

Who Told You That Christian Are Too Judgmental About Sex

Hello Victory family! I consider it a great privilege to be serving you today. If we haven't met, my name is Pastor Kevin Hundley. My wife Renee, daughter Delaney and mother-in-law Susie are members of Victory with you.

I've served as a pastor for 22 years. 18 of those years I served various congregations. The last 4 years, I've served our church body, connecting with folks who support various ministries and mission work that we do in partnership with other congregations both here in the US and around the world. Victory is a part of a network of around 1200 congregations across the country, where we pool our resources to train future pastors and teachers as well as do mission work here at home and around the world. In the US we have about 120 new mission congregations just getting their start. And overseas, we have about 40 missions working in 50 different countries, sharing Christ all over the globe. So it's good to be here today. Thank you for your prayers and support as we share Christ together both here and around the world. A big thank you to pastors Bill and Ben for allowing me to serve you today with God's promises.

If you know anything about your pastors, they like a good laugh. So, can you see them? Planning out the preaching schedule for this "Who told you that" series. Can you see them agreeing that the topic of sex should be part of the series, but neither of them wanted to tackle that one. Let's get the guest preacher to preach on sex. And what a minefield for a preacher to dance into!

It's a sensitive topic where people can get offended – or at least misunderstand. Someone might be scared from past experiences and or wounded from a past hurt. In fact, the pastors shared they got some emails from folks wondering if this weekend's topic would be safe for their 10 year old to hear? A valid concern. Is this going to be a PG, G or rated R sermon?

Well, let me put some fears to rest. We're going to wade into this topical mine field together, and go as safely and careful as we can with a bunch of precautions in place. I'll work to make sure no one cringes and the kids ears aren't scared. But all this begs a question that we need to explore: Why is this topic of sex so taboo that we often feel a need to tip toe around it?

We live in a culture where personal permission and tolerance are the trump cards to any topic. Our country champions freedom. And for many that means license to do, and think, and act any way they want. And if someone objects, they are condemned with the worst label our culture can convict someone with – they are not being tolerant. Do you see that in our culture?

- Isn't that the idea behind phrases like "what I do behind the closed doors of my home is my business and none of yours..."
- Isn't that the idea behind protesters raise a sign that screams "my body – my choice".
- Our culture's theme song echoes the old Frank Sinatra's tune, "I'll do it my way!"

If anyone is judgmental about the topic of sex in our world, our culture has plenty to say about what's acceptable – and often that comes with the idea of "it's none of your business ..."

But here is the first point I want you to think about today: **When it comes to this topic of sex, our world likes to argue and fight for BEHAVIORS – where God calls us to consider our HEARTS that drive those behaviors.**

Let's consider that idea of "my body, my choice". Is that really true? A Christian looks to the Bible and God's Word for truth. So, what does God say? Actually, the Bible teaches a radical idea that the Creator and ruler of the Universe has a claim on you, your body and how you use it. Actually, multiple claims.

Here's what the Bible says about your body:

- **Psalm 139:13 - For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.**
- **Psalm 100:3 - Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.**

Your body is a gift given to you, hand crafted by the King of the universe who personally knit you together in your mother's womb. Talk about intimate knowledge and attention to your every need and detail! And here's another claim:

- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.**

What a radical idea in the ancient world. Many people worshipped their so called gods at a temple. But ask a Christian about their God and His Temple and they would say, "Oh my God – He lives IN ME. Whatever you see coming from me, that comes from my God! And His Temple – well, He lives in me! I'm the embodiment of my God who is with me always! Talk about personal connection! Talk about every aspect of a Christians life reflecting the Word and will of God. At least that's how it is designed to work when we follow Him and get our sinful selfishness out of His way.

But when we don't, we are reminded that we aren't our own again. Not only did God artistically craft you – but He also bought and paid for you at the price of His life for yours. This is what the cross is all about. Sin brings death. So to rescue you, God sacrificed himself in death so that you might live – with Him and for Him both now and for eternity!

You are not your own. You were bought at a price, a very, very high price for God, so that we might in turn love and honor Him who gave His very self for you.

So this whole area of what the Bible says about sex doesn't have to be taboo and shameful as our culture often labels it. Alternatively, here is the proper way to look at it: **God made you to be His own, for His loving purpose. He hand crafted you and positioned you to reflect His love to the world in every aspect of life.**

We need to understand that foundational point for God's Word penned by Paul to make sense for our lives.

In the section of Scripture we are exploring today, Paul will talk a great deal about LOVE. That can be a confusing word in our culture. It tends to be a catch all word we sling around in wide variety of ways.

