



GOSPEL LIFE

SEXUAL REVOLUTION QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- 1. I had 2 female Christian friends that developed a sexual relationship with one another. One of them told me they were "still growing spiritually when in the sin because they were repentant each time after." But they still continued in the sin for some time. Is this incorrect theology?** In Matthew 3:8 Jesus tells us to bear fruit in keeping with repentance. With that as a foundation, on one hand I believe we need to be compassionate about the effort and desire to grow in the Lord amidst consistent struggle. However, the definition of repentance means a discernable effort to flee from sin and run towards Christ. To the point that Jesus tells us if your eye causes you to sin pluck it out (Matthew 5:29). Saying you "repent" without removing yourself from temptation, getting accountability, setting your mind on things of the Spirit, and even separating yourself from a tempting relationship for a season will not bear fruit. If a heterosexual friendship led to temptation with sexual sin, repentance would look the same, which would likely entail separating from the tempting relationship.
- 2. At the outset let me say we are all accountable for our own sins and the following question in no way implies ANY justification for the sin of lust. What responsibility do we have to our spouse to maintain our bodies so as to be desirable to our spouse?** Matthew 7:12 should be a guiding principle here and has to be the foundation for this discussion. "In everything, do unto others as you would have them do for you." The responsibility isn't one of duty or forced vanity but love and care for the other. Out of love for my wife and my desire that she would likewise love me I seek to take care of my body which the Bible tells us is of value (1 Timothy 4:8), though limited. Will you, out of love for your spouse, continue to care for your body even if not reciprocated. It would be unwise to try and force your spouse to work out, but a gentle conversation as to why it is important to you and your desire for them is warranted.
- 3. Talk about God's plan and masturbation.** We addressed this issue in the forum, but to reiterate I would say that Romans 13:14 gives us direction here. Romans tells us to put on a self-denying lifestyle like our Lord making no provision for the flesh. Masturbation becomes antithetical to this idea as it is focused on self-pleasure. On the other hand Paul says elsewhere that all things are lawful for me but not all things helpful (1 Corinthians 6:12). So, I would say **outside** of marriage it seems impossible to masturbate without committing the sin of lust and **within** marriage IF, and I say IF, you masturbate with images of your spouse alone in your mind due to inability to engage with one another you should follow the conscience of the Spirit. However, I believe this is very difficult and defeats the intended purpose of sex as a unifying act and that there may be other ways to address that "passion" WITH your spouse.
- 4. How to address problems of sexual dysfunction when your medical providers aren't receptive to it?** I would suggest seeking advice from a pastor (see below) or find a more receptive medical provider (see below).
- 5. How to practically incorporate regular discussion of sex with our kids (ages 7-11). How much to share about personal sexual sin or struggles with them?** This is of course has many variables, but generally speaking I would say that the discussion should be a consistent conversation as opposed to a moment of sitting down, and that the conversation should develop in accordance with maturity: questions being asked, what and how they are noticing regarding their own bodies and bodies of others, and what content they are engaged in through media. For example, when our kids began to notice that there were physical differences, we generally told them about different body parts and how and why God made

them that way, giving them medical names. This was done in the moment of the recognition and led us to begin to make slight changes to their lifestyle, i.e. closing the door when they changed etc.... We also discussed babies and where they came from without dealing with the specific mechanics of sex. That came at a later time closer to the age of 11 and 12.

- 6. Where do you start when you're trying to have a biblical and healthy sex life without guilt or shame in your marriage after having multiple partners and abuse before marriage?** I would deeply encourage anyone struggling in this way to read a book called *The Relational Soul* by James Cofield. When seeking healing from such things we need to be aware of the damage caused and allow the Lord to heal and reinterpret those events. *The Relational Soul* can be a tool to help guide a person through that process. Counseling may also be necessary depending on the depth of brokenness there (see below for connection). Finally, I would say have a frank discussion about it with your spouse. Together, talk about boundaries, talk about things your spouse can avoid that bring back memories, talk about how your spouse can approach you with tenderness and care that is different than previous experiences. Many times patience and time are deeply important here, and communication is vital for your partner to understand.
- 7. Do parents of teens realize the importance of protecting kids phones?** No they do not. If there was one piece of advice I would give to parents it would be to NOT give children phones until later in high school and then only with certain understandings. Establish a contract of expectation, explain the why behind the restrictions, slowly grant responsibility and help them grow in navigating. NEVER allow full and free access to the web, ALWAYS have the right to see what is present at any time, DON'T allow phones in rooms late at night etc. I would highly encourage the book *Tech Wise Family* by Andy Crouch.
- 8. If one is addicted to pornographic material and is struggling to break free even though he fully understands why it is wrong, what do you recommend for him to reach escape velocity?** Two major things, first is to bring to the light that which is in the dark. If you truly want freedom confess the fullness and depth of sin to someone who will keep you accountable, can give you counsel, and will love you through what may be a long journey. To connect to a pastor who can help you in this regard see below. Second, with the help of counsel seek the root of the problem. Pornography is typically the fruit of something much deeper and if you don't address the real issue it will tend to grow back. See below for help connecting.
- 9. How can we help those that are struggling with sexual impurity, but are not convicted that it is wrong?** This is extremely complicated because certain terms need to be understood. For example, what do you mean by "struggling"? Are they feeling guilt over it and wanting to stop? That being said, we must first acknowledge that it is the Spirit of God that convicts of sin (John 16:8). Second, we must ask the question, who determines what is "right and good" for human flourishing, or "wrong" and ultimately destructive and leads to death? If the answer to the second question is not God, and there is no conviction of sin, then it would seem to reason that this person has not "confessed with [their] heart that Jesus Christ is Lord," (Romans 10:8-10). This is hugely important because if that is true, the goal is not to move them away from sexual impurity, but towards Jesus. When confronted with Jesus, the Spirit will convict of sin (Luke 5:8).
- 10. Best advice for high school relationships and how they are supposed to act physically that pleases God?** While the Scripture does not tell us "this far you may go and no farther" there are principles that clearly guide.

 - According to Genesis and the understanding of sexual immorality, "together in nakedness" is reserved for man and wife. Therefore anything that reveals your nakedness is outside of his plan.
 - We are to love others above ourselves. This means you should care for the purity of your boyfriend or girlfriend more than you care about your own pleasure.

- Seek to outdo one another in honor. You should seek to treat your boyfriend or girlfriend in an honorable way as well as honor their potential spouse if that isn't them.
- Keep things in the light. Avoid private spaces as much as possible. This doesn't mean you can't be alone but be alone in public, go to a movie, go to a park, go get coffee, have a dinner together. Being alone in dark places adds to temptation. Also communicate with trusted friends who can help you stay accountable.
- Love as Christ loves. This is self-controlled, self-sacrificing, committed care for another person and is the opposite of burning with passion and self-seeking sexual fulfillment.
- Understand that if you can't "know" a person without physical intimacy the relationship is doomed to fail. A marriage is not built on sex, physical intimacy comes and goes even in marriage and it is not a foundation that can withstand the trials.
- Know that every time you engage physically you are engaging the body and soul, they cannot be separated and the wounds that can be done can take years of healing.

11. Some churches now are accepting, even promoting, same sex marriage. How can we talk with love to friends and family in those churches? I would point you to our sermon on July 4th (The Beauty of Marriage), July 18th (Good Sex), July 25th (A Contrary Way), August 1st (Walking in Love).

12. I have heard that within marriage all is okay in the bedroom. Can you address what the boundaries are? In a sense this is an accurate assessment however, this is only true when guided by Biblical principles:

- Communicate first the what and the why.
- Love one another is a command not taken lightly. If your spouse is not comfortable it would not be Biblical love to pressure your spouse in any way to proceed.
- 1 Corinthians 6:19 reminds us that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit I would believe this means that we should respect and care for that temple. Meaning specifically that within the freedom in the marriage bed, anything that is "unnatural" or potentially destructive or harmful should be considered "off limits". This would include violence, masochism, or anal sex.

