

Family Bible Series for Jan. 29: Godâs plan remains the only one that works

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God's plan remains the only one that works

- Genesis 2:18-25; Proverbs 5:15-20; Romans 13:11-14

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“We are both consenting adults.” “Everyone is doing it.” “If it feels so good, it can’t be wrong.” “But we really love each other.”

These and other similar sayings have become engraved on the collective popular conscious of most Americans as justifications for all types of sexual activity. Since the sexual and social revolutions of the 1960s, the concept of moral standards, especially in the area of sexuality, has come under gradually increasing attack. As the idea of absolute truth has given way to the philosophy of relativism, morality has become a matter of personal preference and “living in the moment” rather than a principle of life guided by universally applied standards.

This certainly is nothing new in human history. The majority of the world's great civilizations have experienced a widespread decline in morality shortly before their collapse. Yet from Genesis through the Apostle Paul's letters, the Bible always has offered the consistent affirmation that morality was a part of God's original plan for humanity.

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Indeed, there is a moral order to all of creation that is based on certain absolutes. It is only through living in line with these guiding principles that one can find real personal fulfillment and satisfaction in this world.

Genesis 2:18-25

God created humans for relationships. He wants us to have a personal relationship with him as well as interpersonal relationships with other people. Each person has an inherent need for companionship, and God specifically has designed various relationships in order to meet that need.

Among individuals, there are perhaps no more significant relationships than those within a family. It is within the family that people learn how to relate to others. It is the family relationships that most influence the kind of people we grow up to become. The family is so important that the Bible records the story of its creation by God.

Genesis 2 tells us that God specially created men and women so that they

perfectly complement each other. They are each suitable partners for the other. According to Genesis 1:27, God created humanity in the divine image. Thus it is only when masculine and feminine come together as “one flesh” that God’s image in the world can be demonstrated.

This is the basis for the creation of the institution of marriage and the foundation for the family. The preservation and protection of the divine image also is an important part of God’s limitation of marriage as the only appropriate place for sexual expression.

It is significant to note that the initial immediate result of the first sin in Genesis 3 was an awareness of human sexuality. The first couple realized they were naked and sought to conceal their bodies from one another.

Since then, human sexuality has been perhaps the most difficult aspect of our lives to control. Marriage is God’s design for creating and expanding family relationships and for safe and proper expression of our sexual nature. The resulting relationships then become the means for meeting the relational and emotional needs of all the members of the family.

Proverbs 5:15-20

Ancient Israel’s sages also knew the influence sexual desire exercised in the life of individuals. They also knew God had established marriage as the place where those desires could be met. As mentioned above, within marriage, individuals may fulfill those desires in a way that allows them to participate in the fullness of the divine image.

According to the sage in Proverbs 5, marriage also creates an atmosphere of safety and protection for sexual expression through the mutual commitment each partner has made to the other.

Christians are compelled to honor that commitment by avoiding all sexual activity or exploration outside the bounds of the marriage. Respecting God's boundaries for sex in marriage fosters health, satisfaction and deeper relationships. Disregarding these boundaries places one's very life in jeopardy. As one experiences the security that this mutual commitment brings, one can enjoy the true fulfillment and even exhilaration that God intended.

Today, a multitude of tempting messages attack us daily. Billboards and magazines, television shows and commercials, websites and chatrooms all seek to draw us into inappropriate sexual activities outside God's design.

The words of the sage speak just as loudly today. If you are single, avoid the house of the temptress that you might fully experience the fulfillment of God's plan. If you are married, set your full desire on your spouse and rejoice in the satisfaction of committed love.

Romans 13:11-14

While sexual purity is God's design for all humans, Christians have been given a special mandate to live lives of moral purity. We are called to lay aside all improper desires and live in proper relationship with all people. This is one of the ways we let our light shine.

While the world may criticize our actions, they will not be able to deny the fulfillment and satisfaction we experience as we live in accordance to God's design. In his letter to the Romans, Paul provides us with a further motivation for living morally pure lives. Jesus has promised to return for those who believe in and live for him.

We do not know the time when that return will occur. It could be at any hour. Each Christian should strongly desire to be found pure when Jesus

does return. Because of this, we are to maintain our lives in purity and refuse to give in to and satisfy the lusts of the flesh.

Human sexual desire is indeed a difficult animal to tame. God knows it is. God created us to be sexual beings. He created us to enjoy experiencing our sexuality. But God also created a world based on a moral order and placed guidelines for sexual fulfillment within that moral order. Life outside those guidelines leads to guilt, dissatisfaction and possibly physical danger. But as we live within those guidelines, we can experience all of the satisfaction and fulfillment in life that God desires for us.

Discussion questions

- In Genesis 2, God paraded all of the animals before Adam in order to find a suitable mate before the creation of Eve. What do you think was the purpose of this?
- What things do you do to avoid or withstand sexual temptations?
- How would you answer someone who said that what they do in the flesh (short of breaking the law) does not impact their spiritual life?

