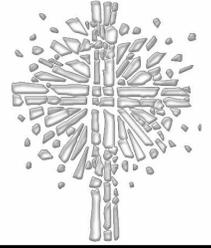




john 15:4
A B I D E in ME



Bible studies for disciples who make disciples

Loudonville Community Church

Volume 1 - Number 26
 The week of May 8, 2016

A Reasonable Faith

Telling the Truth About Sex in a Broken Culture

Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:21-25; Genesis 3:6-7a; Matthew 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Peter 2:11-12

THIS WEEK'S CORE STATEMENT

Love: We believe in the virtue of love. To love is to act in someone else's best interest no matter who they may be, no matter how you feel, and no matter what it costs.

Graham Tomlin is a British theologian, author, college president, and currently serves a bishop in the Church of England. His book entitled *The Seven Deadly Sins: And How to Overcome Them* has an entire chapter that addresses the biblical understanding of sex in the midst of our lust-filled culture. The following passages are excerpts from that chapter:

Lust is not the same as sexual desire. Of course the church has a bit of a chequered history on this, but by and large Christians have always believed that sexual desire is a good and healthy thing, given by God and to be celebrated. After all, there is a whole book of the Bible dedicated to it – the Song of Solomon, one of the most sensual and erotic love poems in world literature. If the Bible had it in for sex, it's hard to see how such a book would have gotten past the censors. . . .

Evil is not very creative. It just takes something good and twists it, distorting it into something destructive and painful. . . . Unbridled lust is deadly. If lust really takes hold of a person it will destroy everything: their mind, their closest relationships, their reputation and even their body. It can lead to broken marriages, shame, endless regret and, most destructive of all, child abuse or rape. . . .

Lust happens when sexual attraction becomes the dominant and overpowering factor in the relationship between two people. It happens when all a person can think about when they look at someone else is their body, and what it would be like to take it, possess it, conquer it. . . . Thomas Aquinas likens it to a lion who seeing a stag, thinks of nothing else but the meal it is about to enjoy: fun for the lion, but not good news for the stag. . . .

This is what lies at the heart of lust: pure selfishness. And that is its problem. Thomas Aquinas says it simply: 'We designate sexual lust self-love.' . . . Lust happens when one person treats another person as just a body and no more; as an instrument, a means to an end, not an end in themselves. Lust is bad, not because sex is 'dirty', but because sexual desire distorted in this way is deeply and cruelly self-centered. And this is also at the heart of the difference between sex and lust: with good sex, we aim first and foremost to give, and we end up receiving as well. With lust the primary motive is to get, and although there may be some temporary relief, the end result is just more frustration. . . .

Christianity celebrates sex in the context of marriage. It teaches people to guard marriage relationships with the utmost care (and hence to be careful about not developing too intimate relationships with those outside of marriage). For those who are single, Christianity promotes another wonderful expression of human sexuality: celibacy. Many think of celibacy as a negative thing – just the absence of sex. In the Bible and in Christian history, however, celibacy has always been prized as a precious and positive way of life. It leaves time and energy for all kinds of other priorities and relationships, and in particular for a special devotion to God and his wider purposes in the world (1 Corinthians 7:32-33). . . .

How then is lust overcome? The first place lust is healed is in relationship to God. It is when we come back to God and learn to see other people as God sees them that it is possible to begin to overcome lust within the heart. . . . In other words, we can put them in context and bring them to mind as full, rounded people. We might just find that

we begin to develop a richer, more complete view of them. . . . Another approach is to think ahead. . . . If we know we are going to be tempted by something that will cause us trouble, and we doubt whether we can resist, we can think ahead and put in place things that will restrain us when the time comes. . . . Some people who have started to walk the Christian path, and who have struggled with lust, ask friends to help. This can mean finding a couple of close friends of the same gender who understand where we are coming from and the path of life we are trying to lead, and giving them permission to ask us regularly about our life, what films or TV we have watched, our relationships, and so on. . . .