13. How do you make purity a desirable idea for our children as they are confronted with the opposite by culture and friends? Sadly, apart from Christ purity will not be desirable because our ways are contrary to His ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). They need to see God as for them not against them, as one who gives good gifts not one who seeks to keep good gifts from them, they need to see God is for our abundant life and flourishing and that despite the data and promises of our feelings and culture following them will lead to destruction. One of the ways parents can do this is try and say "yes" to your kids as often as possible make sure they see that heart of Christ in you even in your discipline, or your "no". Explain the why behind the things you give and don't give or allow and don't allow pointing back the better Father.

14. How does a Christian mentor a young person who struggles with same sex attraction? Like we do with any other sin. We are called to repent, to flee, to no longer offer the members of our body as instruments of sin.

- Be careful to promise heterosexual feelings, they may or may not come. Holiness is not equated to heterosexuality. Help them pray for deliverance, plead that God would restore and renew the mind.
- Lead them to deep friendships and community that can help with loneliness. Brotherly and sisterly intimacy is a great guide here without sexual engagement.
- Help them see that marriage is more than sexual feelings (look to sermon on July 4th, Beauty of Marriage)
- Help them to see the beauty of singleness and chastity if that is their call (1 Corinthians 7). Sex is not a requirement for a fulfilled life.
- Give them a place to fail in grace (not acceptance) where you can lead them to faithful obedience.

15. The topic of homosexuality isn't agreed upon in the "Church". Have you found that it's worth debating whether homosexuality is sin with others who disagree? And as the Church, what's our responsibility to be inviting to all people, but not affirm a sinful lifestyle?

It is not a debate with God or Jesus (see sermon on July 25th, A Contrary Way) and "churches" that deny this are not churches. The true Church should be, and is, inviting to all believers and non-believers who are seeking to listen to or acquaint themselves with Jesus. The only ones who are not invited are those who declare to be believers and continue to live in habitual, unrepentant, lifestyles of sin disregarding what their claimed Lord has called them to. The Scripture is clear... it is these, and only these, who are not welcome (1 Corinthians 5:9-13).

16. What can the church do to strengthen marriages, especially with the prevalence of divorce culture?

Press the true nature and intent of marriage. Encouraging and equipping couples to love as brothers and sisters first, which includes a redefined love (in accordance with Jesus as our example), communication, and bearing all things, hoping all things, and believing all things (1 Corinthians 13:7). Also reminding people that marriage isn't about personal fulfillment, or getting our needs met. It isn't about sex, or feelings... Marriage is a commitment to love in spite of all these things. Finally, marriage is glorious and it is hard and it's ok to look for help BEFORE divorce papers are in the mail. This is why the community of faith is here and at times we all need help.

17. Is there hope for FULL restoration for those of us who have a history of doing sex very wrong?

Walking into my future marriage without my virginity... ABSOLUTELY! God is the great healer and restorer and nothing is beyond His ability to bring about newness of life. With that said, to give specific guidance is impossible without knowing more detail regarding the hurts and regrets experienced. I would deeply encourage connecting with a pastor or our women's ministry director to help walk through some of those things (see below).

18. Dr. Hague, what lies do you see women believing about sex most often? What truth does God's word give us to hold up against those lies?

Remember, Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy. When it comes to sex, I see the two extremes. Either a woman believes sex is bad, dirty, and an awful part of marriage or she is tempted to use sex before marriage to make sure that a man will love her. Both extremes rob women of the joy that God intends sex to give inside the confines of marriage.

19. How would you advise newlywed couples to build a sexual relationship that is influenced by Christ and not culture? In other words, how does a new Christian couple start out on the right foot?

The newlywed couple that is focused on honoring God and each other through the sacred covenant of marriage must use a few guiding principles in sexuality. First, communicating what feels good and what does not is key! This is totally awkward for most who are not experienced sexually (praise the Lord when two become one after the wedding day!). Men - commit to pursuing your bride outside the bedroom. Spend time holding and cuddling and becoming a safe place for her. Women - never lie to your husband. The desire to please him can sometimes lead to the temptation to "fake" what makes you feel good. Faking pleasure is lying and is not edifying to your marriage. A great way to learn to communicate is to read Christian books about sex together - I often recommend couples read together in bed. *Start Talking Intimacy* by Hague and Smith (shameless plug), *Sheet Music* by Leman, *Intended For Pleasure* by Wheat, or the classic, *The Act of Marriage* by LaHaye are all a great place to start. Above all, honesty, open communication, and a desire to please the other person will start you out on the right foot.

- 20. For those of you married and became married in Christ, how did you spend your time dating your spouse before you were married and sought to start a family? In other words, what did you do together while dating to discover that this person was the one person you wanted to marry and become one with?** Neil and I spent a lot of time with other people. Interacting in a group of family or friends does several things. You see how the other person treats people and cares for them. You allow your friends the opportunity to get to know them and they can often see things – especially concerning things – that you cannot. You also reduce the temptation to engage sexually. If you find it very difficult to spend time together in groups, perhaps that is a red flag that you may find it challenging to serve God as a married couple. Serving together in a local ministry is also a great way to learn your future spouse's strengths, weaknesses, fears, and gifts.
- 21. How are single Christians supposed to biblically deal with sexual drives and desires outside of marriage?** Sexual drives and desires are just like anything else. If they are unholy desires, they should be surrendered to God just like any other sin. If they are holy desires, then the timing and fulfillment of those desires must also be surrendered to him. Psalm 37:3-4 speaks to this: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." I know no other area where this is more applicable than with your sexuality! Trust in God's plan for holy sexuality and He will place within you the desires you need to delight yourself in Him.
- 22. As it relates to human flourishing, how would you explain to a nonbeliever that saving yourself until the covenant of marriage leads to human flourishing and isn't just a religious rule?** Most "religious rules" are anchored in natural laws (set by Creator God). The physical consequences of sex outside of marriage are numerous – STI's, cervical cancer, and unplanned pregnancy to name a few. The emotional and spiritual consequences are also extensive. Having one man and one woman for life who practiced self-control before marriage leads to the healthiest situation for both people – physical, spiritual, and emotional brokenness can be avoided by following God's plan for sex.
- 23. From a culture that doesn't care much about marriage, what can we tell those people Biblically about why getting married under God's blessing is important before sex?** The first thing to come to grips with is that they often do not understand why we do what we do. Why do we give away money instead of keeping it all for ourselves? Why would we help someone else at great personal cost when we could just walk on? Why do we not get drunk to cope with life? We have to be okay with the culture not agreeing with us or understanding us. Christ promised us that they would hate us as they hated him. The reason we get married under God's blessing is because we love God and want to glorify Him with our lives. The side effect of seeking to honor God in marriage is that we experience a unique oneness with another human that is an image to the world of the oneness Christ has with His church.
- 24. I work with teens and young single adults. I feel we must have more open discussions about why wait. Can you address this. If they know they are going to marry this person...why wait?** Why are they seeking to marry in the first place? Is it to satisfy their lust for another? Or to honor God with their lives? God says that he blesses sex inside of marriage and that sex outside of marriage is sin. As people seeking to honor Him with every aspect of our lives, we must not compromise our sexuality for the sake of our lust for another person – even our future spouse. According to ifstudies.org, premarital sex with one partner substantially increases the odds of divorce. In the study they cite, women who have zero sex partners prior to marriage are the least likely to end up divorced. In a culture that treats marriage as disposable, the church must be different! Perhaps the reason divorce is lower among virgins who marry because God's plan is still the best plan for our good.

25. How should we introduce the topic of sex to our kids and at what age? Also, what are some good resources for parents when starting these conversations? This on-going conversation should start in the toddler years with body safety and the uniqueness of God's creation and continue into adulthood. See question 29 for recommendations on book series. Remember, the world is introducing cartoons on sexuality to kids as young as 2 and 3, so you must teach age-appropriate truth from that age as well.

26. Can a Christian be gay? How do we approach people who label themselves as "gay christian?" Feelings of attraction for the same sex is a sin just like anything else. When you ask if a Christian can "be" gay, are you asking if our identity can be in anything other than Christ and we still be a Christian? Christ is to be our only identity, everything else is just a struggle or temptation to sin. There are several places in the Bible that explicitly say homosexuality is a sin. That means that if that is the way you or another person is feeling and you are a Christian, you are called to repent and surrender to Jesus. The feelings may be real, but the choice to sin or walk in the power of Jesus is still yours.

