

HOW TO BUILD A FIRE

Proverbs 5; 6:20-7:27

GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEX THAT LEADS TO DELIGHT

Genesis 2:24

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

One man...one women...for one lifetime. That's the design.

Everyone has a standard that defines what is good, true, and beautiful about human sexuality. And whatever that standard is — it determines and defines what it means to be a man and a woman — what marriage is — and what's permissible and impermissible when it comes to sex.

So — the real question is — What's your standard? Who has the authority and the right to make those definitions.

For the Christian — we believe that God is our creator and our designer...and He and He alone has the right, the responsibility, and the ability to define for us what is good, true, and beautiful about our sexuality.

So we look to God's word to reveal God's design for human sexuality. Anything that deviates from God's pattern and design, goes against God's plan for us to thrive and flourish.

So, what is God's design for sex? It was established at creation — God designed sex to be enjoyed by one man with one woman for one lifetime.

Sex according to God's design leads to satisfaction and delight. Sex that deviates from God's design is distorted and leads to dissatisfaction and death.

Proverbs 5:15-17

15 Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. 16 Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? 17 Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. 18 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. 19 a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.

Pastor Ray Ortlund writes...

Sex is like fire. In the fireplace it keeps us warm. Outside the fireplace it burns the house down. Proverbs 5 is saying, "Keep the fire in the marital fireplace, and stoke that fire as hot as you can."

Solomon uses tasteful — but clear metaphors — to encourage his sons toward a vital, life-giving sexual relationship with the wife of his youth.

Everything about this passage says — God designed sex for our delight...and when a husband comes together with his wife...they should drink deeply of each other and be intoxicated in their love.

At the right time and with the right person — sex as God designed leads to satisfaction and delight. But...when we stray from God's design, we distort sex and delight turns to destruction. Look with me at verse 3.

THE DISTORTION THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION

5:3 For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, 4 but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. 5 Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol; 6 she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it.

Sex according to God's design leads to delight...and so anything that deviates from that design is a distortion. And the thing about distortions is that they often have enough semblance of the real thing to feel like it's an adequate substitute. But as we will see, it offers false promises and sure pain.

Proverbs 7:13, 15-21

13 She seizes him and kisses him, and with bold face she says to him, 15 so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you. 16 I have spread my couch with coverings, colored linens from Egyptian linen; 17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. 18 Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love. 19 For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; 20 he took a bag of money with him; at full moon he will come home." 21 With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him.

Sexual sin is persuasive and seductive. It offers immediacy. You can have it now. It appeals to the senses. It will look, taste, smell and feel good. It is love without commitment or strings attached and so it puts you in control. It's attractive, easy, and goes directly for your heart — to the desires.

Only the person who has decided before hand to flee this kind of immorality will be able to say no. If you are on the fence about what you will say when this opportunity comes...then you won't be able to resist.

22 All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast 23 till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life.

If you read through Proverbs 5-7, you will see him describe consequences of losing your honor and reputation, losing time, money, and property in legal battles, getting beaten up by the cheated spouse, living with regret, broken relationships and families, and there's even a hint at physical deterioration due to Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

Solomon says, sex according to God's design leads to delight and satisfaction...but distorted sex leads to physical, emotional, financial, relational, and ultimately spiritual destruction and in the end leads to death.

The Fool thinks...I can beat the system. I can shortcut wisdom and get what I want. Or how many of us have said...I'll do this now, and then I'll repent and change my ways later?

This twisted lie is from Satan himself.

The 17th century writer Thomas Brooks wrote...

But he who now tempts you to sin upon the account that repentance is easy, will, before long, bring you to despair, and forever destroy your soul, and represent repentance as the most difficult and hardest work in the world.

That's why Solomon says...

6:27 Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? 28 Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? 29 So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished.

Sex is like fire. In the fireplace it keeps us warm. Outside the fireplace it burns the house down. If you play with fire...you will get burned.

Sexual Distortions:

Lust, adultery, extra marital sex, Premarital sex, pornography, strip clubs, prostitution, human trafficking, rape, sexual abuse, incest, bestiality, polygamy, polyamory, masturbation, orgies, swinging, and homosexual and lesbian sex.

Now remember, these aren't arbitrary and ancient rules or prohibitions. All of these deviate from God's design for human sexuality. He gets to decide what is good, true, and beautiful because he designed it and he knows what will lead to our flourishing.

Listen again to Pastor Ray Ortlund...

And the truth is, God gave us our sexuality both to focus our romantic joy and to unleash our romantic joy. When this very human joy is both focused and unleashed—having both form and freedom—it becomes wonderfully intensified. We thrive within both form and freedom.

Boundaries are gifts given by God so that the fire doesn't burn the house...but warms the home.

THE DESIRE TO PURSUE A LIFE OF DISCIPLINE

6:25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes;

7:1 My son, keep my words and treasure up my commandments with you; 2 keep my commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye; 3 bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart.

Solomon tells his sons that the battle to pursue the path of wisdom is a battle for the heart.

So, how do we win the battle of our desires?

Here are three ways to battle well.

First — TEACH your heart and LEARN Discipline.

Prov 6:20 My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. 21 Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck. 22 When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you. 23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life, 24 to preserve you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress.

Did you see what Solomon said...Take this truth and bind it to your heart. This teaching and truth will become a lamp to light your way and it will lead you to a disciplined life.

When we teach our heart where to aim, we begin to love the right things in the right way.

So we have to teach them what is good, true, and beautiful so that our desires are trained to love the right things.

David Brooks, in his book, *The Second Mountain* writes...

We are not primarily thinking creatures. We are primarily loving and desiring creatures. We are defined by what we desire. We become what we love. The core question for each of us is, Have we educated our emotions to love the right things in the right way?

We have to educate our desires.

We often think — if I feel something it must be right. If what you feel is aligned with what God says is good, true, and beautiful — then it is right. If it is out of alignment — the problem isn't with God — the problem is with what we feel. And that's where we renew our minds and our hearts through the regular intake of God's word and through prayer.

Second — WATCH your Steps, GUARD your Heart.

Proverbs 5:7-8

7 And now, O sons, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth. 8 Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house,

Often, we know when we are starting to stray. We know it's wrong and instead of putting that sinful desire to death, we cultivate instead of mortifying it.

Mortify is that old puritan word that means to put something to death.

John Owen

Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work; be always at it while you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you.

When it comes to sin, we have the power in Christ to put it to death...Don't incubate your sin. When it is full grown it will eat you alive. Put it to death.

Be killing sin or it will be killing you.

Third — REMEMBER that CHRIST REDEEMS what sin Distorts

Proverbs 5:21-23

For a man's ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and he ponders all his paths. The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray.

When it comes to sexual sin...Everyone can be tempted — no matter your sexual orientation, gender, age, or marital status — and it's likely that no one in this room has a clean track record. Proverbs tell us that our ways are before the eyes of the Lord. He doesn't miss a single step. Our iniquities and sin set a trap and unless someone sets us free...we will die. But friends...there is hope...listen to this Gospel Truth.

Christ redeems that sin distorts!

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NASB)

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

How is that possible? Jesus was ensnared not for his wickedness, but our wickedness. Jesus was held fast to the cross not by the cords of his sin, but by the cords of our sin. Jesus died not for a lack of his discipline, but the lack of our discipline. Jesus was led away not because of his folly, but because of our folly.

No matter what you've done. No matter what's been done to you. No matter the path you've traveled...there is hope.

Paul says...such were some of you. That can be your past if Christ is in your present. There is no sin that can't be washed and cleaned and there is no sin that cannot be forgiven. Christ redeems what sin distorts.