

Pornography and Purity

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[0 : 00] Well friends, 20 years ago that was my favourite TV show. And how quaint it seems really, doesn't it?

Someone's lent me the whole disc with the wedding, if you don't know it was in here. Holy Trinity Doncaster, Scott and Charlene. In fact, on my disc has all the neighbours' weddings and I noticed that all the ones that were married here worked out really well.

And all the ones where they were outside or on Ramsey Street. They drove a car up into the ocean, one couple, and just bad things happen if you don't get married at Holy Trinity.

Well imagine what Scott and Charlene's children, the world they would be in now. They're teenage kids, 20 years later from that quaint marriage proposal.

What is our media like today? What do we have? We've got Girls Gone Wild. We've got Big Brother Turkey Slap.

[1 : 06] We've got Universities, Monash Uni running a sex week in conjunction with Club X Superstore franchises. We've got Pedophile Predators targeting kids on the internet.

Celebrity sex tapes are one click download away. We've got Upper Management of Big Company. We've got Upper Management of Big Companies holding business meetings in King Street upmarket strip bars with lap dances optional.

Formula One chief in Nazi sex orgy scandal. His defense, by the way, is shocking. We'll come back to that.

Here are some of the stats in America that I found from the XXXChurch.com website. And that's the Christian website to help people deal with issues of addiction to pornography.

It's a great website. XXXChurch.com. It's an anti-pornography website to encourage people to scorn pornography. And their stats say that the average age of the first internet exposure to pornography is 11 years old.

[2 : 23] And that 90% of 8 to 16 year olds have been exposed to pornography online. And they've got in brackets, most while doing homework online.

Apparently the internet pornography sales are about \$5 billion US. There are 4.2 million pornographic websites. So those stats are kind of weird because there's billions of websites anyway.

Apparently most internet traffic is most data transfer, most bandwidth is pornography. If you've heard the song from that Norwegian band Trucks, the chorus goes like this.

It's just porn, mum. You're running away. You wouldn't believe what the kids see today. It's just porn, mum. And it won't go away. Wherever you turn, you find porn every day.

It's just porn. Now friends, here is the big question that you need to ask in relation to this matter. And this is the question being asked, though it's implicit in everything we see.

[3 : 31] The question is, what does it mean to be a joyful, satisfied human being? What does it mean to be a truly happy, joyful human being?

Everybody has an idea. Everybody's seeking joy. Everyone is fighting for joy. But what does it mean? What do you think it means to be a joyful, satisfied human being?

On this question, the Bible and the world couldn't be at more loggerheads, couldn't be at more odds, couldn't be more at war than they are on what it means to be a satisfied human being.

And so from the outset, I want to say, friends, today that there's the Bible's view of being human and the world's view. And you actually can't mix the views at all. They are just totally separate views of what it means to be a human.

And Philippians 3 and 4 will spell out for us God's vision of being human that I will take us through.

[4 : 34] Then I want to try and expose three myths from pornography that are around today, three myths. Why don't I pray for us?

Lord God, I pray that you would give us understanding to your word. It's so easy, Father, for our sinful hearts to twist our thinking and the way we hear your word and to not actually hear your voice speaking to us or believe or trust that your model of being human will be best for us.

I pray, Father, that you would help me personally as I preach this message to be clear and helpful. I pray that if I'm inadvertently unhelpful that people would come and ask me questions or email a question and that each person here would be encouraged to be fully human in Christ as you intend for us to be.

Amen. Well, friends, God's model for being human is a very simple model. It's modeled on Jesus, but not just on Jesus.

It's modeled on the cross of Jesus. That is God's model for being human. And the world's model for being human is basically the counter polar opposite to that.

[5 : 51] And that is God's, the world's model is to be selfish. So you've got a model based on the cross of Christ on selflessness. And the world's model is the selfish model of being a human.

Here's what Paul says in chapter 3, verse 17. Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me and observe those who live according to the example you have in us.

By the way, it's going to be so important, I think, if you are struggling with this issue, to be around godly Christians who have, as it were, mastered it or who do model a purity that you can kind of emulate.

You need to be imitating and hang around them. Here's the warning from Paul. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. I've told you often of them.

