

Stop by Quiet Waters

By

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Proclaim Biblical Sexuality

Recently I had the privilege of preaching at a new church on the subject of how to develop true community. Over the years I have watched many new churches form and few of them make it in the long run because they never developed true community, that is, a knowledge of, deep love for, commitment to, and a willingness to sacrifice for one another.

I chose 3 texts from 1 Thessalonians 4-5, on which to build the sermon, this was one of them: "...you should avoid sexual immorality." ^{1 Th. 4:3 NIV} Why would I choose this one? For two reasons:

The first reason was that immorality is something a person tries to keep hidden from others, and the attitude of hiddenness prevents true community from developing with others. You share yourself openly with that person but he or she just fakes it in return. We have all experienced this at one time or another and it is heart-breaking when the truth finally comes out. We feel deceived and misled by the person. Some in the body of Christ have the gift of discernment, and though they might not know what is wrong regarding a particular person they sense something is not right. I have a friend who had that experience with a mutual pastoral friend of ours. He told me that he sensed the man was faking openness. Sure enough, one year later the man was caught in an adulterous affair which had been going on for over three years.

The second reason I chose this text was because whenever a person involved in sexual immorality is exposed not only is his or her family shattered by it, but the Christian community of which the person is a part of is broken over it.

The sexual attitudes and practices of our culture are some of the greatest challenges we face as we preach the gospel and pastor the Lord's people. They can't be ignored and yet they seem overwhelming, and we wonder what impact we can make against such forces. Most pastors are reluctant to preach on the subject of sex, and for good reason. It can be like whistling in a windstorm or walking through a minefield. Are you one of them? But the fact is that our sexuality is part of our nature, it is with us wherever we go and constantly being appealed to by our culture. We must deal with it. The question is, how can we deal with it in such a way that our people will move into a biblical life style of moral purity?

I want to suggest some things you can do. First, recognize that the New Testament speaks out for moral purity and against sexual immorality among the Lord's people over and over. The first church council concluded in Acts 15 that there were four things

Gentile converts needed to do, one of which was to abstain from sexual immorality. In 1 Corinthians 6 Paul says the body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord. In Ephesians 5 Paul said there should not even be a hint of sexual immorality among God's people. In Colossians 3 he said to put sexual immorality to death.

Second, if you don't already get "**Leadership**" magazine, I urge you to get the winter 2006 issue which just came out. You can also access it through the internet. The theme of this issue is **The Drive, Intimacy in a sexually charged culture**. It has several excellent articles which will help you think through how to pastor in a sex saturated culture.

Third, study the Bible from cover to cover on the subject of human sexuality and you will be amazed at how much the Bible says about sex and the wonderful and wholesome perspective on sex God gives us. I love the way Bryan Wilkerson puts it in his article, "*The Joy of Preaching Sex:*" "*What we must say first and loudest from the pulpit is that sex is great, and that it was God's idea! Adam and Eve didn't emerge from the bushes one day, flushed and breathless, and announce, 'Hey, Lord, you'll never guess what we just came up with!'*"

Fourth, preach a series of sermons on the Christian view of sexuality. Leadership editor Marshall Shelley wrote, "*It's not easy to talk in church about sex, but to disciple this culture, we can't avoid it.*" Preach it from a positive perspective in the same way God views it. Don't put sex in an evil light; don't sensationalize it, for when it is presented in the light in which God has made it and given it to us it is glorious; don't pronounce judgment on sinners; and don't be afraid to call sin "sin." If you do this, I can assure you that you will have your people listening to you with full attention and giving you all kinds of feedback.

Do this and you will be a faithful pastor challenging a pagan culture and making disciples for the Lord Jesus Christ. You will see young people and adults change their behaviors as they change their beliefs because they are being confronted with the word of God in a clear and loving context. **Remember that the power to change lives is in the word of God used by the Spirit of God through the life of the servant of God.** It happened in the 1st century and it will happen in the 21st century, which sexually is fast becoming a carbon copy of the 1st.

Peace and joy in Christ,

Dick Germaine