

Identity: Bible basics

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[0 : 00] There are norms that are floating around, the ideas that are floating around, things that people think are normal, things that think abnormal. So we're swept up in our culture and! no doubt the ideas of our culture have expression and origin perhaps in various philosophers that we've perhaps never even heard of, but the ideas are there. So we want to try and, if we can, isolate what the arguments and ideas are in our national culture and legislation. And in many ways, when it comes to ideas, we often find ourselves wanting to know how do we oppose these ideas? How do we show that they're wrong? In many cases, obviously not in every case. Second area would be workplace pressures and issues. So not all of us are in a workplace, but some of us are, and we will have equalities policies, diversity policies, things that we're expected to do or things that are not expected, things that are frowned on. So there, it's not so much how do we oppose this, but how do we navigate it? So there's some things we want to oppose, some things we need to navigate. What are we entitled to do? What are we not entitled to do? What's good practice? What isn't? Where should we draw a line? So navigating. And then thirdly, the issues I think we'll come across in terms of perhaps our own families, family members, friends, acquaintances, neighbours.

And there, we're not so much trying to just oppose, and we're not, there isn't anything particularly to navigate, but we want to win people. So there's a, I think there's a difference between opposing ideas, navigating policies, and winning people. So I think we'll just take that into account. And then again, as we sort of approach this, I thought I'd ask, why are we doing this? What is our motivation? What's in your mind and in your heart when we look at contemporary issues to do with sexuality? Maybe we personally feel uncertain and fearful so I'm sure there are Christian people for whom something like this would rock their faith.

And they would begin to say, well, maybe the Bible's wrong. Maybe my upbringing is wrong. And they would feel fearful and uncertain. And so I want to try and address the idea of being fearful and uncertain. And we might feel got at and worried. And again, we need to have some sort of assurances. We might feel outrage and indignation. We might feel, how dare our culture systematically, as the Bible would say, make black white and white black, make good for evil and evil good.

How dare our culture do that? We might have a sense of holy outrage about that. And I think there's a right place for a holy sort of anger. But I suppose that could tip over into something less gracious. I mean, if we just want to put people down and denounce, I think we have to be really, really careful about that. We might be motivated by the concern for the well-being of people who are not Christians, but who we feel are set on a course that will really not help them, that will damage them. And at the end of it, they might well find they've regretted what they have believed wrongly and what actions they've taken. So I'm going all over the place, aren't I?

So I think there's a right concern for people. They're not being helped. And then we might also enlarge that concern for a concern for the eternal well-being of people in our culture. And of course, that concern would be for people, whatever sexuality they are, we would have that concern for straight people, wouldn't we? People who live very upright and commendable lives, we'd still be concerned for their spiritual, eternal salvation, wouldn't we?

[5 : 03] So I'm just, I think it's a question of what, you know, we might get quite het up about this, but what is at the bottom of the being het up? You know, what motives do we have? And maybe you can think of some of the motives as well. So what I think I'm going to try and do this evening is, so I'm not so much looking at the negative things, but saying positively, what does the Bible teach?

And I think I want to say that the Bible does teach that we are created creatures. It's just saying the same thing in another word. And we're made in God's image.

So I want to affirm that that is what the Bible teaches. I want to affirm furthermore that there are two different sexes or genders. So I'm going to use those words from the Bible as interchangeable. That's not used interchangeably in modern speech. But there are only two. And that they are, respectively, male and female. And these are different. They're not interchangeable. They're equally of value. But male is not the same as female. Female is not the same as male. They're two different sexes and genders. And I furthermore want to affirm that there is, in being made male and female, a positive intention from our Creator. positive intention for sexual intimacy. Having sex, in other words. Between the two sexes in which there is the potential for childbirth.

[7 : 30] And I also want to affirm that this sexual intimacy, so rather than writing it all again, sexual intimacy is for marriage.

And it's marriage between a man and a woman. Whoops. A man and a woman.

And this sexual intimacy is for marriage only. Where shall I put the only? Put it here.