And now I tell you, even with tears, their end is destruction. Their God is the belly. Their glory is in their shame. Their minds are set on earthly things. Many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

[6 : 53] But the Christian lives under the cross or beneath the cross of Christ. Now Paul here is not talking about the world just yet. He's actually, I think, talking about people who are in the church who claim to be Christians but live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

That is because, of course, the world lives as the enemy of the cross of Christ. That's not really, you don't need to be warned about that. But Paul says you need to be warned about these people. And Paul, in a sense, it's not surprising that the world would live as an enemy of the cross.

But Paul's tears are for those who claim to be Christians but are living the world's model of humanity. They're not living God's model of the cross.

They're living as enemies of the cross of Christ. Friends, the cross-centered life is one of service of others.

Taking up your cross and following Jesus. Imitating Jesus. Worshipping Jesus. Serving Jesus and others. The people who live as enemies of the cross live the life of self-gratification.

[8 : 04] That's really the key concept. It's all about self-gratification. My thrills. My own pleasures. My own immediate gratification.

And Paul says of those people, their end is destruction. Their end will be God's judgment. Their God is the belly. Now, in the ancient world, the stomach, the belly, the bowels were considered the seat of the emotions, of the feelings.

So it's, in effect, what we would call the heart. Just a different cultural image. So really he's saying their God, what we would say is their heart.

You know, their feelings. They live for the next emotional rush. For the next short-lived thrill of something exotic or erotic. You know, they live for the desire to gratify carnal urges.

Their God is, their idol is their own heart, or what he would call the belly, what we would call the heart. So be careful when people tell you, follow your heart. That's actually not Christian.

[9 : 12] That's pagan. Their minds and their hearts, I guess, Paul says, are set on earthly things. They are fixated on short-term pleasure, on the short-term rush and thrill.

But that is not the Christian. So friends, where are you on that? What do you live for? Which is your model of humanity? Now, of course, the earthly model has no problem with pornography because it actually serves that view of being human, of self-gratification.

They'll say there's no harm. It's all good. But actually that's a lie that I'll have to show you soon.

Those things are myths. If you watch the TV show, I try not to watch it, but I sometimes watch little bits of it, Big Brother.

Big Brother. That's all about that worldly model of self-gratification. What do they talk about? What are they doing all the time? They're just living for pleasure. It's what they are planning and talking about all the time.

Now, see, the problem with Big Brother is not that occasionally people take their clothes off or there's a version of it that's got the nudity in it. That's not the main problem with Big Brother.

[10:28] The main problem is that the whole show promotes the alternative worldly view of being human, of living for self-gratification. And even if you watch the 7pm, the clean show or whatever, you still are kind of imbibing that view of being human, which is opposite to the cross-centered life.

What does the cross-centered life look like? What Paul tells us in our verse 20 onwards, he says, But our citizenship is in heaven.

It is from there that we are expecting a saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. So we have a different focus. He will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. Stand firm in the Lord in the way of the cross-centered life.

The cross-centered life is a model of humiliation, then exaltation. Of humble service and then being lifted up by God. Suffering, then glory.

[11:47] Selflessness, then reward. It's a model of knowing that you've been bought by the blood of Christ. You are now a citizen of heaven. And so you should live as a citizen of heaven.

Even though you'll be humiliated for it in this world, people will laugh at you and pour derision on you. That is the cross-centered life. Living for what the cross has won for you.

Citizens of heaven don't live for their own short-term gratification. We are waiting. We are waiting for a saviour to return.

Our life is a life of delayed gratification. You know, it's a waiting gratification, but it's not going to come today. It's coming down the track. And that's true of both waiting for heaven, but it's also true of waiting for sex in marriage.

It's a model of selflessness, delayed gratification. The Lord Jesus will transform our body, Paul says. He'll transform our body to be conformed to Christ's body of glory.

[12:54] The Lord Jesus in the gospel makes a claim on our bodies. They are not ours. They are his. And so we ought to respect our own bodies in a way that says, I belong to Christ.

He will transform my body. Therefore, Paul says, stand firm in the Lord. Don't live for the rush of gratification. Don't live as an enemy of the cross, but live the cross-centered life.