27. The culture is actively assaulting my 5 & 7 year old children with lies about sex and sexuality. I struggle with how frank to be with their young hearts and minds, but the world is not watering down their message in any way. Any advice on how to engage immature and innocent(ish) children? With children that young, it can be hard to sit down and have a deep discussion about such a heavy topic. However, as Ravi Zacharias once said, "You cannot put a tepid Christianity next to a scorching paganism". We must speak the truth to our children plainly and boldly, and unfortunately much sooner in our culture than we once needed to. Like Neil said in the forum, this is an on-going conversation, not an event. I think a lot of discussions will happen spontaneously (discussing body safety while bathing, talking about how God made us different, etc), but another good way is to go through an age-appropriate book with them. Books are good conversation starters and they can be chosen topically and some are written specifically for boys or girls. I would recommend a series of books by authors Stan and Brenna Jones that are for kids ages 3-14 as well as their book about how and when to talk about sex. I would also point to Creation and the understanding of God's design of a man and woman made in His image as key. The Creation story is one of the most overlooked and powerful Biblical truths that we as parents must teach our kids repeatedly.

28. I was taken in by a homosexual couple in my teenage years. I called them my "mamas", not realizing how this would effect the my future children. They call themselves "grandmas" to my children now. How do my husband and I show them love without without accepting their lifestyle. We have many people in our lives that do not hold to Biblical values. Our kids have observed their behavior and many times, asked about the issues when we get home after visiting someone. Why does our friend drink so much beer? Why does she lie? Why does he cuss so much? Why does he have so many different girlfriends? We have had many discussions about how we are to love people, and how people who do not know Jesus are not trying to live their lives in a way that honors and pleases Him. It is also an opportunity to talk about how we are not to judge, and that we are to constantly ask the Lord about the plank in our own eye. Expressing your love for the people who took you in and cared for you, and also acknowledging that they do not live by the same Biblical principles is important. Teach your children that we are to love people, regardless of their beliefs or background, and to pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal the truth to them, as we are always ready to give an answer for the hope that is within us.

29. Do we as a church have pre-marital mentoring and teaching classes for people who are in the process of getting married that can in a biblical way teach couples about the marriage they are going to live? (a year-long class that covers many of the things they will encounter) We do please contact the church (see below).

- 30. How should we, practically, walk/live with sexual brokenness after being delivered from sexual sin?** The same way we walk/live with any other kind of brokenness – in repentance, humility, and community. Seek Jesus daily in prayer and reading the Word. Becoming more like Jesus will help us heal from the destruction of any sin we have committed. Will power alone will never be enough to keep us from slipping into old sinful behaviors. We must be transformed by the renewing of our minds daily. Walking this planet with brothers and sisters in Christ who have struggles as well and can sympathize and help us be accountable can often mean the difference between victory and defeat.
- 31. What can we do if a spouse is addicted to porn, other than prayer?** This is a very controversial issue, even among Christian therapists with special training in sexual issues. I have seen men and women handle this successfully in very different ways. One couple I know decided that the best way for them to journey this together was for him to be accountable to his wife and to a male accountability partner. He often traveled for work and struggled with temptation when in the hotel room by himself. He made a habit of calling his wife, discussing the day, and praying together. She always writes him a note that he takes with him on his trips that reminds him of her incredible love for him and appreciation that he is choosing to fight temptation in order to build their marriage into what God wants it to be. Another couple was counseled that the wife should not bring up the issue of pornography at all, but rather the husband would only discuss this with the counselor to whom he had chosen to be accountable. The issue was very difficult for her and caused tremendous pain and difficulty with forgiveness, so it was more healing for them that he have accountability outside of the marriage. Regardless of the approach, this is a sin like every other sin we struggle with. God gave us a spouse to love us, care for us, and prayerfully support and battle for us. The importance of praying for your spouse in this struggle cannot be understated. Seeking out Christian counseling or mentorship will be helpful if you are both committed to being open and honest. If they are unwilling to discuss pornography, speaking with a pastor or counselor would be a wise next step.
- 32. In a Christian marriage is it okay to use methods that are typically “viewed” as secular or taboo to enhance the experience of self and spouse during sex?** Everything you do should be about bringing glory to God, including your sex life. When it comes to bringing other things in to the bedroom, it is important to make sure that both you and your spouse are comfortable with it. There should be no pressure and both of you need to be on the same page. It is also important to remember that other people are never to be a part of your marriage bed and pornography is never edifying or glorifying. The big question to ask yourself is “why”? Why do you want to bring something else into your sexual experience with your spouse? Where did the idea come from? Does it demean your spouse or threaten to make your sexual experience uncomfortable or cause a rift in your union because he/she wants to make you happy at the cost of his/her own sense of well-being? Is it holy?
- 33. Can someone who’s had sex in the past outside of marriage ever experience what someone who remained faithful can?** The term “second virginity” was made popular in the nineties. The concept was that even if you have had sex, you can renew your pledge to God for holiness and He will forgive you and restore you. While this is true, sex outside of marriage will have consequences and often you cannot escape them. Many people struggle with memories of sexual encounters and comparisons. Some have been left with physical reminders such as sexually transmitted illnesses. Just like with any history of sinful behavior, we must daily surrender our minds and bodies to Jesus and ask Him to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. Daily time in the Word and prayer and a commitment to remaining faithful in body and mind to your spouse will be essential to experiencing the flourishing marital union Christ desires to give you. Your life can be a beautiful testimony of God’s power to restore and make new in the midst of brokenness.

34. Are anal and oral sex considered unbiblical even within marriage? There are some things that the Bible is silent about and oral sex is one of them. This is an area that must be between a man and wife. This is a question that is often asked, but it is usually being asked because one of the pair feels comfortable or wants to try oral/anal sex and the other does not. The first conversation must be whether or not husband and wife are both comfortable with the idea and desire to engage in the behavior. If one person does not desire to engage, the answer is no. All sexual behaviors with our spouses must be mutually desired and beneficial for developing continued trust and intimacy. At the same time, being completely closed to having any discussion with your spouse about their desires for sexual intimacy is being self-focused. There may be situations that your spouse wants to try something intimately that you have not done before and your response needs to consider their desires and your willingness to compromise/try new things together. If anything causes pain or discomfort, there must be a willingness to communicate and stop what is happening so you can care for your spouse. (Specifically regarding anal sex refer to question 12).

35. How should we respond when someone we love defends a sinful sexual behavior with, "We're all sinners"? It is true that we are all sinners; however, God also calls us to repent and sin no more. It comes down to their relationship with Christ. If they are truly Christ-followers, then they should be living for his glory, and all sin, sexual or otherwise, takes away from His glory. Pray for his/her eyes to be opened and display repentance in your own life, encouraging them on their journey of sanctification.

36. When welcoming people who have chosen to live a homosexual lifestyle into the church for healing, how do we guide them into making those big changes needed to truly follow Christ and the Gospel? We are not the Holy Spirit. When someone truly gives their life to God, it can be very messy. For a person who has been living the homosexual lifestyle, realize that if they reject that life they often lose all support. The LGBTQ+ community is not often friendly to someone who has come to know Christ and no longer wants to embrace same sex attraction. They can be seen as a traitor and enemy, and depending on the circumstance, may find themselves suddenly without a home or family. The best way we can support them is to be the church. Invite them to dinner, to our home, to our kid's sporting events. Embrace them as a brother or sister in Christ and let them sort out what life needs to look like. Do not push them to make changes, allow God to work in their life as you become the friend and support they need. Realize that behaviors take time – if God told you everything you needed to change and expected it to happen instantaneously you may run away crying. Give them space and grace and an open hand to help when they are ready.