This past Thursday was the 26th Wedding Anniversary for my wife and me. I really, really love my wife! But you know what? I also really love pizza and tacos. Love – we use that word a variety of ways in English. Hopefully you understand from context that the love we celebrated on our anniversary has

a different weight and meaning than someone's love for tacos or pizza. At least for my sake it better have a different weigh and meaning... or I'd be in trouble and our anniversary would be rather meaningless.

Love can be confusing in our culture. But the Apostle Paul penned his letter in the ancient Greek language. A language that is known for its precision. The nice thing about Greek is that a writer can use precise words and verb forms to make sure there is no misunderstanding. Take LOVE for example. We have one word for that concept. Greek had 6 words for love. The four main words are ones your probably familiar with: **Storge, philia, eros, and agape.**

Storge is the love you find between a parent and a child. The love that swells inside of you when you hold your baby for the first time at the hospital, or celebrate that child graduating from school or college. That love is described by Storge.

Then there is Philia – the base of a city name out East: Philadelphia – the city of brotherly love. This is the love of family members, siblings and extended family.

Eros is another word that remains in our culture. It's the root for the word erotic, so the passionate type of love between people.

Finally, and most importantly for our purposes today there is the word Agape. Agape is a special word for love that is reserved in the Bible for the kind of love that God has for people. It's love that is given, just because. Love for love's sake. With no eye to how it will be accepted, received, or if it will be returned. God so loved you. A love of sacrifice. A love of commitment. A love that is given and won't quit no matter what. It's reckless love, because God doesn't care how it will be received. It's love because it's needed, even when it isn't asked for.

Ask a 3 year old why they love their momma. You might hear something like:

- I love her because she makes me Mac and Cheese – which is my favorite.
- Or “she helps fix my boo boos when I fall down and scrape my knee...”
- Or “she checks under my bed to make sure nothing is scary hiding down there... and she only finds dust bunnies...”

If we're honest, we love usually because we receive something from someone. We get a feel from them. They offer us some security. They give us some benefit.

But why does God love? Why does God love you? Is there any benefit? Not really. Usually we are more trouble than we are worth. We make messes. We cause chaos. We whine and complain. Our hearts are incredibly selfish. We do things that cause a great deal of trouble and cause plenty of tears.

Really when you think about it – there is nothing that makes us loveable to God.

So why does God love us? It's not because of us. Instead it's all because of Him. God is love. That's His character and what makes God tick. He is full of mercy. Love never gets old or tiring for tiring for God. His well of love never runs dry. It lasts for an ETERNITY!

We see this love most clearly at the cross, where God put's His love on display for all the world to see. God SO LOVED the world – in this unique way God loved – He sent His only Son and sacrificed Him to rescue you! That's love! God gave His most precious gift up for you. That's how important you are too Him. A love that has no limits. A love that means everything, because it rescued you once and for all for a life with God now and forever!

This agape love of God is the love He calls us to reflect in every area of our Christian life. God love as God has loved you. Recklessly, fearlessly, generously – just as He loved you. With no fear, because you are reflecting the gift that was given to you by God. It will never run out. Slather it around to everyone, regardless if they are deserving or not. Because this glorifies God, the giver of that love. And it benefits the people around you so that they might taste and see the love of God in their life – coming through you!

So this is the next principal to understand when it comes to applying God's agape love in our world and it even applies to us as sexual beings: **The world is ME focused – I do what I want! But God calls us to be OTHERS focused. True love is looking to the needs of others and doing what is best for them – even if that means sacrifice for me.**

So some 2000 years ago, the Apostle Paul penned a letter to Christians living in the heart of Roman culture that was driven by self-centeredness and ME focused. He wrote to direct Christians to reflect God's love into their culture so that people around them might see and experience the love of God. Listen to what Paul writes, and every time you hear a reference to love – understand Paul is using the word agape and all the weight of that word, calling us to love in the same way God loves us. Being filled with self-sacrifice and putting the needs of others above our own wants or comfort level.

8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

Since we have been loved by God, we have the precious privilege to share that love with others – as we reflect God's love into their life. This is the heart of God's call for us to "love others as we love ourself." We are to be generous and lavish with sharing God's love. Because He is not stingy with us.

9 The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Loving as God loves – living out Agape – that is what God calls us to do as we represent Him in this world. That is the overarching principal. Now Paul applies this to our life.

11 And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.

Paul is explaining, the clock is ticking. Judgement Day is on it's way. There is no time to delay. Now is the time to live out this Agape love. Not only because God calls us to do so – but our neighbor, the

people we live, work and rub shoulders with need this love injected into their lives and God will do that through you. So do this – be busy about living and loving this way. There is no time to delay!

