



A Biblical Theology of Sexual Holiness

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OPENING LETTER

"But why?!?"

Since the beginning of time, parents heard that very question as they labored to raise their children well. The truth is that our desires and wisdom do not always align on this side of eternity. This is one of the reasons why children so often ask the question, "*Why?*"

The world is earnestly asking the global church *why* sexual holiness matters. Unfortunately, the answer many receive is convoluted, experientially dishonest, and not comprehensively built upon Scripture. Western society now teaches that it is fitting to build the entirety of one's identity and being around sexual desire and orientation. This teaching is damaging and antithetical to the good news of the Gospel.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to build our lives upon Christ alone. The moment we allow cultural values to eclipse Kingdom values, our lives mirror a distinctly unchristian world view. Following Jesus' teachings is not always easy or understood, but that does not make His commands negotiable.

This e-book is meant to stimulate deeper thought about Biblical teachings regarding sexual holiness. It is not meant to be exhaustive, but it is intended to stir the reader's desire to better understand-- and experience!-- the incredible, counter-cultural life Christ invites His sons and daughters to step into. In the following pages, you will encounter a little bit of history, some insights from the Greek language, and a clearer understanding of how the Gospel proclaims great news that is incredibly redemptive for your sexuality.

I pray this answers some of your "*Why?*" questions about what the Bible has to say about your sexuality. I also pray it moves you to think more deeply about this important subject. Finally, I hope the following pages instill a greater faith in Jesus and what His completed work can release in your own life story.

Respectfully,
Joe Riddle
Founder, Chief Researcher
Danger Close Consulting

A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF SEXUAL HOLINESS

When God redeems a person, the entirety of his or her body is caught up in the redemptive work of Christ. Paul makes it exceedingly clear that the believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. He also spoke clearly about how the precious price of our rescue, Christ's crucifixion, demands we steward our bodies in a way that glorifies God (cf: 1 Cor. 6:19-20). As "members of Christ" it is unthinkable that a true believer would become a "member" of a prostitute (cf: 1. Cor. 6:15). Earlier in the same passage, Paul unequivocally teaches that fornicators, adulterers, and homosexuals will not inherit the Kingdom of God (cf: 1 Cor. 6:9-10). Scripture could not be clearer: how we steward our physicality and sexuality are of immense import in the journey to Christlikeness.

The Domain of His Reign

The early church battled against the dangerous teachings of Gnosticism. This school of thought denied the goodness of creation. This denial flew directly in the face of the Genesis account which time and time again reiterated the beauty and inherent goodness of the entirety of creation prior to the fall of mankind. Genesis 3:15 clearly recounts God's intent to redeem the created order.

The Gnostic notion that the physical realm was impure or absent of true goodness is an affront to the all-encompassing, salvific work of Christ. If allowed to infiltrate a Christian's theology, it would quickly encourage a disconnect between one's salvation and stewardship of his or her corporeal existence. If matter is unredeemable, why would it matter what I do with it?

Such a view is entirely incompatible with the Pauline teachings mentioned above. In Romans 12:1, Paul charged readers to "present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice... which is your spiritual worship." These texts considered concurrently make it abundantly clear that the work of Christ is of consequence not only for our souls but also for our physical bodies. The sanctification journey not only impacts us spiritually but also physically in this current life.

Set Apart Unto the Lord

The notion of consecration runs all through the Hebrew Scriptures. At its core, consecration speaks of something set apart for service unto Yahweh. People, places, temple items, and animal sacrifices were frequently reserved for service to Him. Things consecrated in this way were referred to as holy. In ancient Israel, this notion of consecration reached a crescendo in the environment of temple worship.

Paul introduced an explosive concept when he taught God's temple was no longer comprised of brick and mortar. In the new covenant, our hearts become heaven's home. We are His temple. As such, we are consecrated. We are holy. We are set apart unto the Lord.

The purpose we are set apart for is the original mandate given by God to mankind in Eden. Through Adam and Eve, all of humanity was commissioned to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over... every living thing that moves on the earth" (cf: Gen. 1:28). This mandate comprehensively includes every facet of human existence—even the stewardship of our sexuality for fruitful multiplication in the context of marriage.

How we live our lives has immense bearing on whether we steward this mandate well or not. Paul teaches his readers that God issues His salvation "appeal" to all of creation "through us." This appeal is one of reconciliation between God and a sin ravaged humanity (cf: 2 Cor. 5:19-20). The stakes of this entrustment cannot be overstated. Paul asks, "how will they believe in Him whom they have not heard?" (cf: Rom. 10:14). Wrapped up in the way we live our lives is the successful communication of the true Gospel message of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Inherent in this notion of Lordship is the idea that Christ reigns over every facet of our lives. This includes the stewardship of our sexuality.

When Things Fall Apart

At the core of the Genesis mandate is a sense of service to others. This mandate is for the glory of God, perpetuation of life, and stewardship of a decidedly good creation. Paul uses the Greek word *porneia* numerous times in his writings to early churches. It should be noted that in Christian theology, the church is the new covenant community entrusted with the Genesis mandate following Christ's death and resurrection. While *porneia* is a sexual matter, the effects of it are felt in every realm of one's relational existence. Thus, it is a massive issue.

