

# Review: Holy Sexuality and the Gospel

August 14, 2019

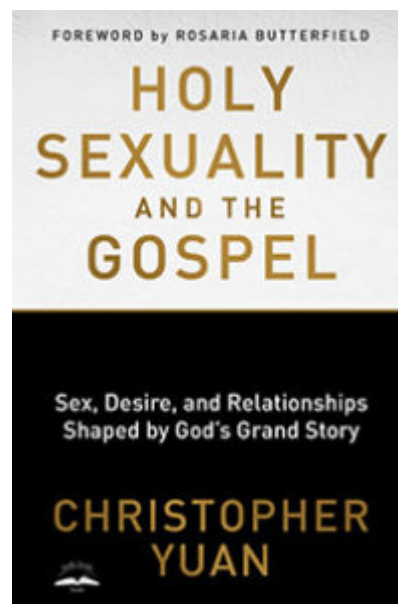
## *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel:*

## *Sex, Desire, and Relationships Shaped by God's Grand Story*

**By Christopher Yuan (Multnomah)**

For those with a settled position on sexuality and same-sex marriage, this book will not change that position.

Readers wary of another book on sexuality and who are curious about what Christopher Yuan's position is on the topic need only consider the publisher is Multnomah, known for publishing theologically conservative authors. In addition, Yuan repeatedly leans on John Piper for theological support.



Yuan's previous book, *Out of a Far Country: A Gay Son's Journey to God, A Broken Mother's Search for Hope*, recounts how he found identity in Christ

rather than sexuality. *Holy Sexuality* picks up where *Out of a Far Country* left off and covers a lot of territory.

In the first chapters, Yuan seeks to combat the prevailing view that sexual identity is central to overall identity. Rooting identity in the image of God rather than human constructs, Yuan suggests sexual orientation derives from sin rather than from one's createdness, thereby denying the givenness of orientation by birth. He returns to this discussion in a later chapter.

Yuan challenges another prevailing idea—the notion of homosexuality as abnormal and all forms of heterosexuality as normal. He contends that not all forms of heterosexual sex are sanctioned by God and that most forms are equally outside the bounds as same-sex sex.

For Yuan, the only biblical understanding of sexuality is “chastity in singleness and faithfulness in marriage,” key terms being chastity and faithfulness. He defines marriage as the joining of one man and one woman, not by natural order—which validates all forms of heterosexual sex—but by the special revelation of Scripture.

In a short chapter addressing attraction, Yuan examines temptations and desires as the biblical terms for attraction, explaining they are neither sinful nor benign things. What makes desires sinful are their ends, or goals, which he expands on in the next two chapters.

Five chapters in the center of *Holy Sexuality* are devoted to marriage, singleness and friendship. Yuan challenges the cultural idolization of marriage, as well as interpretations of Genesis 1 and 2 advanced by James Brownson and David Gushee, two traditionalists who became accepting of same-sex marriage.

For Yuan, the exaggerated importance placed on marriage led to the *Obergefell* decision in 2015 and leads Christians to present singleness as an inferior option for those who aren't married. In response, he offers an

examination of Jesus and Paul as exemplars of the richness of singleness.

Concluding the chapters on relationships, Yuan elevates the family of Christ above friendship and seems to raise it even above marriage, stating that marriage is for this world while brotherhood and sisterhood in Christ are for eternity.

Inserted between one set of chapters on relationships and another set is a single chapter rebuttal of Matthew Vines' interpretation the good and bad fruit in Jesus' teaching on false teachers (Matthew 7:15-20).

The final chapters of *Holy Sexuality* turn to relationships of outreach and discipleship. These chapters include helpful "dos and don'ts" when interacting with LGBTQ persons and advice on what to do when someone "comes out."

The book concludes with an eight-week study guide designed for small-group discussion.

*Eric Black, executive director/editor/publisher  
Baptist Standard*