



Today, we continue our series "The Elephant in the Room" by discussing sexuality. Plenty of people struggle with issues related to this topic. Perhaps it's an elephant in your life, and you don't want anybody else to know it's there. When it comes to this elephant, like last week's, we can ignore it and pay the price or address it and move toward God's best and flourish.

Warm Up:

1. What's something big or small that happened this week that you're thankful for?

Key Passage: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Discussion Questions:

2. What does our culture have to say about sexuality? How does that message differ from the message of the Bible? What does it mean that the world has a distorted view of sexuality?

What is God's plan for sexuality? A man and a woman together in marriage. When the Bible talks about sexual immorality, it's anything outside biblical marriage. Sexuality is a powerful force in our lives, and when used within God's plan, it's incredible. When taken outside of God's plans, nothing may be more destructive.

3. As we noted last week regarding alcohol, our personal choices have a collateral impact. How is this the case regarding temptations around sexuality, especially those that seem isolated from impacting those around us?

People often downplay pornography – it's not like I'm doing anything with anybody! Isn't that a better, less sinful option? It's important to note that pornography isn't just a male issue. Stats tell us that pornography is an issue for men and women and teenage boys and girls. Nothing has made this issue grow like the proliferation of smartphones, either. Pornography is where many people's minds will go when they read Romans 7:15, "I do the very thing I hate."

Pornography is linked to all kinds of physical and emotional issues. Furthermore, it creates unrealistic, distorted expectations within marriage. AND it doesn't just go away when you get married. People often think they'll easily set pornography aside when they're married and permitted to enjoy the gift of sex in marriage.

We often only think sexual, but let's not neglect to address emotional affairs. You may love your spouse deeply; you may have no desire for an affair, but here's what you'll face: Throughout your marriage, you will find an attraction to other people (friends, co-workers, people at church) And we're

tempted to think, "A little flirting doesn't hurt anyone." This couldn't be further from the truth!

4. Why does Paul use the phrase "do not be deceived" in verse 9? How could we be tempted to downplay sexual sin? How does this compare to what Jesus says in Matthew 18:9 and what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:18? Why does sexual temptation require such intentional steps to avoid? What could this look like practically?

Here's the truth about sexual sin: What you feed grows. What you starve dies.

It's been said that sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you there longer than you ever intended, and cost you far more than you ever thought you'd have to pay.

John Owen, "Be killing sin, or it will be killing you."

Matthew 18:9, "And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It's better to enter eternal life with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell."

1 Corinthians 6:18, "Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body."

5. What does it mean that our temptations are not our choice; our actions are our choice? Give some examples of this reality. How does this connect to what we discussed in question 4?

People do not choose same-sex attraction – for years in the church, the response towards homosexuality was, "It's a choice." For those who don't struggle with same-sex attraction but do struggle with lust: Did you *choose* to struggle with that temptation? In that respect, every step into sexual sin *is* a choice, regardless of what kind of sin it is. If homosexuality is your battle, then you've got to fight that battle just like the rest of us have to fight our own sexual battles.

6. What does it mean that we often think that the sexual sin we don't struggle with is worse than the sexual sin we do struggle with?

When it comes to the sexual sin, we don't struggle with – many may have homosexuality in mind. This is the sexual sin that gets the most headlines. But, as stated in question 5, every step into sexual sin *is* a choice, regardless of what kind of sin it is – and it's still very much a sin.

We must resist the temptation of "morality," which considers our sins less than someone else's. Consider this parable from Luke 18: "Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their righteousness and scorned everyone else: ¹⁰ 'Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! ¹² I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.' ¹³ 'But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' ¹⁴ I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'"

7. In 1 Corinthians 6:11, Paul writes: "Such were some of you..." What does he mean by this? What does this say about our identity in Christ? See Romans 6:1-4.

The phrase “such were some of you” means that some Christians in the Corinthian church used to be sexually immoral, some were in affairs, some were living in homosexuality...then Jesus radically changed their lives. Notice the tense used here by Paul as he writes, “and such *were* some of you.”

Our Identity in Christ means that we have been:

1. Washed - When you put your faith in Christ, you are *cleansed* of your sins. You once were dirty and marred by sin, but through the death and resurrection of Jesus, you have been washed clean. Every wrong thing we’ve ever done, including your sexual immorality, has been covered by Jesus.
 2. Sanctified – This is the lifelong process of becoming more like Jesus in every area of your life. You have grown and are still growing in your faith!
 3. Justified - This happens the moment you surrender your life to Christ. You have been declared righteous before God. It’s like being declared innocent even though you’ve been guilty of a crime. That’s why we call salvation an act of mercy, grace, and love. So, no matter your struggles, you are not defined by them.
8. What does it mean that your past or current struggle with sexual sin doesn't define you; Jesus defines you? How can we give this hope to those who struggle with shame regarding past or recent battles with sexual sin? See Romans 8:1-2.

1 Corinthians 6 gives us a life-changing principle: Our struggle does not define us. Neither are we defined by our sexual past. We’re who Jesus says we are! No matter your past – you’re not a gay Christian, and you’re not an adulterous Christian, you’re not a pornography-addicted Christian – you ARE a redeemed child of God, bought back from a life of sin to live for the glory of God.

Romans 8:1-2, “So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.”

Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, so glorify God with your body.

9. How can we move toward obedience to God in the area of sexuality?

Don’t fight this battle alone! If you need confidential help, email help@crosschurch.com