

Topic	Holy Sex
Reference	1-Thessalonians 4:3-8
Date	1 October 2017
Speaker	Dr Peter Ng

If you come to church, traditionally we don't talk about sex. The paragon of Christian Purity is the pastor or the priest and then the nun were basically married to Christ. If you are married to Christ, means you can't have sex and that supposed to be a better way. I remember there was a catholic calendar that specifically put dates on which you don't have sex. You don't have sex on a Thursday because you are commemorating the Lord's Supper, on Friday you commemorate or honor the crucifixion, on Saturday you commemorate the holy mother Mary, on Sunday no sex because it is Resurrection Day, Monday is all Souls Day.

Lady Hillingdon was a lady in Victorian Era and she writes about sex, *"I Am happy now that Charles calls on my bed chamber less frequently than of old. As it is I endure but two calls a week and when I hear his steps outside my door, I lie down on my bed, close my eyes, open my legs and think of England"*

This is the attitude towards sex and Hugh Hefner, king of porn just died last week. He came from a Christian family. His interview with Evening Post in 1962 says, *"There was no drinking, no smoking, no swearing, no going to movies on Sunday," "Worst of all was their attitude toward sex, which they considered a horrid thing never to be mentioned."* This is his parents, he grew up in a white protestant religious Christian family and sex in the Christian family is basically regarded a horrible thing and that's has been the attitude of the church for a long time.

On the other hand, if you look into the world, it is full of sex. I remember working in an Australian factory when I was young and every second line has an expletive and beginning of F, which is in reference to the sexual act, but in real life sex actually pervades many-many areas of our lives. For an average male, you think about sex several times a day, if you don't I think either you are dead or you are lying, because it is part of who we are and we need to accept that, but in the world they basically deify sex. Helen Gurley Brown is an editor of Cosmopolitan and she says about sex,

*"My own philosophy is if you're not having sex, you're finished."*

*"One of the paramount reasons for staying attractive is so you can have somebody to go to bed with."*

In the old days we use to go for dates. Now they have hook ups, which is basically defined as a casual sexual encounter with no expectation of future emotional commitment. So let's talk about sex in its proper context in the scripture.

## **A. SEXUALITY IS ACTUALLY DESIGNED TO MAKE US HOLY:**

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2 (ESV) Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

So basically we are to walk in a manner that will please God and the most important areas at the time, if you are talking about how to please God in your life are basically sex, work and death. This is exactly what Paul writes to the Thessalonians about. When people see the difference in this area in your life, they will know that you actually have a genuine faith.

Letter to Diognetus, chapter 5 on how Christians were different in the first and second century and he writes, *“They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh “*

For the pagans, they have a common bed, but not a common table. They share their wives with everybody else but they never share their money, they never share their meals and the Christians were completely different. For the average Roman man or Greek man, he actually has four women in his life. He has got the wife, which is called the ‘Gynae’ which is the mother of his children, who look after the household, look after the slaves, she is respectable and then he got the ‘Pallake’ who is basically a sex slave to provide him pleasure. Then you got a ‘Hetaira’ which basically is intellectual equal, best friend, soulmate, also provides sex. Then if that is not enough, he has the ‘Porne’, which is basically the prostitute. Four women for one man, sounds familiar. Demosthenes says, *“We have mistresses for our enjoyment, concubines to serve our needs, and wives to bear legitimate children.”*

This is the thinking of that day. In today’s society, 17 percent of human cultures are strictly monogamous. The rest of human cultures are with multiple wives or multiple husbands. Carl Jung is a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalysis. He says, *“the prerequisite for a good marriage, it seems to me, is the license to be unfaithful.”*

The Mistress by Victoria Green is a New York best seller. It says, *“A busy late-twentieth-century wife just does not have the time, even if she has the inclination, to listen to the tales of her husband's day, to provide him with the glass of wine, the soothing music, the sympathetic ear. Far less does she have the time to offer practical help. So who steps in to fill the breach? The mistress, of course”.*

But within 300 to 600 years, the influence of Christians was so great, especially in this area of sex that the entire Roman Empire had turn to Christ. They made a difference in the way they

approach sex, the way they approach work, the way they approach death. Hopefully, we in our society can do the same.

