

HUMAN SEXUALITY COURSE:

God, Sexuality, Gender & LGBTQ+

Talk 5. Sexual Dimensions & Developmental Stages

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OVERVIEW OF WHAT WE COVER

- The Six Dimensions of Sexuality & Gender
- Four Stages of Psycho-Sexual development (being human)
- Sexual wholeness/maturity – some key characteristics
- Main source:
Fran Ferder & John Heagle, *Your Sexual Self – Pathway to Authentic Intimacy*

SIX DIMENSIONS OF SEXUALITY & GENDER

The goal = creation design = **integration to sexual wholeness/intimacy**

NB: Things can 'go wrong' in any or all dimensions of human sexuality

1. **Physical**: Biological, genetic, hormonal factors that influence sexual awareness & responses in all stages of development & life seasons
2. **Cognitive**: Accurate & adequate age-appropriate sexual knowledge, re positive perception of our bodies, and reverence for self & others
3. **Emotional**: Being 'at home' in our body – aware & comfortable with our sexual feelings, having healthy respectful feelings toward other

SIX DIMENSIONS OF SEXUALITY & GENDER

4. **Social**: Relating in healthy unselfconscious ways, with an ability to self-disclose, and sustain friendships and psycho-emotional intimacy
5. **Moral**: The values, attitudes & actions needed for ongoing sexual integration, to express our sexuality in faithful, healthy, and other-enriching ways – behaviours in keeping with God's creation design
6. **Spiritual**: Affirming the presence of God and 'the sacred' in our sexual feelings & expressions; recognizing that our **sexuality and spirituality** are **not** enemies (guilt), but friends ('meet' in our core)

The six dimensions are present in all Stages of Sexual Development

4 STAGES OF PSYCHO-SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

First an introduction and overview of the four stages:

1. Prenatal, 2. Childhood, 3. Adolescence, 4. Adulthood

They are **linear**... AND also **circling back**... from ***awakening*** > to ***exploring*** > to ***relating***... > to *awakening* > *exploring* > *relating*...

Broken creation/wounding/choices (can) happen in each/any stage...

Can **arrest/fixate** growth & development in sexual & gender formation

Stages 2 to 4 each have three phases in sexual development

- **Stage 1: Prenatal** sexual development

Psalm 139:13-14, **Mystery of Creation**

“You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made... your eyes saw my unformed body... woven together in the depths...”

- Unaware body exploration and rhythmic sexual responding
- Prenatal influences and adult sexual behaviour? Nature/nurture?

- **Stage 2: Childhood** sexual development

Phase 1: *Birth to Toddler* – Sexual Unawareness

Phase 2: *Toddler to Early Preschool* – Sexual Awakening

Phase 3: *Preschool to Puberty* – Psychosexual Socialization

- **Stage 3: Adolescent** sexual development
 - Phase 1: *Puberty to Early Teens* – Sexual Fantasizing
 - Phase 2: *Mid Teens* – Sexual Preoccupation
 - Phase 3: *Late Teens to Early Adulthood* – Relational Exploring
- **Stage 4: Adulthood** sexual development
 - Phase 1: *Early Adulthood* – Psycho-Sexual Mutuality
 - Phase 2: *Mid Adulthood* – Ongoing Integration
 - Phase 3: *Mature Adulthood* – Psycho-Sexual Maturity
- Leads to the **qualities/marks of sexual maturity/wholeness**

STAGE 2 PSYCHO-SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

2. CHILDHOOD: Luke 18:15-16, Sacred Touch

“People were bringing even infants to him **that he might touch them** (*hapto*, touch by holding). When the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. **BUT Jesus** called for them and said, *“Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.”*

Phase 1, Birth to Toddler: Sexual Unawareness

- First **sexual** identity (“It’s a girl/boy”), then **personal** identity (naming).
- Unaware sexual experiencing > body sensations & growing cognitive awareness > of mom & dad > *begin **gender** differentiation & identity*

