belonging are ultimately found in relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, within Christ's body the church. If this is so, it is more than possible to thrive as a sexual human being, with or without sex

Choose Your Next Step

What next step will you commit to for the upcoming week (and beyond)?

Closing Prayer

A closing prayer is an effective way to point people back to our Loving Father as they seek to apply their new learnings throughout the week. Ask group members to share what they sense God calling them to. Pray for each other and commit to continue to do so during the week as people step out in obedience to God's leading.