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 (ESV) For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; **4** that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, **5** not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; **6** that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. **7** For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. **8** Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.**

Holiness is mixed with sex. It comes together. Sex is the path to holism, how you control your body in the area of sexuality that best reflects who you are. John Chrysostom is one of the early church fathers. His view of sex is, *“Sex is not evil; it is a gift from our God. But it can become a hindrance to someone who desires to devote all his strength to a life of prayer...Concerning sex, we must strive for self-control. St. Paul tells us to seek peace and sanctification, without which it is impossible to see the Lord. Let us pursue holiness, then, in order to attain the Kingdom of Heaven.”*

He seems to put sex and holiness apart, sex can be a hindrance to holiness and I think we actually hold ambivalent ideas about sex, but Paul is very clear. The path to your sanctification is actually sex. This is the will of God for your sanctification that you learn how to control your body in holiness and honor.

### ***What is holiness?***

It is basically being set apart for God, growing to be like God in his nature. That is what holiness is. It is not necessarily a group of ‘Nos’, it is learning to be like God. Being like God is the best way of human flourishing because if we are made in the image of God, we will most flourish if we are most like God. So we are neither on one side obsessed with sex which controls our lives, neither on the other side we abstain from sex. Many of the early church fathers have actually misunderstood it.

There are two kinds of sex. One is honorable and the other is dishonorable. The dishonorable one is in the passion of lust like the **5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God**. Apparently there is a holy sex and there is a lustful sex.

### ***How do you have sex without lust, without desire?***

St Augustine wrote, *“In Eden, it would have been possible to beget offspring without foul lust. The sexual organs would have been stimulated into necessary activity by will-power alone, just*

*as the will controls other organs. Then, without being goaded on by the allurements of passion, the husband could have relaxed upon his wife's breasts with complete peace of mind and bodily tranquility, that part of his body not activated by tumultuous passion, but brought into service by the deliberate use of power when the need arose, the seed dispatched into the womb with no loss of his wife's virginity. So, the two sexes could have come together for impregnation and conception by an act of will, rather than by lustful cravings"-,*

Martin Luther says, *"The reproduction of mankind is a great marvel and a mystery. Had God consulted me in the matter, I should have advised Him to continue the generation of the species by fashioning them of clay"*

Sex is about control, if you are talking about having expressing your sexuality, holiness and honor, it is something that God controls and not like the passion of lust which is basically our body controls completely beyond our own control.

**Romans 1:24-25 (ESV) Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.**

So immorality actually comes when you actually given yourself to your own lust. You are under control of something else. It is related to idolatry. When you let go of the truth that is known on God, when you stop worshipping the only true God and you start worshipping something else in your life, idolatry is the cause of immorality and much of it is

## **B. IMMORALITY IS DUE TO IDOLATRY:**

**(ESV) Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food" 1 Cor 6:12**

They feel that sex is a physical thing. Just like you are hungry, you eat, you are tired you rest, you feel sexy, you have sex. It doesn't matter who it is with, as long as you satiate that particular desire. It is just satisfying a desire and in a sense it makes sense. Physiologically, it makes sense. If we look at an experiment involving sheep. Every time the ram has sex with the same female sheep, the time to ejaculation becomes longer and longer and longer and maybe it doesn't come next time, but with different females, it is very fast, which means for physiologically actually you should have many females. So that's why Hugh Hefner has this idea of having many women in your life.

*"the interesting thing is how one guy, through living out his own fantasies, is living out the fantasies of so many other people."* If you think that sex is only about desire, the playboy

philosophy is *“sexual freedom was part of a larger spirit of liberty, including free speech, relaxed drug laws and civil rights, including gay marriage”*.

It is releasing from biblical norms into a freedom, apparent freedom as it were. The low view of sex is, this is a commodity, it is a desire, I feel hungry I go to shop, I feel having sex, I go to the sex cinema and the sex shop and see Miranda. It is a low view of sex. Then it translates into modern generation. Modern generation is porn and it effects so many people especially the younger generation because that's available on the spot and the more porn you look at you actually get a hit in part of your brain called nucleus accumbens. You have got dopamine that is released in your brain, every time you look at the porn and you have sexual satisfaction, the dopamine comes up again and again and again and scientist have found that it causes the accumulation of this substance called Delta FosB. Delta FosB accumulates in the nucleus accumbens and it causes you to crave it more and more and more and by doing this Delta FosB causes structural changes in the brain, in such a way that you get numbed pleasure response, which mean you need bigger and bigger hits, because that amount of dopamine is not enough, so you need to see more and more explicit acts in order to have the same response, you are hyperreactive to porn and you also have got loss of will power and at the end erectile dysfunction happens.