Lust twists relationships. It messes them up, and destroys beauty and innocence. Christian approaches to sex at first sound restrictive. In fact they liberate us to relate to each other as people, keeping sex in its rightful, wonderful place. Lust is selfish, and as such it is a cruel parody of love. Lust takes; love gives. . . . Lust is disordered desire for the good gift of sex. The Christian life is a journey on which our desires are put in balance again and brought back under control so that they enhance rather than wreck our lives and the lives of others.

It is our hope and prayer that the people of Loudonville Community Church can have frank and open discussions about love, lust, and sex; so that we can experience relationships with each other that bring honor and glory to the Creator!

This Week's Complementary Passage

I John 4:7-12 (ESV)

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

Marking Guide for Acts (not all words occur in the passage)

appointed

baptized

Caesar

enemy/demons/Satan

eternal life

fathers & children [in one color different from Moses]

Galatians

gospel

grace

Holy Spirit

in the name of Jesus Christ

Jesus

Jews

Law (of Moses)

men of the council

Moses [in different color from fathers & children]

prayer

repent (repentance)

resurrection (raised up)

salvation

suffering

the Way

the promise of the Father

witnesses

word of God ©preceptcamden.com

STEP ONE . . .

READING what the passage says
(Read it at least three times)

Genesis 1:26-27 (ESV)

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 2:21-25 (ESV)

²¹ So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Genesis 3:6-7a (ESV)

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

Matthew 19:1-12 (ESV)

¹ Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ² And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

³ And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" ⁴ He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?" ⁶ So they are no longer two but one

flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”⁷ They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?”⁸ He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.”⁹ And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

¹⁰The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”¹¹ But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.”¹² For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”

I Corinthians 5:9-13 (ESV)

⁹I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—¹⁰not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?¹³ God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

I Peter 2:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

STEP TWO . . .

OBSERVING how the passage moves

Return to the passage and **mark key words, phrases and movements:**

- Circle all of the words in these passages that speak of the Triune God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, etc.).
- Underline the significant verbs/action words in these passages.
- In Genesis 1:26, underline the sentences “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion.”
- In Genesis 1:27, underline the phrase “male and female he created them.”
- In Genesis 2:21, underline the phrases “So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man” and “took one of his ribs.”
- Highlight Genesis 2:22-25.
- Highlight Genesis 3:6.
- In Genesis 3:7, underline the sentence “Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.”
- In Matthew 19:2, underline the phrase “large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.”
- In Matthew 19:3, underline the question “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?”
- In Matthew 19:4, underline the phrase “Have you not read.”
- Highlight Matthew 19:5-6.
- In Matthew 19:7, underline the question “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?”
- Highlight Matthew 19:8-9.
- In Matthew 19:10, underline the phrase “it is better not to marry.”
- In Matthew 19:11, underline the phrase “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.”
- In Matthew 19:12, underline the phrase “Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”
- In I Corinthians 5:9, underline the phrase “not to associate with sexually immoral people.”
- In I Corinthians 5:10, underline the phrase “not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.”
- In I Corinthians 5:11, underline the phrase “not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.”
- Highlight I Corinthians 5:12-13.
- Highlight I Peter 2:11-12.

STEP THREE . . .

Ask the five “W” questions and the one “H” question:

1. **WHO** is speaking? Who is this about? Who are the main characters? And, to **whom** is it speaking?
2. **WHAT** is the subject of the passage? What does the passage say about the subject?
3. **WHEN** do or will the events occur? When did something happen to a particular person, people, or nation?
4. **WHERE** did or will this happen?
5. **WHY** is something said or mentioned? Why would or will this happen? Why at this time? Why this person?
6. **HOW** will it happen? How is it to be done? How is it illustrated?

STEP FOUR . . .

UNDERSTANDING what the passage means

This commentary is intended to enhance your own study of the text.