STAGE 2 PSYCHO-SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

CHILDHOOD: *Phase 2, Todler to Early Preschool:* Sexual Awakening

Early self-pleasuring > normal childhood sex play > body & psychic consciousness & boundaries > trusting affirming touch of caregivers > body acceptance & comfort > *language acquisition & **gender** identity*

Phase 3, Preschool to Puberty: Psychosexual Socialisation

Bondedness with caregivers (esp. mom & dad) & early socialisation > self as separate person > healthy self-awareness in nakedness/'private parts' (no guilt) > search for connection & hormones > socio-sexual play as rehearsal for adult love (essential conditions for such) > "Do not hinder them" (shaming, rejecting) > "let them come to me" (grow).

STAGE 3 PSYCHO-SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

3. ADOLESCENCE: Luke 2:40 & 52 **Growth into Adulthood**

“Jesus grew in wisdom, in stature, in grace and favour with God & others”

Phase 1, Puberty & Early Teens: **Sexual Fantasizing**

Hormonal & body changes > natural imagination > rehearsal for love relationships > sexual feelings attached to persons > search for *self-autonomy in their gender identity* > fantasy & morality (sexual character)

Lust is a sin, not because it is sexual, but because it is fantasy-driven use/abuse of others for our pleasure/purposes – makes people ‘objects’.

Love is the sexual energy (relational passion) that promotes the good of others in celebrating their beauty/uniqueness as God’s very image.

STAGE 3 PSYCHO-SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

ADOLESCENCE: Luke 2:40 & 52 **Growth into Adulthood**

Phase 2, Mid Teens: Sexual Preoccupation

“Hormones on feet” > Sexual fantasy & pleasuring develops > pre-occupation of self & peers > social/cultural pressure > *settling identity*

Phase 3, Late Teens to Early Adulthood: Relational Exploration

Infatuation/romantic relationships > still self-preoccupation (‘normal’ narcissism) > need for healthy group interaction/friendships > falling in love > the levels of physical-sexual engagement (sexual character again)

STAGE 4 PSYCHO-SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

4. ADULTHOOD: Romans 8:19 **Coming into our own**

“The **whole of creation** waits with eager longing to see the revealing of the sons and daughters of God”

Phase 1, Early Adulthood: **Psycho-Sexual Mutuality**

Sexuality is the fiery gift of (God's) love in relationships > the movement from self-preoccupation to mutuality > psycho-emotional intimacy ('social sexuality') > **not** driven by physical intimacy ('genital sexuality')

Growth in accurate self-knowledge > interpersonal sensitivity/empathy > trust & self-disclosure > spontaneity > equality & mutuality.

STAGE 4 PSYCHO-SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

ADULTHOOD: Romans 8:19 **Coming into our own**

Phase 2, Mid Adulthood: **Ongoing Integration**

The unfinished business of psycho-sexual development is the ongoing journey of healing wounds/damage AND integrating body, soul and spirit (six dimensions of human sexuality) into one whole person

Phase 3, Mature (senior) Adulthood: **Psycho-Sexual Maturity**

Deepening personal awareness & accurate self-knowledge > fully home in our body > marked by compassion & wisdom > transcending genital sexuality in pure love (the age to come) > truly generative (life-giving)

QUALITIES OF HEALTHY PSYCHOSEXUALITY

- **Practice of chastity**, including celibacy for singles, for wholeness
- **Healthy self & others awareness & respect**: accurate self-knowledge & containment of sacred 'embodied self'... and others (trustworthy)...
- **Upholding boundaries**: of/for (sexual) integrity in the way we relate
- **Responsible freedom**: moral-value-led spontaneity in relationships
- **Developing creativity**: converging self-awareness, energy & freedom
- **Capacity for authentic intimacy**: ability to relate & love as God does.
With genital sexuality IN marriage **AND** healthy psycho-social intimacy in all other relationships – warm, gentle, wise, & **generative**