

The SEX & GENDER Conversation

God, Sexuality, Gender & LGBTQ+

Alexander F Venter
alexanderventer.com

FORMAT AND RESOURCES

Six teaching sessions... with time for Q & A

Available: 1. Copy of my power point slides

2. **Glossary of terms** – The explosion of terms & meanings can be bewildering & controversial, **BUT** we must know **what** we mean when we speak... and **how** we say it (sensitive ‘correctness’)

3. **List of recommended reading/books...**

Richard Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh – Sexuality in the Old Testament*

William Loader, *The New Testament on Sexuality*

F. Ferder & J. Heagle, *Your Sexual Self – Pathway to Authentic Intimacy*

Mark Yarhouse, *Understanding Gender Dysphoria*

SEXUALITY COURSE OVERVIEW

Talk 1. INTRO: Approach, Definitions, Sexual Ethics

Talk 2. Jesus' Sexual Ethics & Creation Design

Talk 3. Sexual Redemption, Healing & Formation

Talk 4. Intro to LGBTIQ+ and Cultural Context

Talk 5. LGBTQ+ and The Bible: Hermeneutics

Talk 6. LGBTQ+ and The Church: Pastoral Practice

HUMAN SEXUALITY:

God, Sexuality, Gender & Family

Talk 1. Intro to Healthy Sexuality

Assumptions & Approach
Definitions & Sexual Ethics

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ORIENTATION & DISCLAIMERS

- Thank you! A **Big subject**... sensitive, emotive, complex, controversial
- Though **personal**, it affects roots of **society AND politics** – of human relationships, abuse, ‘identity politics’, ideological and culture wars
- **Human sexuality** is essentially about **relationality**, not to be reduced to **my** personal feelings, **my** identity & fulfilment = current ideology
- I am a fellow traveler, **wounded healer**: confessions of a pastor via ‘lenses’ of male, white, South African, husband, father, Christ-follower
- Thus, importance of **STORY** and story-telling: **my** story... **your** story... **our** story (church and society)... and **GOD’S story (our focus)**... that redeems, interprets, gives meaning & purpose to our stories

ORIENTATION & ETHICS

- **Sex, Sexuality & Gender** – ‘Being Human’ – **THE** issue of our day?
- It’s essentially about personal, and social, and political... **ETHICS**...
The ‘**framing**’ of our theme – *how I approach and teach this course*
- **Ethics** is about **morality** – moral knowledge – and the loss thereof.
Dallas Willard’s book, *The Loss of Moral Knowledge*
- More specifically, **ethics/morality** is about...
 - 1) **Knowing** what is **right & wrong**, how to distinguish **good from evil**;
 - 2) **The basis** on which we do that – **knowledge and truth** – and...
 - 3) **The character** to do what is good & right, overcoming wrong & evil

ETHICS, KNOWLEDGE & TRUTH

- Hebrews 5:12-14, “Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the *elementary truths of God’s word* all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with *the teaching about righteousness*. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have *trained themselves* to *distinguish good from evil*”
- “**Truths of God’s word**”: the basis of knowing, distinguishing, choosing; The **tree of life**... or... **tree of the knowledge of good & evil** (Gen 3)... *Humanism* that deceives & darkens? Trust/obey *God’s revealed truth*?
- E.g., **the eye** can see, but NOT by itself: it needs light from the outside

ETHICS, KNOWLEDGE & TRUTH

- **Integrated approach to knowledge & truth:** *“All that is in the Bible is true (what the Bible teaches is true) but not all truth is in the Bible”*
- **Raises issues of:** 1) **Worldview**: Modern, Postmodern, or Biblical?
Our view of reality, of knowledge, of human nature, the sciences, etc
- 2) **Scripture**: a) what ***authority*** do we give the Bible?
b) how we ***interpret*** it? *‘Hermeneutics’*... literalist?
Or liberal-cultural? Or historic-orthodox (evangelical)?
- 3) **Theological Ethics**: the ***three steps*** of ethical inquiry & evaluation...
political, economic, social, ecological, sexual, medical, etc.

THE ‘BATTLEGROUND’ OF GENDER THEORY

- The postmodern cultural/ideological battle regarding human nature and sexuality is “**Gender Theory**”, which can be stated as follows:

“**Gender theory** denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman, and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family.

This **ideology** leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. ***Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time***”.

Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*,
19 March 2016, p.56.