Your body's been bought by Jesus on the cross. You're a citizen of heaven. Your body will be transformed by Jesus. So live the pure life. Live for him. Keep your body pure.

The Christian has a very high view of the body. You have a low view of the body in pornography or in promiscuous or disobedient sex. It's a low view of the body.

But Christians have a very high view of the body of sex. So, friends, the question to ask yourself, and this is broader than just the question of have you watched, looked at images of nude people or something like that.

[13:58] The question is, are you being entertained in your viewing of media of an idolatrous view of the human life? It's a much bigger question than just saying, am I disciplined in changing channels when there's nudity or turning off the DVD or skipping that scene?

I mean, that's a good thing to do. But the question is, am I imbibing a view of the humanity that is shameful, that is selfish?

Am I entertaining the world's view of humanity that always tries to feed the lust of my heart? Am I, in effect, absorbing a poisonous view of the human life, that is, living in enmity to the cross of Christ?

Is my heart captured by this world's view of humanity? Because I think what happens is, we are caught by the world's view of humanity and are into being enemies of the cross long before we get caught up in the pornography.

That's really just the icing on the cake in the end, but it's really our whole lifestyle. Are we living the cross-centered life? Now, Jesus taught, and I think this is an important principle, you cannot just empty your mind, you need to fill it with something greater, something better.

[15:27] You cannot just say, I'm not going to have feelings for these worldly things. You need to generate and work for godly feelings that honour God.

And so, Paul will go on in chapter 4 to tell us what to fill your heart with, what to fill your mind with. And the first thing he says, and you might have just thought this is a bit of an aside, but it's a good principle.

He says, That's an aside in a way, but actually it shows a good principle that Christians who live in the cross-centered life ought to be working hard for the ministry of the gospel.

You know, how hard are you working for the ministry of the gospel, to promote the gospel, to promote the cross-centered life, to do evangelism, or to spend time with other Christians?

Are you involved in small groups and church services and doing courses and doing acts of practical service? You know, attending prayer meetings, there's so much to be done for the work of the gospel.

[16:46] Don't give up just if you have a fight with someone, you're involved in a ministry and it's a bit awkward. Keep going with the church if those things happen. You know, Euodia and Syntyche are fighting, but Paul says, keep going, sort it out, work hard for the gospel.

That's one way, I think, that we fill our lives. And the problem is, and maybe this is more for guys, I speak more for guys when I talk about this issue. If you have too much free time, you're sitting duck for the evil one.

You're sitting duck, you're a sitting duck for the temptations of lust and pornography. So, you need to fill your time, get involved in gospel ministry and there's so much you can do to speak to Jono and I.

I mean, we are here at church, you know, people are doing jobs at five o'clock. Come early, come and pray with us at five thirty. Be the first here, be the last to leave, be stacking chairs, you know, fill your life with doing good works for the Lord.

But it's a great way, if you have too much free time, you're a sitting duck. I'd rather you be too busy and stressed with all your church commitments than just having way too much free time and therefore temptation time, if that makes sense.

[18:00] Paul goes on to command, what emotions should you have in the cross-centered life? Verse four, Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say, rejoice.

Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication. With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Friends, do those verses describe you? Do you rejoice in the Lord?

Are you prayerful? Are you on your knees in secret prayer? Do you experience sweet fellowship with God day by day? Peace with God through Jesus?

Do you nurture joy in Jesus? Are you listening to music that lifts up Jesus? Are you Christ-centered? Again, friends, if you're not cultivating those great emotions and passions for God, you are dead in the water.

[19:01] You're sitting duck for temptation. And lastly, Paul says, fill your mind with the best things. You can't leave your mind empty. Things are going to come in.

So verse 8 and 9, Beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, pure, pleasing, commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. Friends, your mind is a muscle. You control it.

You can exercise it. You can control what it's focused on. Choose what you think about. Do you dwell on God's greatness? Do you memorize and meditate on scripture?

Do you read meaty Christian books? Don't read what's on top ten at the local Christian bookshop. It's all Christian junk food. Read J.O. Packer, Knowing God.

[20:04] What a classic book of the 20th century. Knowing God by J.O. Packer. That book will just fill your mind with the glory of God. You know, just get, for me, reading is a big part of my Christian life.