The bad news for young people is really big problem, we have just discovered erectile dysfunction from going to porn. The years and years of heavy porn does cause the accumulation of Delta FosB and causes structural changes. Porn is actually sexual suicide. The problem with sex is uncontrolled lust and Samson was an example of a judge who was basically controlled by the woman, Delilah, who actually was his downfall. It is a cautionary tale which the Bible tells. The other ingredient of sex is just not physical, it is also social, psychological and emotional.

**Genesis 2:18 (ESV) Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” V24b and they shall become one flesh.**

That is the only episode in the entire Book of Genesis where God said it is not good. So it is not good to be alone and there is a social dimension of how we are created. If you look at this physiology of prostitution. If genital stimulation or orgasm is the goal, it is lot cheaper to do it at home, why would you go out and man go out and look for a prostitute. You got to pay a lot of money, might get HIV AIDS, you might get herpes and all sorts of things, why would you go and look for. The reason is that, they look for another human being, so that when they interact with that human being and they want that prostitute to create sort of noise and pleasure. Why do they get bothered whether the prostitute having good time or bad time, because it is social interaction. Sex is not just genital stimulation; it is social interaction.

Pretty Woman was a show in which Richard Gere was a basically a rich person and he picks up Julia Roberts early in the career as a prostitute and he pays for her for whole week and she allows him to have sex and do whatever he wants but there is one place that he cannot do, he cannot kiss her, you know why because that's the real her. She reserved some part of her life, her lips that will represent who she is. The rest of her is a commodity that can be sold, but you can't get to the real me. That's why she has allowed sex but you cannot kiss me and that tells you human beings, sex is just not physical, it is psychological, emotional as well as social.

Noam Shpancer, Ph.D., is a professor of psychology at Otterbein College. He says, "*sex is truly pleasurable because through it we may transcend our aloneness and form a meaningful bond with another human being*"

So it is not just physical, it is social. Randall Collins writes, "*You and your lover do not bring your sexual pleasure to the relationship. You get sexual pleasure from the relationship. Your body parts do not charge the relationship with sexual pleasure. The interaction charges your body with sexual pleasure. Pleasure is not derived from the physical stimulation of the genitals or from the possibility of giving birth to the next Bill Gates. In its most fundamental sense, sexual pleasure is derived from the synchronized cooperation between people. The whole of human contact is larger than the sum of its participating individual parts*".

Which means when you come to sex, it is not like potluck, it has to require social interaction. So therefore sex is about either determining how your body controls, how your mind controls in terms of your social interaction.

In Australia, they are going to have a big referendum. Before they are going to have this, they are going to send out postal service to everyone and the former prime minister of Australia's daughter is actually a lesbian and she is going against her father, who is basically conservative and she says, "*You can't help who you fall in love with. Love just happens sometimes and its unexpected and that's kind of what's the awesome thing about it.*"

It you talk about sex, our body and our mind make up our own mind is not in control. Sex outside God's control is wrong simply because its controlled by something else other than God. It is about control and for her, your feelings are the most important thing and we are living in a generation especially young people, where it is the same, it is the lust of passion because that's all that controls it, because you feel so good, you get all these dopamine rush when he loves you and he likes you so much that is all that matters.

The definition of morality, "*codes of conduct put forward by a society or other group, such as a religion.*" Or "*Any code accepted by an individual for her own behavior or a code of conduct put forward by rational persons*"

Problematic definitions because society is changing. The whole group of people are changing. Gallup poll in 2015. In 2001 40% thought gays and lesbians are okay, now 15 years later it is 63%. Having a baby outside marriage, 45% agreed to it in 2001, now in 2015 it is 61%. Relationship between unmarried man and woman 53% in 2001, now in 2015 it is 68% and it goes on and on.

Societies attitude are changing. Sex before marriage 30% in 1972 thought is not wrong, now today it is like 60%. Gay marriage, 10% thought it was not wrong, now 2012 it is almost 40%. So society, if we actually depend on societies definition, they are all moving in a very wrong way, so therefore we actually have this lesbian-gay movement all over the world and the medical fraternity actually let us down.