Commentary on Genesis 1:26-27 (ESV)

1:26 - “Let us make.” There has been much discussion over the plural “us.” Some scholars say it is “the plural of majesty,” but this grammatical form does not occur until much later in Jewish literary history; another says that it refers to the heavenly court, but this cannot imply that angels had a part in creation, or that they have the divine image. Still others assume that it is an incipient form of the concept of a Triune God. It is interesting that in the Mesopotamian accounts of creation the gods are always contending with one another but here not only is monotheism evident but even in the few plural expressions there is harmony and not capricious discontent.

“man” This is the Hebrew word “Adam,” which is an obvious play on the Hebrew term for ground, *adamah*. Only in these opening chapters of Genesis is the Hebrew term “Adam” used as a proper name. The Greek Old Testament uses the word *anthropos* to translate this term which is a generic term referring to men and/or women. The more common Hebrew term for man or husband is *ish* and *ishah* for woman or wife.

“In our image, after our likeness.” The term “image” is often used in the Old Testament to denote idols. Its basic meaning is “to hew into a certain shape.” The words “image” and “likeness” are synonyms and describe that part of humanity

that is uniquely capable of relating to God. The Incarnation of Jesus shows the potential of what humanity could have been in Adam and will be one day will be through Jesus Christ.

“Let them have dominion.” This literally means to “trample down.” This is a strong term that speaks of mankind’s dominion over nature. Although these verbs seem hard, they reflect the image of God’s reign. Mankind has dominion over the created earth because of his/her relationship to God. They were to reign/dominate as His representatives, in His character. Power is not the theological issue, but the way it is exercised (for self or for the good of others). Notice the plural, which implies mutual dominion of male and female.

1:27 - “God created.” There is a threefold use of the Hebrew term *bara* in this verse, which functions as a summary statement as well as an emphasis on God’s creation of humanity as male and female. The term *bara* is only used in the Old Testament for God’s creating.

“In his own image.” It is extremely interesting that the plural of verse 26 is now a singular in verse 27. This encompasses the mystery of the plurality, yet the unity, of God. God’s image is equal in men and women!

“Male and female he created them.” The sexual component of human beings relates to the needs and environment of this planet. God continues to separate throughout the creation narrative. Notice also the mutuality here. Humanity’s divine image allows us to uniquely relate to God.

Commentary on Genesis 2:21-25 (ESV)

2:21 - This verse reinforces the unique relationship between man and woman, Adam and Eve. The Hebrew word for “rib” is translated elsewhere as “side.” R. K. Harrison asserts that the Hebrew term for “rib” here means “an aspect of the personality” which would form an analogy with Adam made in the image and likeness of God to also include aspects of personality.

2:22 - **“Brought her to the man.”** Jewish rabbis say that God acted as best man.

2:23 - This verse uses poetry and wordplay in Hebrew to describe the beauty of this scene.

2:24 - **“Leave his father and his mother.”** The importance of the family causes the comment to be read back into this early account. Moses is reflecting on his own day and the importance of the family unit in an extended family living situation. Marriage takes precedence over in-laws!

“Hold fast to his wife.” This is a Hebrew saying which points to the loyalty and intimacy that exists between a husband and wife.

“They shall become one flesh.” This shows the complete union and priority relationship of married couples. The singular form of “one” speaks of the joining of the two persons.

2:25 - **“the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”** The implication of the phrase is that Adam had nothing to hide from himself, his spouse, or his God. Therefore it is an expression of innocence. Things will soon change! The fact that the man and woman were naked implies a very controlled environment.

Commentary on Genesis 3:6-7a (ESV)

3:6 - **“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise.”** Here we see the threefold development from the temptation to the actual act of sin. The Jewish rabbis say that the eyes and ears are windows of the soul and what we let in grows in our heart until the fateful act is committed.

“She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” There has been much speculation about this verse. Jewish rabbis assert that Adam ate so that he would not be separated from his wife. However, it seems from the context, that Eve acted toward Adam as the serpent had toward her, along with the experiential evidence that she had already eaten and was not dead. Some rabbis even assert that the serpent used this same technique with Eve; that he forced her to touch the fruit and said, “See, you did not die.” Possibly she told Adam, “See, I’m not dead.”