So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

Roman culture was filled with ideas of “live for today”! Eat, drink and be merry! It was a culture driven by self-gratification. Look out for number one. Claw your way to the top!

Sound familiar. Times might change, but people don’t. That’s because sin is alive and well in the hearts of people. But God’s agape love was given to you, so that you might no longer be bound to sin – but covered with Christ. Covered with His forgiveness. His rescue that makes you a child of God today and a citizen of heaven for eternity. Covered with Christ, or as Paul says “clothed with Christ” so that you every thought, word and action might reflect Christ and His love to the world around you.

Our culture doesn’t need more self-centered selfishness. It needs the self-lessness of Christ and His love. And through you, the world around you get’s to see that love in action. The heart of Christ gets to be made evident today through your words, your hands, your heart – serving and helping the people around you. **God’s love for us moves us to love our neighbor in His name. This is how God’s agape love permeate throughout the Christian life and flows into the world.**

So, let’s wrap up today by giving you some practical ways to put these points into action in your life.

Parents: realize your kids are walking into a cultural minefield about the topic of sex, so you can’t check out on this topic. Every day culture is trying to teach them through TV, movies and the internet. So sorry – but you are going to have to be engaged and vigilant about this.

- Plan on having age appropriate talk about the issue of sex. Again I stress age appropriate. It’s OK to pause the TV show or movie to use teachable moments to talk.
- Understand they want to know what you think about this. They want guidance and information. You are the safe source of that conversation verses other tools like the internet.
- Talk about and show your kids what a loving, Agape love sharing mother or father, wife or husband looks and acts like. In all of the marriage counseling I’ve done through my years of ministry, it’s evident which people grew up in a stable, love modeling, forgiveness offering home – and which people didn’t.
- Put a safety net around your kids. Use parent controls on the TV and the internet. Evil and satan is looking to mess up your child, and future families with his counterfeit junk this world labels as love. Keep them away from the junk the best you can and model what Agape love looks like in your home.

Singles: you are walking into a cultural minefield too when it comes to dating and relationships in our culture.

- Your going to feel pressure in the area of sex before marriage.

- Hold fast to who you are – God’s dearly loved, fully forgiven child. Stand fast in your convictions.
- Find support with others who are going to encourage you to live out your faith. Your pastors can guide you to others in the church or in the area that are a supporting each other.

Couples: the best advise I can encourage you to do is become a lifelong student of your spouse. Find out what they appreciate, even in the bedroom. Explore and ask what makes them feel loved as you live out Agape love in your relationship. The area of sex is a beautiful gift God has given you to build connection with each other. But that connection grows out of the foundation you lay with each other of communication, commitment, sacrifice and generally living out Agape in every area of your life together. So be a student of each other.

Find out what makes your spouse tick, you might also learn what ticks them off and avoid doing those things! This makes life a new adventure each day. Because just when you learn about your spouse as a newlywed, you get to learn about your spouse as a new parent. And then just when you get to know that another stage starts – and so it is with life. There are always new like, new adventures, new ways to put your love into action. Enjoy the journey!

You will mess it up along the way – because when two imperfect humans get together, there is sometimes tears and disappointment. But what a blessing that we can forgive and be forgiven by our spouse, which again reflects God’s mercy and forgiveness to us. This is another way Agape love is shared and enjoyed.

Talk to your pastors about a marriage retreat they might recommend, or a seminar that might be coming to the area. It never hurts to grow in this area and realize others might have some help and suggestions to try. My wife and I have benefited from these and I’m sure you might too.

Finally – love is work. But it is so worth it! God wants to help and guide you in building something beautiful that will last. Agape love shared between spouses has a way of permeating through a whole family and seasoning with love generations of people who come into contact with it. What a blessing from God to enjoy and cherish!

Marriage – it book ends the Bible. The Bible begins with a marriage as God brings Adam and Eve together. The Bible ends with marriage as God the groom, comes to scoop up His Bride, the Church – you and me – to take us to be with Him forever in heaven! This Agape love – filled with commitment, contentment, sacrifice and peace is what God wants for you. It’s what He gives you in Christ. It’s what He calls you to share as a Christian. It’s what He wants to rejoice in as you live out a loving relationship. **God’s agape love is the foundation of God’s gift of sex. And it reminds us that there is no area of our life that is off limits to God.**

Some might call what the Bible says about sex being old fashioned or out of date. But true love – based on commitment and sacrifice for the good of the other person, is a picture of the unique way God has loved you! That is what the cross is all about. God so loved – in this unique way – God loved you. Sacrificing His Son for your rescue! That is love.

In this dark world, be unique – be light as you reflect the victory of Christ in how you love others. To God's glory and for the good of others. Amen.