Porneia is ultimately a matter of exploitation. *Porneia* sees sex as transactional and disregards the beauty of covenant fidelity and commitment. It describes any sexual behavior that violates God's sovereignly decreed order and His design and intent for human sexual expression. *Porneia* is rampant in the pornography industry and is the bedrock of the scourge of human trafficking. A byproduct of *porneia* being enshrined in society is the widespread support of abortion—an incomprehensible act of exploitation of the unborn. It's interesting to note Paul never commands us to fight *porneia*—only flee (cf: 1 Cor. 6:18).

Conclusion

Sexual holiness proclaims to the world the incredibly good news that God's redemption permeates every area of our lives. Sex is biblically reserved for a lifelong marriage commitment between one man and one woman and yields the beautiful fruit of shameless intimacy and love (cf: Gen. 2:24-25). Sexual holiness is attainable not only in marriage but also in the context of singleness through the proper stewardship of one's sexuality for God's glory.

The call to sexual holiness is an invitation to live one's life with the incredibly good news of the Gospel at the center of one's nature and being. We are not ruled by desire. We are not ruled by our gender. We are not ruled by society's latest trends. Sexual holiness declares to the world that our life and identity is rooted in the completed work of the Cross.

ADDITIONAL READING

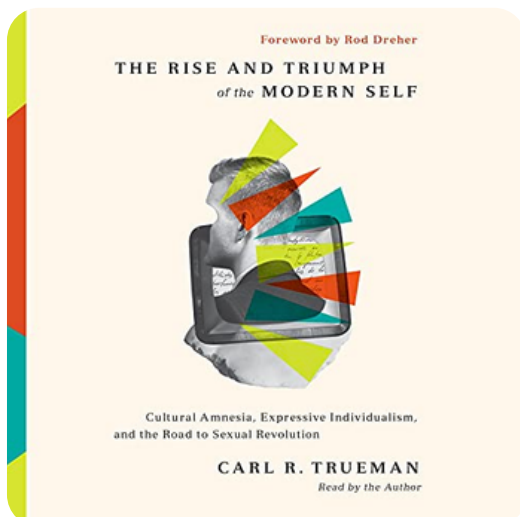
FAITHFUL: A THEOLOGY OF SEX

Beth Felker Jones' text provides a succinct and nuanced understanding of sex and Christian theology.



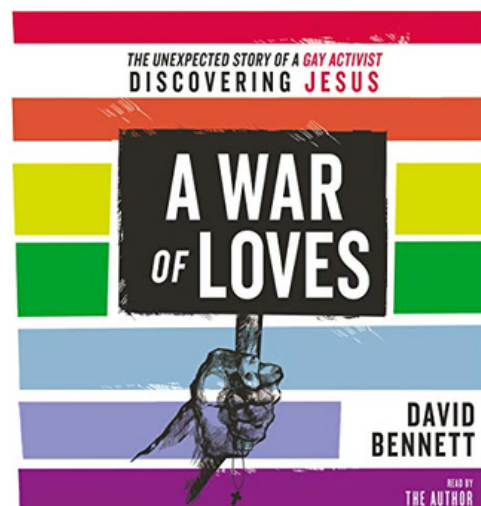
THE RISE AND TRIUMPH OF THE MODERN SELF

A deep dive into how America arrived at its current expression of individualism and the ideals that fueled the sexual revolution.



A WAR OF LOVES: THE UNEXPECTED STORY OF A GAY ACTIVIST DISCOVERING JESUS

A powerful testimony of David Bennett's journey towards a Biblical understanding of sexuality, specifically as it pertains to homosexuality.



ABOUT

JOE RIDDLE



Joe Riddle, Founder & Chief Researcher

LIFE & CARREER

Joe launched Danger Close Consulting in 2022. He currently serves as a preaching & teaching pastor at Wave Church where he has served in varying roles since 2010.

He completed a masters degree of divinity at Regent University in 2023. His area of specialty is Biblical language studies.

He regularly speaks in church, conference, and intensive lecture settings.

His three children (Uzi, Cruz, and Goldie) keep him on his knees believing for God's wisdom and protection.

When Joe isn't serving churches through the efforts of Danger Close, you are likely to find him training for an upcoming endurance event.

Feel free to drop Joe a message at joe@dangerclose.com. He'd love to hear from you!

About Danger Close Consulting

There are more demands on pastors than ever before. In this ever-changing world, one thing remains: you are called to preach and teach the Word of God boldly and without compromise. Here at Danger Close Consulting, we know balancing ministry life with the demands of regular sermon preparation can feel about as safe as a knife fight in a phonebooth... and we are here to help! Danger Close Consulting specializes in coming alongside you amid the ministry fight to provide support, encouragement, and equipping so you can stay the course in all Christ has called you to do for His name and renown.

Danger Close Consulting Objectives

- 1 Provide a faith filled, professional, & external sounding board for Gospel communicators committed to improving their craft.
- 2 Offer a full spectrum of services that enable Gospel communicators to focus on the elements of preaching and teaching that bring them true joy and fulfillment.
- 3 Through consultation and research, Danger Close accelerates the efforts of Gospel communicators to serve in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.



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your ministry efforts, please email Joe at
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