37. In Genesis 39 Joseph avoided and ran away from Potiphar's wife, who had been tempting him with sexual sin. What are some ways we can avoid and run away from sexual sin? It all depends on what sexual sin you are struggling with. If it is internet-related, my advice would be to invest in a filter or blocker. Removing tempting websites from your unintentional viewing will help you avoid vulnerability when you are striving for holiness. The Gospel of Mark talks about cutting off your hand if it is causing you to sin. While this is extreme, there are things in your life that may need to be cut off, such as a social media account, toxic friendships that encourage you to engage in sexual behaviors that do not glorify God, movie channels that are a temptation, or unrestricted internet access. Just like an alcoholic may need to keep all liquor out of their home, you may need to remove as many tempting situations as possible to seek holiness.

38. How would someone know if they should see counseling regarding issues of sexual identity, sexual intimacy or relationships? Do you have any recommendations for Christian counselors that are available and have reasonable costs in the Wichita area? There are many great Christian counselors, and some with specific training in sexual issues. Heritage Family Counseling has several therapists who are prepared to engage this subject, as does ICT Therapy and I'm sure there are others. If you make the decision to seek counseling it is essential that you find yourself being pointed to Biblical principles

and the cross. If you are looking for a counselor that will help you justify your sin, you do not need a counselor you need to hit your knees and repent, asking God to empower you to live to glorify Him. If you know your feelings and confusion are sinful, have repented, and desire wisdom and accountability, counseling can be useful in that process. If you are married and find that communication with your spouse is broken, counseling can sometimes help if both parties are open to it. If your spouse is unwilling to go but you think it would be helpful, you can consider individual counseling to help you learn better communication.

39. When discipling children on the topic of sex and marriage, how do we manage not awakening too much while also preparing them for what they will encounter in the world? Ezekiel 3 & 33 portray the prophets of God as watchmen, who post up on the outer walls of a city, keeping an eye on the landscape to preserve the people in safekeeping. Their job is completed when they blow the trumpet to warn the people of danger when they spot it on the horizon. I believe this same example bears out in the question you ask. Each child is different, and we are most likely aware by their disposition, school environment and so on, about when they are ready for the various stages of conversation about sex and marriage. The fact is, they are surrounded by a hostile world and an enemy bent on their malformation. In many cases, the church and Christian parents hesitate and share too little, too late, long after the world (through channels often unaware to us) has said its piece time and time again. As you're your wise concern about "awakening too much," I understand your concern, but physiologically, there will come a point when those thoughts and feelings happen on their own. It's less our task to keep that from happening than it is to teach our children restraint and self-control for the glory of God when they do. My encouragement to you is that by 3 methods we can safeguard our children's spiritual and holistic wellbeing regarding sexuality. **A.** We can pray for them, laying our hands on them and praying to the Spirit for their preservation, for their joy in Christ, for their understanding of God's incredible love for them. God answers prayer. **B.** We can train their language and form their understanding by teaching Scriptures that cast in a positive light true things about God's creation, that will create a foundation that will naturally war with any lies they inevitably will hear. Genesis 1 & 2 are huge. Parts of Ephesians 5 can also be incredibly powerful. Tim Keller's *New City Catechism* is also a wonderful book that step by step forms our children's theology in a very biblical manner. **C.** We can be warmly inviting to any questions they have. Just by being open and responsive to their inquisitive questions can be one of the most protective actions for us to take as parents, to keep our children from thinking they need to go elsewhere to get "real" answers.

40. What are some practical things that you on the panel do to keep yourselves from falling in our human weakness to our sexual desires? It's holistic. Daily time in God's Word, daily prayer, consistent network of brothers and sisters that keep me grounded and known. Healthy rhythms of sleeping and eating also play a part in it. Without consistently coming to the fountain of God's Word to drink deeply, and time with God in prayer, that battle is already lost. It also helps to memorize certain passages of Scripture to combat wayward desires. Another practical step to take is to note down if there are specific places or times of the day when that moments of weakness and temptation happen. If you struggle with something late at night, perhaps the most godly decision you can make is to go to bed. Set that rhythm, seek accountability there, set alarms, use phone apps to shut your phone down at a certain time. Because we are habitual creatures, there are often rhythms to our habits, both the good ones and the bad ones. If we leave those things unexamined, there's no way we can grow out of them.

41. How should we handle persuading fellow Christians who have chosen to practice sexual acts with their boy/girlfriend outside of marriage that what they are doing is truly wrong? (they say what they are doing is not actually sex) I'm thankful for your desire to protect your friends. Your heart is in line with James 5:19-20, and that's wonderful. I would first encourage you to pray. One thing to take seriously is to pray with James 1 faith, believing that the Lord truly hears us. God hears your prayers for your friends. Further, it seems to me you might be saying that your friends have drawn the line at having intercourse as being the one thing they can't do, while allowing concessions for everything else. I would ask your friend what wisdom has caused them to draw that line there. It is understandable that people in a relationship who deeply care for one another sometimes want to go further than they know is wise, and they allow their passions to take them there at will. But something for us all to consider is that passion unrestrained and uncontrolled while sometimes might feel good, ultimately leads to our destruction. Will this same couple make the hard decisions later on in their relationships that need to be made for the sake of maintaining their relationship in a godly, healthy manner? Probably not. Our future is an amplification of our present. A lack of self-control that is permitted for pleasure inevitably leads to further lack of self-control in other areas of life, leading to serious pain and hurt. Lastly, while I appreciate your concern for them, and your desire to help them, it might be helpful to consider reaching out to somebody else who is seen as a trusted authority figure to encourage them. It takes a village...

42. With differences in libido, how can couples engage each other Biblically without resentment or feeling inadequate? This is a great question. Many thoughts here to share. Our overly-sexualized culture often leads people to believe their partner is going to have some kind of unhinged, voracious appetite for sex all the time. Which is ludicrous. What ends up happening is we often develop (without realizing it) unspoken expectations that eventually aggravate us. This strikes me as a holistic issue to a certain degree. First, regarding libido, our desire to have sex should not be the primary guide for when we have sex. It is very often the case in my marriage that my wife doesn't really begin with an appetite for intimacy, but once we begin the initial phase of coming together (foreplay, conversation, kissing, touching) she really begins to enjoy our time together. She chooses to spend time with me, even when it's not a super-strong drive for her in the moment (thought sometimes it certainly is), because she has chosen to sacrificially love me in that way. There have been occasional times when the reverse has been true. Sexual intimacy is a choice, it is also a biblical command from the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7. Conversation and holistic planning is so important in this area. Some helpful things to consider: Sexual intimacy is best when both people feel consistently cared for by being actively engaged in caring for the home. A man who never wants to fold laundry but always want to have sex has a faulty understanding of marital love. Further, having conversation ahead of time can be helpful. "Honey, I'd like to spend time with you this evening, can we prioritize that?" is a great question to ask to help your partner mentally prepare to be fully present with you then. If a long term distaste for sexual intimacy continues, simply asking them "why" in the confines of a healthy, safe, sensitive conversation might open up areas of insight previously unknown. Ultimately, the Christian pattern is to regard others before ourselves, to love others for their own sake, and not merely for what we get out of it. Healthy Christian marriage cannot be sustained when either person is consistently led simply by what they want or don't want rather than choosing to serve and consider the other.

43. What if I am someone who feels they can't be fully happy or balanced in a lifelong purely monogamous marriage? In love and sincerity, I would tell you that you need to repent of that. Your vision of sexuality is not better than God's, who formed you, loves you and knows you through and through. If we're led merely by our feelings, we'll always end up somewhere we truly don't want to be. This question strikes me as coming from a person who has been formed or persuaded by a worldly sexual ethic. God has not called you to seek your own happiness and "balance" in life. That is what the enemy of our souls wants for us. I don't mean to sound harsh, I truly don't, but I would urge you to consider what community you're living in, what shows you're watching, what entertainment you surround yourself with. If you're not surrounded by wholesome godly influences, there's no way you'll be able

to see and have a taste for what is truly beautiful, wholesome and good. God's love for us, especially in Genesis 12 & 15 with Abraham, is demonstrated as a covenant, a promise. God's love for us is the anchor of our love for one another. We are also called to love one another with covenantal love, a love that seeks to serve, to stay, to remain despite troubling times. While the world might glorify polygamous or open relationships, the core of what drives those relationships is sinful passion. Further, consider the long-term effects of having multiple sexual partners whenever it feels right. Children would be destroyed by a relationship like that. This is one of those cases, where though the world glorifies it, it would actually destroy you and rob you of the real joy of committed marital love that God designed.