WHAT WE LOOK AT - THE AGENDA

1. **Defining** sex... sexuality... psychosexual... gender...
2. **Biblical anthropology:** the nature of human personhood
3. **Biblical interpretation:** Jesus and Paul's hermeneutic on sexuality
4. **Three steps of Sexual ethics** for human sexuality, but also...
5. **LGBTQ+:** The cultural ideological context, the Biblical hermeneutics, and church practice engaging and pastoring the LGBTQ+ community
6. **But... pastoring and healing** human sexuality in general
 - **Brief intros...** our focus is on **Biblical vision & teaching, and LGBTQ+**

1. DEFINING HUMAN SEXUALITY

- **Sexuality**: more than **sex**; it's the way we experience our '**body-self**' as **male and female** in our living and relating to others... **THREE** key ideas:
 - **Embodiment**: male & female (nature) > masculine & feminine (nurture)
 - **Love**: the need/desire for love – about **love or lust** – in the hunger for **relationships...** as in authentic intimacy, closeness, bonding
 - **Energy**: the fire/passion of love, “the very **flame of Yahweh**”, S of S 8:6, experienced in the whole of who we are, in every atom, till our love is perfected in resurrection bodies saturated with Spirit (Luke 20:34-36)
- **Psychosexuality**: the whole of us as male/female sexual beings in self-sensing masculinity and femininity: **gender identity (formation & role)**

1. DEFINING SEX AND GENDER

BIOLOGICAL SEX	MALE	FEMALE
GENDER IDENTITY	MAN	WOMAN
GENDER ROLE	MASCULINE	FEMININE

EXCEPTIONS TO THE BINARIES – ‘Bimodal’ realities

Biological sex	Male	< Intersex >	Female
Gender identity	Man	< Androgyne >	Woman
Gender role	Masculine	< Outside cultural norms >	Feminine

2. BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGY - HUMAN NATURE

- The **nature** (sex/sexuality) and **nurture** (gender) debate, with the new Gnostic separation of sex (biological) and gender (psycho-social)
- Biblical anthropology is not just **nature** (body, sex) and **nurture** (soul, psycho-socialization)... but also **character** (spirit, will, choice, beliefs)
- **E.g. in psychology:** temperament versus personality versus character
- **Being & becoming** is the dynamic interaction of biological determining AND psycho-social forming, **effected by our responsive choices/beliefs**.
I.e. not only biologically determined, nor victims of psycho-socialization
- **Challenge** of intersex, androgyne, gender confusion/dysphoria/fluidity

3. HERMENEUTICS: BIBLICAL OR CULTURAL?

- **Who/what is our authority?** Science? Culture? The Bible?
- Christians follow **Jesus**, and then **Paul**, in their hermeneutics:
Jesus (in Matthew 19:1-8) and **Paul** (in Romans 1:21-32) both **work from God's creation design and purpose as their interpretative key**
- **Biblical/Hebrew sexual ethics** works **from creation** (Genesis 1 - 3)...
To the **10 commandments** (Deuteronomy 5, esp. v.18, "***porneia***")...
To the **Holiness Code** (Leviticus 17-26, esp 18 & 20)... AND BACK AGAIN
- Rabbis say that Genesis 1 to 3, the creation story, is **God's foundation-revelation**, and the rest of scripture is but commentary

4. THE THREE STEPS OF SEXUAL ETHICS

- **REMINDER**: **ETHICS** is about **moral choices/behaviour...**
AND the **ideas, beliefs**, feelings, pressures, etc, behind those choices...
AND compassionately accepts/works with **non-moral sexual issues** like intersex, orientation, dysphoria (medically diagnosed, multidisciplinary approach). *Our choices on how to respond, live out, **becomes moral**.*
- 1) ***What is the situation*** (re human sexuality)? **Analysis & research**
- 2) ***What ought to be?*** **God's vision/design** for healthy human sexuality
- 3) ***How can we become?*** **Salvation**: sexual healing & ethical formation
Pastoring the practice of human sexuality... including LGBTIQ+ folk

4. SEX ETHICS Step 1: What is the situation?

Brief historical perspective:

- **‘Original’ sexuality as sacred** – all cultures honored the institution of “marriage” between a (biological) man and a (biological) woman
- BUT **sex outside marriage became the norm** – adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, incest, etc (see David Greenburg’s history of sex)
- Ancient Near East societies (ANE’s) **‘spiritualized’ sex**: idolatry, the gods
- In the ANE context, **Hebrew monotheism & creation story, with its sexual ethic** (sex only for marriage, NO ‘*porneias*’), **was revolutionary**.
The Holiness code listed the sexual sins (Leviticus 18 & 20)

4. SEX ETHICS Step 1: What is the situation?

Some key characteristics of current human sexuality:

- **Lost:** with no (moral) values or absolutes – subjective/cultural morality
- **Broken sexuality:** The Fall, broken creation (biology & gender), and sin
- **Sexual separation:** of sex & gender, of sexuality & social accountability as in pre-marital sex, recreational sex, adultery... every imaginable form
- **Technological formation** & functionality: loss of community/intimacy
- **Genitalization/objectification** – idolatry of pleasure (e.g. pornography)
- **Predatory:** power use > abuse > violence (GBV, gender-based violence)