3:7a - **“They knew that they were naked.”** This has been used by many commentators to assert a sexual nature to the

temptation, but this seems to be reading biases into the text. Their new knowledge was not the blessing it was cracked up to be.

Commentary on Matthew 19:1-12 (ESV)

19:1 - **“He went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.”** This period of Jesus’ ministry is often called His Perea ministry. It covered chapters 19 - 20. Many Jews would not pass through Samaria but would cross over the Jordan River to the area of Perea, then south toward Jerusalem and cross back over the Jordan at Jericho into Judea. This was because of their hatred of Samaritans. They believed them to be half Jews, half pagans.

19:2 - **“Large crowds followed him.”** These were possibly pilgrims going to Jerusalem, but they could also be persons looking for healing or curiosity seekers.

“And he healed them there.” Jesus’ healings were intended to confirm His message, to help show the future bliss of heaven, and the heart of God. He did not come primarily to heal, but to teach; however, whenever He saw people hurting from the ravages of sin, He acted; and He still does!

19:3 - **“Tested him.”** This term had a negative connotation of “testing with a view toward destruction.” This was not a theological discussion in a neutral setting!

“Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” Here the question concerned the grounds for divorce. The conservative rabbinical school picked up on “some indecency” from Deuteronomy 24:1, while the liberal rabbinical school picked up on “she finds no favor.” So the first school said the grounds were only for adultery or some other forbidden sexual act; the second said for any cause. Rabbi Akiba even said that one could divorce his wife if he found someone prettier!

19:4 - **“From the beginning.”** This quote is from Genesis 1:27 and 5:2. Marriage was God’s idea and it was to be monogamous and permanent.

19:5 - **“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother.”** This is a quote from Genesis 2:24. Notice both parents are mentioned but also the radical break with one’s nuclear family that marriage demanded. In the ancient world families lived with multiple generations in one house. The priority and independence of each generation is affirmed.

“The two shall become one flesh.” This is the plural form of the Hebrew numeral “one.” In this verse the possibility of plurality is shown in the form of this Hebrew word. Love merges individuals!

19:6 - **“What therefore God has joined together.”** This verb expresses completed action. By stating “what,” not “who,” the institution of marriage was emphasized. The term “joined together” meant “yoked together.”

19:7 - **“Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?”** This is from Deuteronomy 24:1 and following. Jesus said that Moses did it *not* because God wanted it, but because of the hardness of the peoples’ hearts. Moses had compassion for the wife’s societal plight. This certificate required several days, required legal help,

may have required return of the dowry, and implied remarriage.

19:9 - “Except for sexual immorality.” The Greek term is “*porneia*,” which comes into English as “pornography.” This could have referred to fornication, adultery or other inappropriate sexual acts such as bestiality and homosexuality.

“And marries another.” Only Jewish men had the right of divorce during this period of time. In Mark and Luke, who were writing to a Gentile audience, women are also addressed.

“Commits adultery.” This is a present passive verb form. The translation could be “causes her to become an adulteress.” This may possibly refer to the social stigma which was put on the divorced woman by her Jewish culture, which designated her as an adulteress by the fact that she was put away.

19:10 - Jesus’ statement shocked them. They had the views of their culture ingrained in their minds. So do we! Marriage is God’s will for man. It is a great blessing but also a great responsibility. In days of frequent divorces the witness of a strong, godly marriage is very powerful to a lost world.

19:11-12 - Marriage is the norm but celibacy is also a godly option. A believer’s prayerful desires will guide him/her in this area. If one chooses to be single, it should be for service to God.

Commentary on I Corinthians 5:9-13 (ESV)

5:9 - “I wrote to you in my letter.” This probably refers to a lost letter. It is possible that several of Paul’s letters have been lost, or it could refer to I Corinthians, which he was currently writing.

“Sexually immoral people.” This is the Greek adjective, *pornos*. It relates to the noun “immorality” and the verb “commit immorality.” These new believers at Corinth were mostly Gentiles (probably Romans). Pagans worshiped with drunkenness and sexual acts at the temples of their gods and at special public and private dinners. Their new faith in Christ was still tainted with their Gentile past and culture.