44. Involved in porn in the past, I realize this will always have to be on the alert to temptation there.

Having confessed to my spouse, how can my spouse trust me again? Time and consistency. Let them see you taking initiative to have meaningful, holistic community to combat those false desires. Pursue your spouse, be sensitive, patient, and encourage one another to love each other with the same pardoning, forgiving love God has given each of you in Jesus. They can trust you again if they also realize that they are a sinner who God has richly pardoned in Christ. It should not be a surprise to Christians when we falter and stumble, as nobody is perfect, but neither should that allow us to stay in the muck and the mire. Persevere, seek deep community, keep it up. I'm encouraged by your hard work and desire to fight the good fight of faith.

45. How can we help our young adult kids fight the bombardment of the internet as it relates to misinformation that permeates Tik Tok, Instagram etc. Lies of the culture.

Increasingly, the way commerce is handled in our global economy leads us to feel as though we need to be connected to survive. This pressure is even more acutely felt by small business owners who at every opportunity need to promote their product to stay relevant. The same pressures are felt in the social sphere. So much event planning and communication now happens over messaging apps that it seems nigh impossible to connect with our phones. But as for our young kids, I recommend they be given phones that have only texting and calling ability. If they need to use a phone for online engagement, they can use a parent's phone until they turn 16, or whatever age you would like to designate. To give them unfettered access to TikTok is to consign them to unbearable temptation and even to the deceptions of spiritual darkness. We protect them from the bombardment of the internet by shielding them from it completely, as much as possible. The internet is a malforming agent in our culture. Its cost/benefit ratio is deplorable. For the little good it does, it brings so much more damage. I'm glad you're working through this. I'd recommend you only allow online access in a family room where there is communal accountability. Teach them that sometimes following Jesus can be lonely, especially when we refuse to engage in the apps and garbage that the rest of the world is trifling with. They can learn to be faithful, joyful, curious young people of ingenuity and enterprise without the distractive and frenetic online realm. A helpful book to read would be Andy Crouch's *Tech Wise Family*.

46. Is there a plan for CCC in the youth, 5th grade through college, to incorporate sessions for these kids that encourage and teach them the God Plan for marriage.

Direct this question to Jason Krieger (kriegerj@ccc.org) and Tori Dahilig (dahiligv@ccc.org). In short, yes. I'm so thankful they take these matters seriously. They also desire to instruct and encourage not just the students but also the parents in how to engage the topic of holistic, biblical family life, as it takes a village to follow Jesus together and to disciple God's people to honor the Lord with all their lives.

47. What if you have had so much sexual dysfunction and abuse when young, that you feel nothing sexually or physically during sex? Where do you even begin to start healing?

My heart breaks for you. I am so sorry this has been your experience. This is not God's will or desire for you, it is a result of horribly broken and fallen man, who injure themselves and others due to following the passions of their own flesh and being influenced by the enemies of spiritual darkness. Healing happens on multiple fronts. It happens in God's Word, guided and empowered by His Holy Spirit, and it also happens in the

guidance of Christian biblical counselors and Christian sex therapists. I would encourage you to seek professional guidance of these kinds, while committing yourself to walk in community with brothers and sisters who grow in God's Word together. I am encouraged by your willingness to share this openly. It shows maturity and courage that you're aware of where you are and how you got here. I believe in these cases, sometimes therapy with your spouse in biblical counseling can help you both be aware of how to know one another (past abuse, attachment patterns, learned level of intimacy) and how to love one another. God is able to heal, restore and make new! For next steps, please call the church office so we can connect you with sound and reliable biblical counsel.

48. Could you guys explain how we can lovingly and correctly talk about modesty with our Christian peers who are of the opposite sex when we see an issue with their clothing or should we leave that for the individuals parents to address? I believe that sometimes writing a gentle and honest letter can go a long way. It allows the person to process the information on their own, and prevents them from being embarrassed or overwhelmed by a real time confrontation. Ultimately, deciding to dress modestly and to convey biblical virtue is a response to the gospel in each of our lives, it begins in the heart, and these matters take time for people to work through. I would encourage you to have grace and prayerful disposition to those dressed immodestly, eagerly seeking to show them grace and gentleness as you help to make them more aware of who they are and whose they are. And yes, I believe reaching out to the parents can also be helpful, but in some cases, the parents aren't interested to engage, which is sad. If they are open and willing, that can be doubly helpful. Ezekiel 16 conveys some powerful truths about God's love for us despite our faithlessness and immodesty.

49. How do you approach different sex drives in a marriage while still respecting consent, comfort, and without pressure? See question 44 above.

50. What current pressures and assaults are teenagers and young adults facing in this area? All the same pressures we are, but to a much higher degree with regards to the social complexity and pressures of their lives. Teenagers today have never known a world without social media. They don't know a world devoid of constant distraction. They have real time and online relationships. Often, the online aspect of their social connections bears more weight than their actual friendships... which is so troubling and deceiving. In consideration of all of this, to leave them unguided with no accountability as they engage in the online world is truly leaving them to the wolves. They probably don't see it that way, at least at first. Hebrews 2 implores us to "pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest we drift away..." The entirety of the online enterprise is intended and developed to distract us and to lead us to drift away from responsibility into endless hours of scrolling and mindless entertainment. We should heed God's Word with all of our hearts.

51. If pornography has taken away the desire for intimacy with your spouse due to oversaturation as mentioned in the sermon. How do you recover from that? I applaud you for recognizing where you are and giving voice to the damages your sexual addictions have caused you. But there is indeed healing. God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins when we confess them, eagerly desiring to walk in holiness. Experiencing a loss of desire or satisfaction sexually due to pornography affects both the mind and the body. It makes it difficult to be present with your spouse without allowing your mind to wander off into ungodly imaginations, and it physically can have a negating impact on your ability to be sensitively present with your spouse. Repentance, time for restoration, retraining the mind to focus on the good is a holistic journey. Learning how to truly be present with your spouse is a new thing to learn, and God is able to do all of this by His Spirit. If you haven't confessed this to your spouse and your accountability community, you need to. That is a crucial step in the process, and walking alongside godly counsel is also crucial. Seek that wisdom, stay anchored to Jesus, He will never leave you.

52. What does a healthy married sex life look like? This is a very broad and vague question. I'll try to address it as best I can in the short time I have. If you're simply asking about the mechanics of lovemaking in the confines biblical marriage, it all depends on the comfort and delight of the husband and wife. It is a good and godly thing for a man and a woman to enjoy discovering one another, pleasuring one another, showing gratitude and joy to have one another sexually. But this goes far beyond just the bedroom. The holistic rhythms of life, the distribution of duties around the house, diet and sleep schedules, goal planning and execution, date nights, communication and conflict resolution strategies... these all play a role in healthy marital intimacy. Marital intimacy is experienced with quality time together in so many forms from flirtatious communication, cuddling, working alongside one another all the way to lovemaking. But even the act of lovemaking has a wide bandwidth connection. Sometimes lovemaking happens out of a need to connect in the midst of a frenetic schedule, sometimes love making is intensely passionate, sometimes it's playful. When it's about serving the other person rather than merely seeking to get something out of it, there's no end to the goodness, and all of this is a wonderful gift from God.

53. When should we have these conversations with our kids? As early as they can comprehend language. Even before children develop the capacity for language they feel and notice the bond of their parents. In fact, they borrow from our facial expressions and patterns of relating how they themselves are to do so. They emulate us in ways we can't understand from an earlier age than we realize. But obviously as children grow up, the way we talk about and demonstrate marital love becomes more candid and complex. The fact of the matter is they understand more than we give them credit for. It is probably the case that there is a greater danger in having these conversations too late rather than too early. But my wisdom would be to talk about sexuality in its good and intended nature. Talking about the mechanics of masturbation and why it's unwise to an 11 year old boy will most likely have the effect of unhealthy curiosity. But talking about godly sex in the confines of covenantal marriage would be greatly helpful. We should not feel shame talking about sex. That is an influence western philosophy has had on our thoughts about sexuality.