We have got a set of definitions in psychiatry, DSM I, II, III, IV and V, so we keep on updating our definitions of disease and when I was in medical school that was way back in the early 80s, I worked under a very brilliant professor whose idea was, in those days' homosexuality is a disease and he used to have this funny gadget where you put a monitor over the penis, connected to electrodes and it flash a picture of a beautiful woman, if you get erection out of that, hello happy everyone claps. You show a beautiful man, if you have erection and you get a rise, he gets electrocuted. He tried that for years, didn't work. The change in definition from doctors. It used to be a sociopathic personality disorder in 1952, then it changed in 1968 to sexual deviation, then it changed in 1973 to sexual orientation disturbance then it went on to ego-dystonic homosexuality then after that it is removed almost completely.

In 1973 they pressured a huge demonstration, pressuring the American Psychiatric Association. There were about 30 to 40 thousand doctors in that association at that time, so they all actually had to, they send out questionnaires. Only 10,000 doctors returned the questionnaire, 56% said homosexuality is not a disease and rest of them were chicken because the gays were quite violent and difficult at that time. So you actually have the thing decided by a minority of people because the other 20,000 never referred to the questionnaire and so from then onwards the DSM IV and V now do not have homosexuality as a disease or disorder in any form but we know it has got a lot of problems, they will have suicide which is on increase, depression, promiscuity, disease, there are a lot of medical problems with homosexual couples. So how can we redefine, why should we redefine what marriage is?

Peter Kreeft is a philosopher and he gives a good argument. He says, is marriage an artificial human invention. If marriage is an artificial human invention, then we can define it by human will. So therefore, if have an ipad, then I will call it ipad because I can as it is defined by human will. But when you look at marriage, it is something that is defined by natural essence. You won't create marriage, you don't invent marriage, you discover it, like you discover the law of gravity. It applies everywhere. You discover it by natural essence, and marriage is like that. So

you can't just define it, just because you go and demonstrate and so therefore it is what you want. So you look at what scripture says

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (ESV) Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Leviticus 18:22 (ESV) You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

Leviticus 20:13 (ESV) If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.

But sometimes the church starts to move. In Germany we actually have a bishop. He says, *“church’s teaching on moral sexuality was “repressive” and “remote from life.” It was also no longer tenable to declare that every kind of cohabitation before marriage was a grievous sin,”*

The church is starting to move. The other aspect of sex is not only physical, it is social, it is also spiritual because there is a way in which you can have sex with holiness and honor. Corinthians tells us very clearly.

1 Corinthians 6:15-17 (ESV) Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! **16** Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” **17** But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

So therefore there is a unity when you become a Christian. Because you are bound with Christ as one spiritually, how can you bind yourself with a prostitute and he says

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (ESV) Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. **19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, **20** for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Our bodies are special; our persons are special. We are created not only for physical satisfaction of sex, social interaction but also there is a spiritual dimension. It is different, every other sin a person commits outside the body but a sexual immoral person sins against his own person. Imagine the temple in Jerusalem, what he is saying is that you only offer certain sacrifices, certain animals, you come, the high priest will basically cleanse himself for one week and it goes

into the holy of holies and sometime ago this guy called Antiochus Epiphanes came in and he offered a pig, it is a desecration of the temple. Sexual immorality is about the same thing. Because if your bodies are temple of our Lord Jesus Christ, having sex with someone else outside marriage is like offering a pig, it desecrates it. That's what Paul means, by every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. When you commit the sin of immorality, you are actually desecrating the very body in which the sexual act is supposed to be offering in recognition of Jesus Christ of God, of who how created us.

Jim Baker was a television evangelist who was caught with sexual immorality. Look into his mind when he actually wrote this book about his apology, about having sexual immorality.

*I had never cheated on my wife in all our years of marriage. Jessica Hahn, however, seemed quite comfortable with the situation. I simply abandoned myself to the moment. We did not make love; we had sex.*

So here is a man who is a pastor, who is trying to differentiate between making love physical, spiritual part love and then there is sex, it is just sex only, but yet that is in his mind. When he had sex with the woman he said this is just physical, it is sex, it is not love, I feel horny, I got this desire, I feel like having it and then yet when he does it he writes, *"I disrobed and immediately stepped into the shower, turning the water on as hot as I could stand it. I never felt so dirty in all my life. Maybe if I make the water hotter, it will wash it all away, I thought."*

On one hand his mind says it is not love, it is just sex, on the other hand he is trying to burn himself to death because it is dirty, because in his mind sex is spiritual. It affects you to the deepest core of your personhood. Sex is about self-control, in holiness and honor or in passion of lust.