5:10 - Paul’s letter had been misunderstood. Paul urged the new believers to flee immorality. However, some interpreted this as “never associate with.” Paul had to clarify his meaning. Believers live in a fallen world; it is impossible not to come in contact with immoral people. What Paul meant was do not let active pagans be your covenant brother, fellow church members or even best friend. This Greek term literally means “to mix together.” Verses 10 - 11 provide a clear picture of the cultural setting of the church at Corinth.

5:11 - “Anyone who bears the name of brother.” It refers to someone claiming the name of Christ or calling on the name of Christ. Taking Christ’s name meant taking His character. It is very clear that Paul believed that one’s lifestyle revealed one’s true self. Profession must be matched with knowledge of the gospel, the indwelling Spirit, personal obedience, and perseverance.

“Not even to eat with such a one.” This may refer to the Lord’s Supper, but could refer to normal social contact. In Roman culture dinners were often opportunities for immorality.

5:12 - Paul and the church must deal with members, but believers must allow God to deal with non-members. Believers must not judge one another, but we must examine each other’s fruits for leadership positions and we must exercise church discipline when the reputation of the church is at risk. This is often a fine line! God’s Spirit, God’s will, and God’s Book help us as believers find our way in this fallen world, but unbelievers are exploited and manipulated by sin, self, and Satan. They need our witness and compassion, not our judgmental self-righteousness. They are not capable of understanding our motives, purposes, and action.

5:13 - Paul clinched his argument from the Jewish point of view by alluding to the writings of Moses, specifically Deuteronomy. If the church glories in, or even tolerates, immoral members they will affect the whole church.

Commentary on I Peter 2:11-12 (ESV)

2:11 - “Sojourners.” This Old Testament status speaks of non-residents with limited rights living in a place that is not their home, like Abraham.

“Exiles.” This term implies a short stay. This alludes to the fact that believers are citizens of a heavenly realm, not this physical world.

“To abstain.” This is literally “continue to hold yourself back from.” Believers continue to struggle with sin and temptation. The battle with evil does not cease at salvation. In many ways it intensifies. When one believes in and receives Christ he/she is indwelt by the Spirit and given the divine nature. However, this does not mean that the old sin nature is removed. It is made inoperative by Christ’s finished work on our behalf. Jewish rabbis say that in every human’s heart is a black and a white dog. The one you feed the most becomes the biggest. Believers face the continuing choice of seeking the good, dwelling on righteousness, walking in light, or reactivating the old sin nature! Believers are citizens of two realms; which one exerts the most influence in our lives is up to us!

“From the passions of the flesh.” The body itself is not evil, but it is the battleground of self-centered and Satanic temptations.

2:12 - “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable.” Unbelievers are watching! How believers live and react to the common struggles of life are loud witnesses to all who know them.

“When they speak against you as evildoers.” The early Christians were accused of cannibalism (because of the Lord’s Supper terminology), incest (because they loved each other), atheism (because their God was invisible), treason (because they would not serve in the army or pledge allegiance to Caesar), and immorality (possibly the holy kiss). This slander seems to have developed in the pro-Emperor eastern provinces of Asia Minor.

“They may see your good deeds and glorify God.” How we live as Christians reflects the God we claim to know and serve. God’s glory is our highest calling and evangelistic mandate.

“On the day of visitation.” This refers to any time that God draws near, either for blessing or for judgment. Some see this as relating to believers on trial, but in context it seems to refer to any opportunity for the unsaved to hear and respond to Jesus as Savior before they face Him as Judge.

Resource for Commentary: Robert James Uteley’s *Study Guide Commentary Series* from Logos software.

STEP FIVE . . .

SUMMARIZING the message

The Bible and Christianity are routinely criticized for having an outdated posture towards human sexuality. The church also fails to talk about sexuality in a healthy and appropriate way. We face at least two challenges today. First, our entire culture is over-sexualized. Secondly, the Bible’s teaching about sexuality is often misunderstood. The result of these two challenges is that we keep getting a lot of things wrong. Therefore, one of our greatest needs is to present a theology of human sexuality.