You know, read the great biographies of Christian literature or read the great works of church history that were written before the last hundred years. fill your mind with things of God.

I mean, there's so much. We live in a fallen world, but there's so much good that God is doing in our world that Christians can be doing in the world. Are you caught up in supporting gospel missions, praying for missions, writing to missionaries, emailing them, sending them jars of Vegemite or

whatever, you know, and getting news back from your prayers?

That's really exciting. You can get involved in that. Don't spend your free time on the internet. I mean, is that just obvious or what? Don't have the internet in your bedroom.

You know, I mean, I love the internet. I mean, I'm an IT geek, but I have got to be disciplined in how I use it. It's much better, I think, to, if you have free time, read a book.

[21 : 20] Go for a walk. Go for a run. Go bush. Get outside. Go to an art gallery. Go to a classical music concert. You know, get some culture.

Lift up your mind. Take up a creative hobby. Write a poem. Write a song for God. Go visit a nursing home and talk to lonely people. It's full of them, you know.

Teach Sunday school at Holy Trinity. Do a Bible, yeah, do a Bible correspondence course. There's so many great things to do. Find other godly Christians and just hang around with them, you know. Spend time with them. Imitate them. Don't waste your life. Friends, this is the summary. Live the cross-centered life.

It's God's model of humanity that stands in contrast to the world's selfish model of being a human. The cross-centered life is a radical, Christ-centered, selfless existence.

[22 : 18] The Bible says it's the most fulfilling life. Jesus says, I've come that I may have life and life to the full. Jesus also said, I've told you this.

He said, Obey me. I've told you to obey me so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. Or as Paul said, Rejoice in the Lord always.

Again, I say rejoice. Life to the full, as Jesus promised, is not kind of living the big brother life but pulling back at the last minute with some of the dodgiest stuff.

It's living a cross-centered life. And it's living life for God, for Christ. It's losing your life to gain it. If you're married, Paul describes sex in this way.

He says, Love your wife as your own body. And he who loves his wife loves himself. And so, the cross-centered life is a life that brings the most pleasure in the end.

[23 : 18] Let's go into this a bit more and I'm going to look at three myths to do with pornography and they pretty much came out in the drama which was good. The first myth which I hear all the time or read all the time is that everybody views pornography and finds satisfaction in it.

That is a great myth. It's not true. I don't view pornography. I've never watched a porno video. I was married before I had broadband. Maybe that's helped. Maybe I was too scared. But that's okay. You should be scared. It's dangerous. It's poisonous. I'm tempted by pornography on the internet.

I'm tempted by the images which can sites can just come up sometimes or you just sort of drift to the wrong corner of the net and you're there. You don't even realise you're heading there.

I'm tempted by that. I'm tempted by things I see on TV. But friends, I scorn pornography and I scorn it because I value my sexual pleasure.

[24 : 30] Pornography to me is poison to my view of sex. It's poison to my marriage. Friends, it's poison to your future marriage if you're not married.

If you are married, it's poison to your marriage. It's poison to your sex life or your future sex life.

Here is a great secret you will never hear anywhere except in a church and maybe not in a church.

There are many, many, many people, thousands, millions of people who in the name of Christ are enjoying long-lasting sexual fulfilment in their marriages.

pre, during, post kids. They are experiencing the blessing of God and the satisfaction that sex can give if you enjoy it where God has placed it, that is, in marriage.

Let me plug some books. There's a book called Pure Sex by Tony Payne and Philip Jensen.

[25 : 36] I'll give you a quote from this book in a minute but it's a great overview to the Christian view on sex. That's probably what I recommend if you're not married. If you're getting married, I recommend this Christian book on sex called One Flesh, A Practical Guide to Honeymoon Sex and Beyond.

That's if you're getting married. I might leave these out here and you can give you permission to look at the table of contents. And the third book is If You Are Married. And this book is a great book called Intended for Pleasure, Sex Technique and Sexual Fulfillment in Christian Marriage and the guy's a doctor so he's got some great stuff here.

He's got some great Bible but he's got really helpful, detailed medical stuff. This, it says on the back, it's the must-have classic on sex in Christian marriage.

Now, is there any difference with Christian sex to non-Christian sex? I want to say there is. Because if you're going with God's model of humanity or the world's model, the sex is very, very different and I'll explain that in a minute.