54. Why do we focus only on the pornography and not on regular movies that are really a gateway to pornography? Great question. I'm not sure who you mean by "We." But I'd agree that Christian culture tends to make way more concessions than it should for unwholesome content that does not inspire wholesome imagination, but rather comes to us in the form of temptation to entertain ungodly thoughts. To a certain degree, there is real complexity to living wholesomely in a wildly broken world. In some cases, we need to have the self-control to enter certain environments for the sake of the gospel to love others well while not falling prey to the surrounding temptations. But that is an altogether different motivation and scenario than the Christian who binges on hours of unwholesome entertainment. One thing is certain, it requires real devotion to keep oneself unstained by the evil of our present age. It also often requires being the only one to refuse to go to the movies or to engage in something everybody else seems to be doing.

55. What age do you start talking to kids about sex? Any advice or resources to use? Refer to Question 45 above. As for resources, consider this website: <http://littlebookbigstory.com/9-christian-resources-help-teach-child-sex/>

56. How do you overcome low sex drive when you have to take pills in order to have intimacy with your spouse? Candidly, some difficulties we don't overcome, but we learn to deal with over time in the guidance of wise and biblical counsel. We should be thankful for the medicine God has provided in this age to help with issues like erectile dysfunction, rather than feeling disappointed and ashamed for needing them. Healing happens on multiple fronts. It happens in God's Word, guided and empowered by His Holy Spirit, and it also happens in the guidance of Christian biblical counselors and Christian sex therapists. I would encourage you to seek professional guidance of these kinds, while committing yourself to walk in community with brothers and sisters who grow in God's Word together.

I am encouraged by your willingness to share this openly. It shows maturity and courage. I believe in these cases, sometimes seeking Christian therapy with your spouse can help you both be aware of how to pleasure one another and how to deeply enjoy the sexual intimacy as that changes throughout our pilgrimage here on earth. For next steps, please feel free to call the church office so we can connect you with sound and reliable recommendations for sex therapy and biblical counsel.

57. What are good boundaries to have before marriage in order to be able to love your future spouse in a Godly way? Romans 14 helps us consider how to proceed in all things with faith, rather than doubt. If there is a sense of doubt, that might be the Holy Spirit conveying conviction and drawing boundaries for your wellbeing. The fact is, there is no clear cut answer to this question. But I would say that the boundary of virginity (as we consider it) is not crossed only by sexual intercourse. The process of two people becoming intimately, emotionally, and physically one happens in the process of being naked with one another, discovering one another, and pleasuring one another in ways meant to be experienced in the confines of covenantal marriage. For this reason, couples shouldn't feel like they have to wait forever to get married. Often, we pressure children to wait til after college, once they're financially settled in a home with a good car, with long term financial stability. It's ludicrous. But also, I think setting a boundary not to touch parts of the body covered by clothing is a wise step. Going beyond this inevitably leads people in passionate moments to want to experience much more. I'd also recommend not sleeping together in the same bed or engaging in profusely long kissing sessions. Sexuality is such a wonderful gift, but it truly is the very best when experienced together in biblical covenantal marriage. What a wonderful gift it is in marriage to unclothe one another and enjoy discovering and pleasuring the gift God gives us in our spouse!

58. How does this forum relate to teens? Refer above to questions 41, 43, 47, 48, 50 and 59.

59. How should we handle persuading fellow Christians who have chosen to practice sexual acts with their boy/girlfriend outside of marriage that what they are doing is truly wrong? (they say what they are doing is not actually sex) I wonder how they would define what sex is and if they say it is not a sexual act, then what would they call it? I'll assume that since they say what they are doing is not actually sex, then they may believe that it is some type of meaningless animalistic act of instinct and that their boyfriend/girlfriend is just a means for self-gratification. If this is the case, then they have a very deficient biblical view of the personhood of human beings who are not just a body with physical bodily function but also a soul created in the image of God and that whatever they call the act they are engaging in deeply affects their soul. Be in prayer that the Holy Spirit would be at work in their life to be receptive to his revelation that they are more than just what they do and that people are special creations of God. Hopefully, you have good relationship with the person you are wanting to persuade and can approach them with an attitude of humility and love, expressing a caring posture for their soul as a person.

60. Could you guys explain how we can lovingly and correctly talk about modesty with our Christian peers who are of the opposite sex when we see an issue with their clothing or should we leave that for the individual's parents to address? The body was created by God and before the fall there was no shame even though Adam and Eve were naked (Gen 2:25). The area of modesty is one of those "gray" areas because people have different boundaries/conviction of what modesty is (Romans 14). Instead of focusing on modesty, we need to teach both boys and girls that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and they are to glorify the Lord with their bodies (1 Cor 6:19-20) by loving and respecting their bodies. We also need to teach both boys and girls to pursue holiness and walking in step with the Spirit so that the fruit of the Spirit might be borne in them.

61. Could you discuss when one partner wants to have sex and the other doesn't in that moment?

Honest communication is a huge key. When one partner desires and initiates sexual intimacy and the other doesn't, the one who initiates will experience some rejection and may be tempted to retaliate in a number of ways (detaching emotionally, refusing physical intimacy when the other one initiates, silent treatment, etc.). Whenever there are unmet expectations, conflict arises in the relationship. The one who feels rejected must communicate how they are feeling to their spouse and listen to their spouse's reason for why they do not want to be intimate at that time. The one who feels rejected must seek the best for their spouse (Phil 2:4) and there have been times when the one who doesn't "feel" like it, will still engage in sexual intimacy as an expression of love for their spouse (1 Cor 7:1-5). Sexual intimacy should never be forced or demanded.

62. What is the biggest risk in sex before marriage for an engaged couple?

Since sex is designed by God to be within the bounds of a committed covenant relationship of marriage, premarital sex, even for engaged couples, would rob them of the gift of this goodness. Because sexual intimacy is such a powerful desire, it often become the focus of the relationship and true intimacy (relational, emotional, spiritual) is not cultivated and sexual intimacy, which was meant to bring a couple closer together, becomes a wedge that drives couples apart (even engaged ones).

63. How do we reconcile leaders in the Bible having multiple wives or sex partners? How do respond when being asked by unbelievers?

One of the things I love about the Scriptures is that it is brutally honest about human sin and brokenness. Just because we see leaders in the Bible having multiple wives/concubines does not mean that the Lord condones or approves of it. We find it in Scripture because it reveals the reality of the deceitfulness of the human heart (Jer 17:9) and the consequences when we do things our way instead of being obedient to walk in the good path God has called us to. It did not go well for these leaders as time and time again, their hearts were drawn away from worshipping the true and living God to worshipping the idols of their own heart not to mention all the relational conflicts (jealousy, anger, deception, etc) that resulted from having multiple wives/concubines. Jesus affirms the design of creation that marriage should be between one man and one woman in Matthew 19:1-9.

64. How highly should one prioritize keeping his body in shape for his spouse's pleasure?

We need to remember that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and we are to glorify God with our bodies (1 Cor 6:19-20). So, how we care for our physical body is one way to honor God and to love our spouses well. The problem is that we live in such a sexualized culture that body image can be consuming and we can idolize how we physically look by spending an inordinate amount of time/money maintaining our physical bodies. We know the body we have now will break down and age over time, and we look forward to our glorified body. This doesn't mean that we don't exercise to take care of it and live a healthy lifestyle, but the priority should be on training in godliness because it holds promise for the present life and the life to come. (1 Tim 4:8, 9)

65. Is asexuality unbiblical?

If you mean that you experience no sexual attraction to other individuals, no, I don't believe it is unbiblical. The Scriptures talk about eunuchs (Matthew 19:10-12) and even talk about it as a gift for the sake of the kingdom. Sexual intimacy points to the ultimate reality of the intimacy we will have with Christ in the new heavens and new earth which we can pursue now as we draw closer to Jesus and follow the great commission.

66. Involved in porn in the past, I realize this will always have to be on the alert to temptation there. Having confessed to my spouse, how can my spouse trust me again?