God Created Human Sexuality.

We begin in Genesis 1 where it is stated, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). In this single verse, three important statements are made. First, we are personally created by God. The second statement is that we are made in the image of God. We aren’t just made but actually stamped with His image. Theologians have long discussed what it means to be made in God’s image. Certainly, at the heart of what this means is the fact that we have been created with the ability to respond and relate to God. We are not just flesh and blood but soul and spirit. The third statement is that we are created male and female. When God created humanity, He intentionally created a duality. He deliberately made a man and a woman. In other words, sexuality is more than what we do, it is who we are.

Sexuality is a God-Given Good

Since God is the author of human sexuality then sex itself was part of His design for our lives. Genesis 2:18-25 states, “Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” 19 Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.”

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”

Adam and Eve are brought together and bound in a one-flesh union that is physical and sexual. The last verse in that paragraph (v. 25) is very important to understand. Under God’s design, sexuality is not something ignoble or wrong. It is a gift.

The Joy of Intimacy

God said that it was not good for man to be alone. Therefore, He made a helper suitable for Adam. After God made the woman, he brought her to him. Genesis 2:24 says, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” Our human sexuality fills that relational vacuum. A man needs a woman and a woman needs a man. Proverbs states,

18 Let your fountain be blessed,
and rejoice in the wife of your youth,
19 a lovely deer, a graceful doe.
Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight;
be intoxicated always in her love.
(Proverbs 5:18-19).

The Mission of Procreation

God also made the duality of male and female for the mission of multiplication (cf. Genesis 1:28). This is the basis for family life. God provided the companion and mission in marriage.

The Fall

Genesis 3 is one of the most important chapters in the Bible. It records the lies of the serpent, the nature of temptation, and the fall of humanity from God’s created design. From the outset, God gave humanity the freedom to make choices. In the center

of the Garden of Eden, He planted a forbidden tree. Adam and Eve, however, chose to eat what was forbidden. The impact of that decision shook all of creation. It radically altered God's original design for how the world would operate and how life would be lived out. We could have had life in intimacy with God, living in a world under His leadership and protection. Instead, we chose to be separated from God and to live outside of His direction. The result was catastrophic. Like a wildfire, the disorder that spread from person to person caused all hell to break loose.

Theologians refer to this as the "fall." Our world is not the way God intended it to be. The purity of human sexuality has been lost. The sexual consequences associated with the fall have been enormous: self-focus, shame, confusion, and objectification. None of these problems existed before the fall. But after the fall, even the beauty of childbirth is marred by pain. Human sexuality has grown increasingly twisted, warped and distorted. For example, sex outside of marriage trivializes and eventually destroys the emotional union marriage was intended to provide. No other human activity has the same power as sexual intimacy. It is ultimate emotional unity. Because of that, it needs the boundaries of marriage to protect it from wounding us deeply. Outside of marriage, sex does severe damage to the soul. It is for that reason that God placed boundaries around intimacy, showing within marriage what it is meant to be. When sex is divorced from marriage, it stops being wonderful.

Sin in any form is a direct offense against God and that includes sexual sin. God created us. We are spiritual beings. Part of our creation is our sexuality. But when we misuse our bodies through sexual behavior, it tears away at our soul and drives God away.

Our life with God is a relationship. When we reject His commands, His principles, His prescription for life, we reject Him. Sex is a wonderful thing. The Bible isn't against human sexuality. It just wants to protect human sexuality. It's not that sex outside of marriage is bad and after marriage sex is good. Sexuality is good. But taking it out of its God-given place is bad.

STEP SIX . . .