So it's not just one of a range of options. That is the only option. And any sexual activity outside that is sin and detrimental to human flourishing. Let's see if I can spell that whether any sexual activity is for any sexual activity is not just any sexual activity. Let me tell you So that's an affirmation that the sexual activity is not just only... Sorry. It's not just within marriage as one of a range of options but that is what sexual intimacy is for there aren't other options and when people take other options it actually it's there's the sin there i guess you might say in varying degrees or but there's sin because it fails to uphold god's pattern and it doesn't help it doesn't further god's plan for humanity it's actually detrimental so i'll just turn the page on my notes those are the things that i would like to affirm uh in looking at bible basics so if we'd done this 30 years ago you would have thought it was a complete waste of time because everybody knows this you don't have to be in a church to know this everybody knows this but now this is almost uh what's the word um subversive it you know you almost feel that somebody's going to ring you up and say how dare you say that you know it's going to offend somebody did those points make sense that the ones that are trying trying to affirm that we're created creatures in god's image that there are two and only two sexes and genders which in the bible are the same thing um and that there there's a positive intention for sexual intimacy but that with the potential for childbirth um and that sexual intimacy is for within heterosexual marriage marriage between a man and a woman and that's the only place for sexual intimacy anything else other than that is sin and is detrimental to human flourishing okay well that's the that's what i want to try and affirm and as long with that i think i need to affirm or to put this in a context so putting it into the the bible context so there is a pattern of creation so that's how things were made to be for so that's when sin entered the world so various things are going to get disrupted redemption redemption so that's when putting it simply when somebody becomes a christian so that changes things again and then consummation in the in the resurrection which we were singing about i think there's two m's in consummation consummation so that's the glory that's to come and in each of these under each of these headings things get altered a little bit you know they have to tweak things and be a bit subtle about about all sorts of things okay are you with me so far yep thank you let's read some scriptures

first of all genesis 1 26 to 31 genesis 1 26 to 31 genesis 1 26 to 31 genesis 1 26 to 31 ending keep going just the end of the chapter thank you very much that's through day six of God's creation week and it is he says very good not just good but very good and now let's read in

[14 : 29] Genesis 2 verse 18 to 25 maybe Mark who also has a nice clear voice could read

Genesis 2 18 to 25 the Lord God said it is not good for the man to be alone I will make a help for him now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air he brought them to the man to see what he would name them and whatever the man called each living creature that was his name so the man gave names to all the livestock the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field but for Adam no suitable help was found so the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep and while he was sleeping he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man and he brought her to the man the man said this now is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh she shall be called woman for she was taken out of man for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh the man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame

Amen Thank you Thank you very much So we've got those two texts and let's also read Matthew 19 3-9 Matthew 19 3-9 It's sometimes said that Jesus is entirely agnostic about sexual matters but it's interesting to read Matthew 19 verses 3 2-9 Matthew 19 3-9 Could Oh, ask Emma Could you read that for us please?

Matthew 19 verse 3 to verse 9 Mary . . .

. . Thank you very much. I quote that, or we read that, because Jesus is endorsing what's written in Genesis, and he affirms who wrote it.

In verse 4, he who created them, or the Creator, said, therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife.

[18 : 18] Do you get that bit? Because that's part of the narration. It's not in quotes from the Lord in Genesis, but Jesus says, well, that's still God speaking, that's still God's Word, because it's in the Bible.

The one who created them also said, therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. Okay, so we've read those fundamental chapters, and presumably we'll keep coming back to them.

But I would like to ask you to discuss some questions. And I think the first question is, what is involved in being created?

Now, does it say from the dust of the earth? We've got that actually in Genesis 2, 7, so we didn't read that.

The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living creature. What is involved in being created from the dust of the earth?

[19 : 53] So, I'd like you to find two or three other people and do a real brainstorm. This implies lots of things, actually.

So, being created implies a lot of things. The fact that we're made from dust implies things as well. Have a real good think with two or three people next to you, and I'll come back in about three minutes.

What is involved in this being creatures? Okay, what does it imply? What does it... What... You think about it.

Okay, so three minutes. So, three minutes. Okay.

Thank you.

[22 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[24 : 30] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[27 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[29 : 30] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[32 : 30] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Yeah.

[35 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

So, the idea, and you can't,

Okay.

[38 : 30] Thank you.

Adam, Thank you.

Yeah.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[41 : 30] Well, and I'll, And then you mentioned,

And you're born in the sin, All of us, and you're born in the sin,

Yeah.