Trust, when it is lost, is always hard to regain and takes time to rebuild. Open and honest communication with your spouse will be key in times when you are tempted to run to porn to satisfy your desires. The desire to engage in porn is not always sexual. It may be that you are feeling tired and weak to fight temptation. You may be feeling disconnected emotionally with your spouse. You may be feeling unworthy or insufficient.

Discuss these feelings with your spouse and pursue the Lord together as a couple. A long, consistent, persevering step towards Christ is always the goal and will help you rebuild your spouse's trust.

67. When discipling children on the topic of sex and marriage, how do we manage not awakening too much while also preparing them for what they will encounter in the world?

A close relationship needs to be fostered with your children so that they feel safe and comfortable to come talk and ask you questions about sex and marriage. Children are being disciplined by the culture about sex and marriage at an earlier age due to technology, the internet, social media, and entertainment and awaken them to these topics. It is never too early to start discipling them in this area. Keep a watchful eye on what they are viewing on their devices and a pulse on what they and their friends are discussing. This will help you discern topics that need to be engaged. Ask the Lord to reveal to you any areas that they are involved in that involves sexual sin so that they may be found out and protected.

68. Women dressing modestly helps to reduce lust, however I'm a curvy girl so no matter how many clothes I wear I get unwanted advancements. What can curvy women do to curb this?

See the answer to question 62. This also applies to adult men and women. I appreciate your desire to dress modestly but men need to pursue holiness in what they allow their eyes to look at and walk in step with the Spirit in the area of self-control.

69. How highly should one prioritize keeping his body in shape for the sake of his spouse?

See the answer to question 66.

70. What are some practical ways that we as Christian parents can disciple, shepherd and protect our children in this casual, hook-up, pornography-soaked culture?

See the answer to question 69. There is software that can help you provide some form of protection from pornography (Covenant eyes, Canopy) but this only deals with the fruit and not the root of the issue which is the heart. Parents need to have continual conversations with their children to cast a better vision for sex and marriage than the casual hook-up culture and to disciple in all areas of their lives.

71. How is sex with your partner before marriage viewed even when both follow Christ and plan to marry?

See answer to question 64. I would also add that being a follower of Christ means loving Him and obeying his commands (John 14:15) and dying to yourself and your desires (Col 2:20).

72. What practical pressures and assaults are teenagers and young adults facing in this area?

The culture is so sexualized due to the internet, social media, entertainment, and porn that it encourages teenagers/young adult to pursue and fulfill their sexual desires by any means possible, and has proliferated the hook-up culture. Sex in these arenas is not portrayed realistically and puts pressure on them to perform and gain acceptance.

73. What might we do to help couples not married that are unwilling to repent and continue having sex outside of marriage?

1 Corinthians 5:9-13 is very clear that if someone claims to be a brother/sister in Christ but is living in willful and in unrepentant sin then church discipline must be applied (Matthew 18:15-17). This is done with love and a desire for repentance by the couple to pursue holiness and restoration of fellowship with the body of believers.

74. As a young married couple, who have only heard the negative of sex from the church and very limited conversation from parents, sex in the marriage has had roadblocks with complete intimacy. How does one overcome these walls? Then how can we do better with our future kids? This is something that a couple should not walk through alone. There are couples in the church that have healthy (not perfect) sexual intimacy in their marriages that would like to journey with couples and share biblical wisdom and their own experiences in this area. If intimacy is due to a physical issue, we have healthcare professionals that can provide medical advice and counsel you in this area.

75. What is the biggest risk in sex before marriage for an engaged couple? Same question as 64

76. How sexually adventurous should couples be in their marriage? It feels like the purpose of sex can merely be procreation and not pleasure, service, and adventure. There is a lot of freedom within the marriage to discuss what you like and don't like and what you find pleasure in. Here are some principles to guide you.

- Is there a clear prohibition in Scripture? A clear "No"? (Leviticus 18) Sexual intercourse with your neighbor's wife or animals. adultery, orgies, prostitution, homosexuality, fornication, sodomy, impurity, lustful passions, obscenity, incest.
- If not, it might be permissible but is it beneficial for us? (1 Cor 6:12). Physically, emotionally, spiritually – are we doing something that will damage us in one of these areas?
- Am I glorifying God even in my sex life? (1 Cor 6:18-20). Am I pursuing holiness in this area? Have you and your spouse prayed about this area of your marriage?
- Is it all about me, my selfishness and satisfaction, or am I looking out for the best interest of my spouse? (Phil 2:3, 4)
- If it is not from faith, it is sin (Romans 14:23). Romans 14: Conscience and Faith related to food. We will give an account of ourselves to God (12). Don't be a stumbling block for others (13). Walk in love (15).

77. How do you navigate after being married for 5+ years to keep sexual intimacy alive when things become redundant? First, start with open communication. Why are you viewing sexual intimacy as redundant? Do you both feel that way? Has the focus become physical pleasure rather than truly being intimate with your spouse? If the marriage is healthy, then both should be seeking sexual intimacy as the goal. However, sex is fun as well – communication is also vital in this area to determine if there is a mutual desire to try different things.

78. Please explain what these verses look like practically "The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife" 1 Corinthians 7:34
In marriage, the two become one flesh. Both the husband and wife should be striving to die to self and to serve each other. One does not take from the other in selfish desire, but seeks to satisfy the other. If this desire to serve each other is not present, then there are other issues in the marriage and/or a spiritual misunderstanding that would need to be addressed first before tackling this issue. This is not a command to abusive, subservient, or harmful behavior.

79. How do you navigate after being married for 5+ years to keep sexual intimacy alive when things become redundant? First, start with open communication. Why are you viewing sexual intimacy as redundant? Do you both feel that way? Has the focus become physical pleasure rather than truly being intimate with your spouse? If the marriage is healthy, then both should be seeking sexual intimacy as the goal. However, sex is fun as well – communication is also vital in this area to determine if there is a mutual desire to try different things.

- 80. Please explain what these verses look like practically, "The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife" 1 Corinthians 7:3-4** In a healthy marriage, the two become one flesh. Both the husband and wife should be striving to die to self and to serve each other. One does not take from the other in selfish desire, but seeks to satisfy the other. If this desire to serve each other is not present, then there are other issues in the marriage and/or a spiritual misunderstanding that would need to be addressed first before tackling this issue. This is definitely not a command to abusive, subservient, or harmful behavior.
- 81. Why is it hard to have a friend as a girl without having sexual thoughts?** There could be lots of reasons for this. God made us to be in relationship (community) with each other – friendship, comradery, and marriage. So, we have that innate desire. However, one should always look at their own motives and thoughts. Why are you having sexual thoughts? Do you struggle with lust how are you seeking to walk by the Spirit so you do not gratify the natural desires of the flesh. We would love to help guide in this. Please see below for how to connect with a pastor.
- 82. How should we view movies that have passionate scenes but do not show nudity? It's seems like everything nowadays have to put something suggestive in them.** We are all different people with different bends toward different sins. There are of course the common sense and clear types of situations like the ones with nudity that are clear. However, for others a few things to consider:
- Does this scene stir my affections for Jesus or does it take my eyes away.
 - Does this relationship depicted exhibit the godliness and sexual ethic God desires for his people. Consider Philippians 4:8, we are to set our minds on what is godly and right and true.
 - James tells us that temptation comes when we are enticed by the desires within us, does what you are ingesting "entice" fleshly desires if so we are to flee.
- 83. What are the concerns if an engaged couple has been intimate (and it fits everything that has been said here that God wants the act of intimacy should be, even though they didn't wait for the time He wants) before the wedding ceremony?** Christ is still the cornerstone of the relationship. The statement made about Christ still being the cornerstone of the relationship is not consistent with his desire for you to obey all the things he has commanded. I would say that if obedience to Christ is only something important when immediate consequences can't be avoided or when we understand then in essence we are making ourselves to be God. The truth of the matter is that in marriage you are asking God to bless you, to go before you, to exhibit gospel truths through you, to protect the relationship, to bring about children, and fruitfulness.... How can you faithfully do that while living in direct disobedience to what he has commanded? Psalm 66:18 "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear;" I would encourage you to cease sexual activity until you have made your committed vows to one another.
- 84. What physical boundaries should be put in place in a dating relationship?** Boundaries against sexual sin are set before situations rather than during. In other words, rather than having a physical boundary that you are going to try to maintain, try to avoid the opportunity of physical closeness from the beginning. It can be difficult to "do the right thing" in a dark room, alone on a couch, in a house/apartment by yourselves, etc. – even if you have the best intentions. Rather, the boundaries should be to avoid those situations – don't be alone together, don't be in potentially compromising situations. Do things together in public, with groups of friends, with family. Enjoy getting to know each other rather than constantly struggling with the physical temptations.
- 85. How do we interact with a world that is attacking the very foundation of man and woman? For example, do we have a responsibility to call man, man or women, women to someone who says they are not that? What can we do to fight back against the attacks on the this foundation?** (Look to Sermon August 1, Walking in Love)