EXPLORING the passage through discussion

1. In your opinion, what is the church's biggest challenge regarding the biblical message about human sexuality?
2. What beliefs about sex are regularly being promoted on TV and movies? How does Satan use the different mediums to propagate his lies?
3. What does it mean that Adam and Eve were naked and not ashamed? (cf. Genesis 2:25).
4. What does it mean to be a "one flesh" union (cf. Genesis 2:24). What can we learn about God's view of sexuality from this verse?
5. How did falling for Satan's deception affect Adam and Eve's relationship with one another? With God?
6. Read 1 Peter 2:11-12. Why does God desire that we enjoy sexual intimacy only within the boundaries of marriage?
7. Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-13. In his message on Sunday Pastor Paul stated, "We are not directed to demand that secular culture reflect biblical principles. We have been called to reflect biblical principles to a secular culture that points to the gospel." Do you agree or disagree?

This Week's Memory Verse

¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

I Peter 2:12 (ESV)

THE MISSION OF LOUDONVILLE COMMUNITY CHURCH

We are committed to reaching and teaching people to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ, connecting them to one another and sending them to serve their families, communities and world.

10 CORE BELIEFS OF A DISCIPLE

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

The Godhead *2 Corinthians 13:14*

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Deity and Sinlessness of Christ *Colossians 2:9*

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life.

The Sufficient Atonement of Christ *2 Corinthians 5:19-21*

We believe in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood.

The Resurrection and Return of Christ *Acts 1:3, 9-11*

We believe in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential and that a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit *John 14:16*

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

Unity in Christ *Ephesians 2:14-17*

We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eternity *Revelation 21:22-27*

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

We believe that everything we have or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES OF A DISCIPLE

Undiluted Worship *Matthew 22:37-40*

Loving the Lord God with all of our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual vigor and, my neighbor as myself.

Constant Abiding *John 15:1-11*

Abiding in Christ in order to be faithful and bear fruit.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

Reading the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for daily life.

Desperate Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

Praying to God to know Him, laying requests before Him and, finding direction for daily life.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

Fellowshipping with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, other people's lives and, in the world.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

Using my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Total Forgiveness *Ephesians 4:30*

Practicing forgiving others as God has forgiven me in Christ.

Tangible Compassion *Matthew 25:31-46*

Showing compassion to those in need and so minister to Jesus Himself.

Generous Giving *2 Corinthians 8:7*

Giving away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

God Space *Ephesians 6:19-20*

Increasing the quantity and quality of our gospel conversations.

10 CORE VIRTUES OF A DISCIPLE

Love - a sincere affection for others *1 John 4:10-12*

Love is acting in someone else's interest no matter who they may be, no matter how you feel, and no matter what it costs.

Joy - a delight unaffected by circumstances *John 15:11*

An inner delight in God that is sustained in spite of the changing seasons of life.

Peace - an abiding sense of harmony *Philippians 4:6-7*

Relationships are free from friction. Positively, it describes harmonious relations with others in the church.

Patience - a willingness to stick with things *Proverbs 3:3-4*

Being willing to live with a difficult situation for a long time—even if things are slow to change or never change.

Kindness - a sense of compassion in the heart *Job 6:14*

An inner disposition that puts others at ease and out of which kind actions flow.

Goodness - a goodness that flows outwardly *1 Thess. 5:15*

Choosing to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Faithfulness - an unwavering loyalty *Psalm 26:3*

Being the kind of people who keep our word to one another.

Gentleness/Humility - an attitude of humility without any entitlement; a lack of self-awareness *Philippians 4:5; 2:3-4*

Gentleness is power and strength under God's control.

Humility is considering others above myself, if I consider myself at all.

Self-Control - an ability to direct your energy wisely

Titus 2:11-13

The strength to restrain our desires, emotions, and actions has to come from within rather than from some outside source.

Hope - a certainty of what is to come *Hebrews 6:19-20*

Coping with the hardships of life and with death because of hope in Christ.

Each week this Bible Study will feature either a core belief, practice or virtue vital for growing disciples.

OT in 52
(52 weeks through the Old Testament)

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE READING IN A YEAR

Monday, May 9 thru Saturday, May 14
2 Samuel 10-12, 13-14, 15-17, 18-19, 20-21, 22-23

Loudonville Community Church
374 Loudon Road, Loudonville, NY 12211

www.lcchurch.org