Here's what Jensen and Payne say about marriage and sex. They say, we long, that is we, everyone, longs for a situation in which we are completely at one with another person and where each partner is as much or more concerned with the other person's pleasure as their own.

[27 : 05] Already you can sort of see the cross-centeredness in that, the selflessness of that. Where the excitement and the pleasure of the other person, the other person is receiving gives us pleasure as well.

Each one serving and pleasuring the other. Each one worshipping the other's body. We would want this sort of relationship to go on for a long time and to grow in intimacy and mutual pleasure as each one learns how to please the other even more.

Friends, that is intended to describe the ideal of Christian marriage. If you are married, that is your ideal. You should be working hard toward that ideal. You should not be complacent with where you're at sexually, but working for that great ideal.

If you stop viewing sex as a means to self-gratification and yet look at it through the lens of the cross, the cross-centered life, then what you actually see is that sex in marriage is about you working for the pleasure of the other person that you've made a public commitment to, that you know that you and this person, your husband or wife, you're going to be working on this project for life and it's going to be like a dance.

You're going to get better at it and you're going to learn each other and grow in intimacy in a way that the world will never get because you have a Christian view of marriage and sex.

[28 : 35] Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies, that is, to seek to pleasure their wife as they would pleasure themselves if they were just being selfish.

Seek to pleasure their wife and he who loves his wife loves himself, that is, when you seek the joy of the other, joy comes back to you. And the world will never learn that lesson because the world only wants gratification now.

But if you trust God and seek the joy of the other, then a blessing comes back to you. So that's a great myth that everyone views pornography and that it satisfies.

I love the Reformation, I love Martin Luther, he's talked a lot about sex. That was a time of a great rediscovery of the value of marriage and sex.

People are always trying to change God's rules. Have you noticed that? People are always trying to seek autonomy from God and find a better way. And in the medieval world, the better way was the monastic single life, life, the life where the majority were expected to be a virgin, when Mary was a virgin perpetually, the Bible doesn't teach that, but virginity was held up and exalted way too high.

[29 : 56] And so when they discovered the gospel of the Reformation, they discovered the power and blessing of marriage. Now today it's the opposite of that, but the same attitude. In their rebellion against God, instead of seeking a monastic life, people seek a promiscuous life, or the kind of pornographic life.

They say, I can get satisfied apart from God's way. I don't need marriage. I can do this and I can do this and I can go to this club and I can pay this person.

And people seek satisfaction apart from God's design of marriage. And both models, the monastic thing and the promiscuous thing, are trying to rebel against God. But it can't be done, friends.

Pornography will never satisfy. And so what we need to do is concede that God is right. And that if we want to have sex, then we need marriage to be satisfied.

We cannot be satisfied independently, individually. And so, friends, we need to do it God's way.

And what I've noticed with pornography is that reading about it and counselling people and my own experience of being tempted by it is that there are ever-diminishing returns with pornography.

[31 : 11] Have you noticed that? After a short time, what you view won't arouse you anymore. You will need something more twisted, more hardcore to get you to the next level.

And that won't satisfy after a while. Then you'll need something even worse and kind of more dodgy. And it just gets worse and worse and worse with ever-diminishing returns. Here's a testimony of someone, a Christian that I read on the internet.

He says, when I think about pornography, I think about a line from the movie Men in Black. Tommy Lee Jones' character is about to retire. Remember in that movie, you blank your memory when

you're about to retire.

And he tells Will Smith, I've just been down the gullet of an interstellar cockroach. That's one of a hundred memories I don't want.

And then this person says, I've been a porn addict since I was twelve. I remember my dad telling my brother and me when I was about five that pornography is like a boa constrictor.

[32 : 15] It'll wrap itself around your mind and squeeze everything else out. One of the problems, he says, I face on a day-to-day basis is the fact that all these images that I've seen take up so much of my mind that it's difficult for me to do anything without some unbidden erotic thought or image coming to the fore of my thoughts.

Unerasable, unforgettable, inexcusable, this person says. And he speaks about how this problem has been passed down to a generation of men in his family. He says, one of the things that saddens me is that my father and his brothers struggled with this and their inability to face the problem and get help that they desperately needed has meant that as they became fathers, the same problems of their personalities that made them so susceptible to sexual pornographic temptation have rubbed off on their sons.