The first non-westerner noble prize winner was also for novelist, Sir Rabindranath Tagore. He gave example of what is sex is. Sex is like a violin string, if you take the violin string and you just put it on the table and you just roll it back and forth, it does not do anything, it does not sing. You take the violin string and you stretch it right across as tight as possible then you run the horsetail on top of it and the sound comes out and the string sings. It is about control. True sexuality is a reflection of our love and our proximity to God and is about control. It is tightly wound and control under tight circumstances it will make you flourish.

They shall become one flesh. If you want total intimacy, means total commitment, you can take off your clothes and expose yourself entirely to another person then I think you need to respect the other person to give your entire life to that person, total intimacy means total commitment. It honors God and honors each other. If you have sexual immorality, it dishonors that person

because that person would just feel like an object. Having total intimacy means total commitment. How would you commit your body entirely to someone and yet not your life? That is how humans needs to flourish.

It is wrong to say that Bible is against sex.

**Songs 7: How beautiful you are and how pleasing, O love, with your delights!**

**7 Your stature is like that of the palm, and your breasts like clusters of fruit.**

**8 I said, "I will climb the palm tree; I will take hold of its fruit." May your breasts be like the clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples,**

**9 and your mouth like the best wine. May the wine go straight to my lover, flowing gently over lips and teeth.**

**10 I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me.**

The Bible celebrate sex but like a violin string, strung right across, tightly controlled, it sings, it is beautiful, it is the most beautiful experience you would ever have. Peter Kreeft of Boston College says, "*Sex... gives us subjectively a foretaste of heaven, of the self-forgetting, self-transcending, self-giving that is what our deepest hearts are designed for, long for and will not be satisfied until they have, because we are made in God's own image and this (kind of) self-giving constitutes the inner life of the Trinity*".

So in a trinity where it is God, Son and Holy Spirit, there is no looking at self. There is looking at the other, giving, pleasuring, upholding, loving, always the trinity and what he is saying is that sex gives us a foretaste of that, because in the sexual act itself the focus is on the husband and the wife and they focus on each other. So in sex, your focus should be to pleasure your partner and your partner's focus should be to pleasure you. So this is done in great dignity, honor and beauty and this is a reflection of what happens within the trinity he says.

Sex can also be a glimpse of hell because it is a spiritual act. Louise Brown wrote a very important book on Sex Slaves, the trafficking of woman in Asia. This is a child prostitute who writes, "*I am angry at my fate. If my mother was well she would have arranged a good marriage for me and I would not have to suffer this shame. My life is ruined. I want to learn a new skill so I can earn money and look after my mother. No one will want to marry me because of what's happened to me. I won't live long and before I die I will pray 5 times a day to God to apologize for what has happened.*"

This is heart wrenching, a child sold into prostitution with the very act that tears in her soul and she grapples not only been suffering but also with guilt which is not her own but it is guilt because sex is a spiritual act as well.

### **C. GOD WILL CALL US INTO ACCOUNT FOR OUR SEXUALITY**

Our sexuality is the most potent tool in our bodies. Everywhere in our lives we encounter issues in sex. People kill each other for sex, people conquer whole countries for sex, it is part of who we are, it is physical, it is social, psychological and spiritual. We need to come to terms with it and not only we need to come to terms with it, we need to take our bodies and handle our bodies, it is not just for married people here, it is also for unmarried people. How you handle your sexuality is a way of sanctification. That's why one of the biggest problems in leaders in church is sexual infidelity, because it is a core of every person's being. So we need to admit it, we need to work at it, we need to be accountable to each other for it, because you can't do this alone. We need to be accountable to each other.

1 Thessalonians 4:6-8 (ESV) that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

This is the area I want us to read. We live in an era where the world is telling us that the Bible doesn't matter, sexual morality does not matter, everybody else is doing it, but no matter what God has given us his Holy Spirit, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and we will be given an account of this one day to Him.