Yeah. And you're in the sin, in London,

And you're in the sin, and you're in the sin, and you're in the sin, if anybody thought in those ways.

[48 : 04] I'll tell you what I think. If we're created in God's image, then the way to understand ourselves is to do it in relation to our creator.

What are we like? We're like God. God is transcendent. You can't boil him down to something. And I'm like him. That's how I understand myself.

And if you cut that, you're really struggling to find who am I? What am I? What makes me me? And if you look inside, well, we see all sorts of conflicting things going on, don't we?

And so it's really difficult to know who I am if I don't do it in relation to God. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yes, exactly. Because I don't know whether Daniel's going to do on this.

[49 : 20] what we live in is a world today in which it said, the thing to do is to be yourself and you look inside and see what urges are there and the most important thing is just to fulfill those urges because that's being authentically you.

that's the way the whole world is thinking, well, the Western world is thinking at the moment. But if ourselves are formed by the Creator, we ought to listen to what he says, shouldn't we?

About who we are, how we're supposed to live, where our significance comes from and it isn't just up to us to sort of whatever you want to do, do it.

Do your own thing. Be true to your heart. All this sort of stuff. That's not if it makes you happy. Yes.

Yeah. I think it pushes against this whole I think really important idea of being created.

I hope that makes sense. Yeah. Yeah. I think it's similar to you because it's not coming to you earlier. Here's a question of my things.

[50 : 40] I do feel like the same way you have a table and the table has a manner that I am allowed to sit in that table or to treat the table as long as sitting is actually meant to carry things.

What am I going to sit in this anyway? It's the same as being formed by God. The only way to find our manner is to God. That's the right there. No matter how comfortable it is to sit in that anyway, that's what it's meant for.

And the reason is in the manner is because it's convenient to start to come sit on it. So I think also the only way to find our true purpose is by our manner to create that's good and that's the Bible.

So that's how it's set. Thank you. Thank you very much. In case you didn't quite catch that, so the idea of a table is for sitting at rather than sitting on.

You can sit on it. It might be comfortable. That's not what it's made for. We need to know what the designer's intention was and refer back to that, which in our terms is going to be what he says in his word, isn't it?

[51 : 53] We're going to have that. Okay. Right. So if we just look at the things I was trying to affirm, we haven't really got very far with those, but we looked at this first one about creation.

I think that's a really fundamental thing. Now we'll see if I was right in thinking that because we'll see whether Daniel ever refers back to that or that's completely irrelevant to anything else he's going to say.

Personally, I think there's something really important about us being creatures under the authority of a creator made in God's image. We read some of these things off the surface of the text, didn't it?

We're made in God's image, male and female. Male and female, he created them, two genders. And that's important because that's part of being in God's image.

The sexual intimacy with the potential for childbirth, I'm not saying that that potential is realizable in every case, so you don't stop being married once you're as a couple old, two old to have children, you're still married.

[53 : 06] That's there in the text where it says be fruitful and multiply. And that marriage is between a man and a woman only, and anything else is sin and detrimental to human flourishing.

Well, the sin bit was in Matthew 19 where Jesus said, I should have done my homework a little bit better on this.

He talks, he says, I don't think I've got this, but the idea that Jesus endorses the idea of man and woman being married, one flesh, what God has joined together, let not man separate, the idea that God is endorsing this union, man and woman, and he mentions sexual immorality.

I should have looked this up. I think he says pornea, which is anything other than that. So, everything else is ruled out apart from the man and woman marriage.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. of the argument we never are mentioned in the way that we are not committed in the way there are yeah yeah yeah it would be interesting to develop what in the Bible is marriage I mean when Abraham married Sarah he didn't go to church there wasn't a vicar doing it and there wasn't a registrar but when it was a public event in which they are publicly saying we're going to live together we're going to have sex together and this is a permanent thing for us

[55 : 34] I mean that's sort of boiling it right down yeah there's lots of the more you think about there's lots of things that you could say well what about this what about this and I was really just trying to do the those things as best I could and we need to stop does anybody else want to ask any questions and preferably not a really difficult question because but question you yeah yeah yeah any other questions thoughts well I think it'd be nice to sing something would anybody like to choose something to sing and then we'll we'll stop let's go

Thank you.