Every one of my cousins struggles with this. This is truly an addictive thing and it makes the whole family co-addicts. Isn't that a sad testimony, friends? That's a sad, sad legacy to leave to someone else.

And it's a sad thing to be caught in that and to not be satisfied and yet to have these images stuck in your head. If God's model of being human is right, then the world's model and pornography is dehumanizing, depersonalizing and destructive to our humanness.

I think that's why some people pornography just leads them to increase their level of self-pity which they then use to excuse doing it again and again and end up in this vicious cycle.

[33 : 57] Pornography is poison. Now two more myths that I'll do a bit quicker. Another myth is that pornography increases sexual understanding and skill.

Well, that's so not true. 99% of what you see in pornography is an outright lie, does not reflect healthy, godly sexual expression.

Pornography is generated largely around the male sinful ego. The roles that women play in pornography and the women's sexuality in pornography is largely a projection of the male producers who lie behind it and kind of cast women in those kind of roles.

pornography is actually just designed to tantalise and get you to pay and then you get you to pay the next time and the next time and to buy the next product or go to the next part of the website.

You know, each time crossing a new boundary into something more and more perverted or weird. I mean, if you go down that line, you will have such a perverted view of human sexuality that when you are married, if God gives you a wife or husband, you just won't know what to do.

[35 : 10] You won't know what's good and normal to do. I think for young men, pornography is society's way of turning you into a kind of a pathetic slob, turning you into just a sort of selfish, entertainment consuming machine.

And I wonder what years of self- gratification of pornography does to young men in particular. I'm not joking when I quote this, but there are websites to help 20-year-old, this is not my term, Viagraholics, 20-year-old Viagraholics.

That is, they're so corrupted by pornography that they need to take Viagra to have a kind of a sex life. And they're addicted to Viagra at age 20. That's a drug that's designed for older men who can't get an erection.

A 20-year-old shouldn't need Viagra, shouldn't be addicted to Viagra. That's just scary to think we're producing a generation of pathetic, impotent young men.

Don't be counted among them. The best preparation, if you want to increase your sexual understanding and skill, the best preparation is the cross-centred life. The best preparation for a good sex life in marriage is energy expended in the service of others, in Christian ministry.

[36 : 36] It's stacking chairs. It's vacuuming floors at church. It's leading Bible study groups. It's teaching Sunday school. It's helping pack up.

It's running camps. It's serving others. It's calling people up. It's service. It's, you know, if you're looking for someone to marry and you want someone who's going to be a good lover, as it were, find someone who has a servant heart because that will be reflected in the bedroom.

That's exactly what you want. That's the best preparation for a good sex life. It's not pornography, not the poison of pornography, but actually servant ministry. So the two myths I've had so far are everybody views pornography and is satisfied by it.

That's not true. The second myth is that pornography increases your sexual sort of skill. That's not true. And the third and final myth is that Christians are prudes.

And this is really the implication in so much. When you do get a Christian on Big Brother, they're either kind of hypocrites or they're seen as prudes.

[37 : 44] Well, we're not prudes, I don't think. You just read the Bible. The Bible is very positive about sex, very open about sex. It's true that the Bible is very modest with sex and encourages godly modesty both in dress and the way we speak about sex.

But, you know, the Bible has this amazing sealed section called the Song of Songs or the Song of Solomon. It's an erotic love poem. The Bible is positive about sexual arousal and yet it's discreet about the specifics.

Christians are not prudes. I'll never forget the pastor who married my wife and I. I can never forget this. About 12 months into our marriage, just before church one day, just having a yak walking into church, he starts asking me questions about my sex life and starts giving me advice about my sex life.

And I'm just thinking, I've got to teach Sunday school in 10 minutes and you've got to preach. And he's encouraging me, you know, saying, oh, well, Wayne, you know, you're too in, you know, you've got to be a bit more creative.

Oh, well. Well, you know, Martin Luther, it's just great to read Martin Luther. He discovered in the Reformation the value and joy of marriage and sexual activity and parenting.