- 86. How do you think we should approach birth control in general? Is that taking away God's plan for procreation? (I mean in the context of marriage only)** As with most things in marriage, communication is key. I don't believe the Bible gives clear guidance when it comes to birth control – it's not something that existed at the time. I think that there are good arguments that it could deprive couples of the blessings of children that God wishes to give. However, I don't see a clear prohibition either. I would caution that not all forms of birth control are "equal." I would caution against using birth control that prevents implantation of an already fertilized embryo rather than birth control that prevents ovulation.
- 87. As a young married couple, who have only heard the negative of sex from the church and very limited conversation from parents, sex in the marriage has had roadblocks with complete intimacy. How does one overcome these walls? Then, how can we do better with our future kids?** If you are able to overcome these obstacles on your own, then praise God! In many cases, additional help may be needed. That could involve discussions with a pastor (see below), Christian counseling, or seeking help from a medical provider, depending on what issues are encountered. There is hope! With kids, be intentional with your education and discipleship. Conversations should always be age appropriate, but there should be continued conversations.
- 88. When discipling children on the topic of sex and marriage, how do we manage not awakening too much while also preparing them for what they will encounter in the world?** In today's culture, I'm not sure that "awakening" is a concern any longer. Our children are constantly bombarded by the world, sometimes subtly, sometimes blatantly. Age-appropriate discussion is always relevant, and the sooner, the better, based on how youth are being bombarded by the culture around them. My wife and I subscribed to the idea that we coined "inoculation parenting." What that meant was that we didn't shield our kids from the sin of the world, but rather exposed (not participated) them to it (as appropriate) and used those opportunities to speak God's truth to counter the lies of the world. For instance, if we saw an inappropriate relationship on a television show, we would pause the show right then, ask the kids if they understood what was being depicted, why it was wrong, and then asking them what God's Word has to say about that behavior or situation.
- 89. Could you guys explain how we can lovingly and correctly talk about modesty with our Christian peers who are of the opposite sex when we see an issue with their clothing, or should we leave that for their parents to address?** First – for adults discipling youth - I think it depends on the relationship. If you know the parents/family, then the Christian community can have a powerful influence on discipling children. Kids don't always want to listen to counsel from their parents, but will listen to other respected adults. However, correction without any kind of prior relationship can be dangerous. In all cases, having a biblical foundation is critical. People aren't receptive to correction if they don't already have a relationship with Christ or haven't decided that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. As for instruction, questions always work well. Basically, the thought to convey is why they want to dress the way that they do. Are they seeking attention? Do they not value themselves? Why would they want to attract someone to them that is only interested in the way they look? Sometimes the use of questions will lessen the defensive response, and more importantly, may allow discussion as to the root causes of the behavior. If the question is more about how kids address behavior in other kids, then again relationship is important. Is the other truly a Christ follower? If not, you need to start there. If they are, then some of the questions posed above still hold. The message is that Christ is their identity, that Christ loves them, and their identity and value is in being an adopted child of the King.
- 90. How do you deal with depression and a lack of sex drive in a marriage?** Dealing with depression is in-and-of itself where the focus is needed. First, understand that the stigma often placed upon depression is a failure of the Church. Depression and anxiety can often times be the result of real physical conditions that need both counsel and or medication. This is NOT evidence of a lack of faith any

more than taking an aspirin is when you have a headache. So, I would encourage engaging in Biblical counsel to help address the depression first (see below for connection). There are times however that communication should be open enough that sex can still occur if one or the other partner doesn't "feel" like it. Remember sex is a body and soul connection of intimacy and is important for more than just the endorphins it fires.

- 91. How do we square the importance of sex in the relationship of marriage with either of you not engaging in it prior to saying your vows? In other words, what if you both find out that you're not as sexually compatible as you originally thought?** Sexual compatibility is guaranteed if the plumbing is all there. If sex is not fulfilling for one or both partners there are deeper issues at play. Lack of communication, unresolved hurts, lack of care for the other person in the day to day and the bedroom, physical pain that needs care, etc... When these deeper issues are addressed sex becomes the joy it was intended to be. One key phrase that has always been helpful, "Feelings don't create actions, actions create feelings."
- 92. Growing up, I was taught by the church that sex is bad... period. No one spoke about how wonderful it can be within the covenant of marriage. This has made it very difficult for my husband and I to be intimate in the marriage bed, because of the guilt I feel. How would you suggest healing from this?** The suggestion would be to talk with a pastor or counselor (see below). The issue is not Biblical but self-induced by programming of the mind. Talking this out and getting the clear Biblical tools to speak truth when the feelings come can be immensely helpful. Guilt can be a tricky thing because it is something we all have but at times can be self-inflicted instead of Spirit-convicted and when this is the case we need to grow in abiding in Christ.
- 93. If pornography has taken away the desire for intimacy with your spouse due to oversaturation (as mentioned in the sermon), how do you recover from that?** Every situation is different, but here are some thoughts. If you have already stopped viewing pornography (that of course is step one), then focus on intimacy first. Do you have time together just with your spouse without distractions? Do you still date? (You should!) What do you love about your spouse? What do you enjoy doing together? Often the physical desires follow from shared experience, from doing things together and "doing life" together. Sex is just the physical act – making love encompasses so much more. Counseling may be needed in some cases.
- 94. How to get past anxiety surrounding painful sex, and not feeling resentful towards God that you waited for marriage and then feel punished in it not being desirable/is painful?** There are many conditions that can lead to pain with intercourse. Sometimes it requires a brain "reprogramming" to move beyond thoughts that sex is bad or to move past earlier painful experiences. Sometimes counseling is needed, especially if there is prior abuse or past hurts. Sometimes the pain has a true physical cause that can only be addressed through physical therapy, medical evaluation, or even sometimes surgery. Seek a medical provider that is trained in sexual dysfunction and that will work with you to determine a course of treatment. As for feeling resentment – God created sex to be enjoyed. It isn't his desire for us to struggle in these areas. It doesn't mean that there may be difficulties, however that is true in many aspects of our walk with Christ.
- 95. As Christians, how do we navigate infidelity in a relationship before a marriage covenant has taken place? Is it okay to continue to pursue the relationship and reconciliation/forgiveness if repentance is displayed?** That really depends on your heart. God always desires reconciliation. Because we have been gifted forgiveness and grace, we should have the same for others. However, if you haven't truly forgiven the other, and are unwilling to, there could be dire consequences for the marriage. Also, use discernment – was this infidelity a one-time thing that the other is truly repentant of, or is this a warning from God that this person can't be trusted? Without knowing the spiritual maturity of both members of

the couple, it is difficult to give sound biblical advice. I would highly recommend seeking counsel from a trusted (and discerning) Christian friend or pastor to work through these thoughts. If you are already going through pre-marital counseling, this is definitely a topic that should be discussed.

Connection notes:

- To connect with a pastor or women's ministry leader please text "respond" to 316-202-9767. Fill out the form that will be sent letting us know how we can help, and we will get back with you shortly.
- To talk with a trusted Christian medical professional about sexual wellness, Dr. Melissa Hague has a Women's Sexual Wellness Clinic. Appointments can be made by calling 316-858-7100.