[39 : 10] I'll read to you a letter that he wrote. Tell me he's a prude. This is a letter he wrote to someone for their wedding night. What would you write to someone? What advice would you give someone for their wedding night?

What would you put in writing? And the problem for Luther was that he couldn't make it to this person's wedding. And the danger was that would be interpreted as that maybe Luther, who's not married yet, thinks marriage is a sin or marriage is lower than singleness.

And he wanted to communicate that he thought marriage was a great gift from God. And this advice I would write to any young man for their wedding night. He said to his friend, when you sleep with your Catherine and embrace her, you should think, and then there's quotes, what the man should think.

He should think, this child in front of me, this woman in front of me, this wonderful creature of God has been given to me by Christ. May he be praised and glorified.

Isn't that a nice thing to think on your wedding night? This wonderful young woman I'm marrying is a creature of God. May Christ be praised. See how positive he is about the gift of marriage.

[40 : 24] And Luther goes on. I think this is really sweet. Others might think this is a bit creepy. Luther says, because he can't make the wedding, he says, on the evening of the day, on which according to my calculations you will receive this letter, I shall make love to my wife, while you make love to yours, and thus we will be united in love.

Sex is a gift from God. The Christian model of marriage and for sex is that marriage is a way of guarding sex, of treasuring sex.

It's a great gift from God, and it's not a gift that's to be shared. It's not the kind of gift you unwrap early. It's a gift that you wait for and you enjoy when you've got it.

And when you've got it, you say grace before it. And you praise God together afterward, and you thank him for it. I'm serious. I mean that literally. You pray and thank God for it.

The world will mock our naivety, friends. They will mock us for being naive. But let me tell you, on your wedding night, naivety is glorious.

[41 : 44] Naivety is glorious. The less you know on your wedding night, the better. What you need to learn, you will learn together. One friend I had, they were virgins on their wedding night, and he tells a story that I wish I'd thought of doing this.

He said, on their wedding night, they got after the reception and everything, they went to the hotel, they went to the hotel room, they had their Bible in their pack, they opened up Song of Songs, read the whole thing together, prayed to God, and then enjoyed it.

Isn't that great? That's what it should be for each one of you. That's how Christians do sex. So friends, let me conclude.

Most of us need marriage. Most of us. If you need sex, you need marriage. Paul is right in 1 Corinthians 7, we heard it last week, that those who marry face many troubles in this life.

I can tell you, marriage is trouble. It's glorious trouble. Don't avoid it. If you're a young man, don't avoid it. Step up to the plate. Grow up and take responsibility.

[42 : 58] Seek out a wife. Learn to serve people and learn to serve a wife. Don't, and friends, don't say that God's model can't be done. Don't say that it's too idealistic and that you can't do it.

Even if you are sinned, repent tonight and be a virgin, as it were, from this day forward if you're not married. Find godly models and imitate them.

Remember, the Spirit of God dwells in you. God commands you to live the cross-centered life, to not live as an enemy of the cross. God is offering you in due time the most pure, refreshing water. Don't drink from the gutter now or the toilet now. Protect your body. Be pure. Build a wall around your body like there's a wall around the woman in the Song of Songs.

Build a wall around your body. If you love someone, if you have a boyfriend or girlfriend, respect their wall. The wall will guard you in singleness. And when you are married, the wall will be a beautiful source of protection and security and joy and pleasure.

[44 : 09] That your bodies will belong to each other in due time, fully devoted to each other. And friends, don't poison your minds. Don't poison your minds or undermine your sex lives by viewing pornography.

Let's pray for help in this. Lord God, we thank you for giving us a wonderful model of being human that, in theory at least, but also I think in practice, Father, makes great sense and is the best way to live.

Dear God, please, by your spirit, help people here tonight. If any are struggling with pornography or if they have not respected the wall with their boyfriend or girlfriend, I pray that they would repent of that and out of obedience to you, but also out of an investment in that relationship, respect the wall. I pray that, Father, you would give to those who desire it deeply, the gift of marriage. Prepare those people by making them godlier Christians, taking up their cross, serving others, living a selfless life. Father, keep us busy and protect us from temptation. Father, we ask for your grace to do this and we ask that our lives would bring you glory in everything.

[45 : 33] Amen.