

Dear Leaders & Parents of Watermark Students,

This letter is meant to inform you all about an upcoming series we're doing in our Junior High Ministry at Watermark Community Church starting February 9/10. We intentionally address the topic of sexuality in Wake and our Small Groups once every three years with a series entitled:

EXPOSED

NAKED TRUTH ABOUT SEX

There's no denying the fact that sexualized messages embedded in our culture (movies, radio, television, internet, social media, magazines, store windows, billboards, text messages, lunchroom conversations, etc.) continue to undermine biblical morality and destroy young lives. Junior High students are bombarded with culture's messages of sex, but often are far less "exposed" to the biblical view.

Very few topics are as tough to tackle with young people as the topic of sex. We recognize that this is an especially sensitive subject for this age group, and want to invite you into the conversation with us or give you an appropriate "heads up" to make the choice to wait on some or all of these conversations, by abstaining from Wake/Small Group for the next four weeks.

This series certainly won't answer all possible questions about sex (in fact, it may serve to raise a bunch of new ones), but it will expose Watermark's students to 1) a biblical understanding of God's plan for sex, 2) where society has gone wrong, and 3) what a young person can do about it all.

I want to encourage everyone to visit <http://www.watermark.org/dallas/ministries/junior-high/curriculum> and click the "Exposed" icon to view a detailed summary of the material that we will cover in Wake and Small Groups on February 9/10, February 16/17, February 23/24, and March 2/3 (a split guys/girl panel). I can assure that we will follow these outlines and address this topic in a very straight-forward and tactful manner. Take some time these next few weeks to work through these outlines and discussion questions and figure out exactly how it applies to the specific situations and students you are invested with. Because of the subject matter, parents and leaders may need to adapt the discussion topics to fit specific individuals and groups.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or comments about the topic. Also, please join us in praying that this will be a helpful and impactful time in our students' lives.

In Him,



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EXPOSED

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Week 1 – God’s Good Design for Sex

Today, we’re going to be talking about sex. In fact, for the next 3 or 4 weeks, we’re going to be talking about sex. I want to go ahead and say this: I understand this is probably going to be really awkward. I’m gonna say the word ‘sex’ so many times, and it could be uncomfortable. I get it. So I want to start by asking you all to do something. I know that there are some of you who, when you hear the word sex, your natural inclination is to giggle or laugh or make a joke to your friends. You want to so bad!

I’m going to ask that you not. That you try really hard to focus in on what we’ll have to say for the next few weeks.

Why are we talking about this?

Now, I know there are some of you that are thinking to yourselves right now, “Why are we even talking about this? Last month we talked about being a good friend, and now we’re jumping to sex?! What we talking about next month, how to be a good parent??” I want to talk to you guys real quick. I also understand that...that for some of you, this feels out of left field, doesn’t apply to you, and isn’t one of even the ten most pressing topics in your life.

But here’s the truth: the world around you thinks it is. Wanna know how I know that? Because it’s EVERYWHERE! Literally, everywhere. We know which TV shows junior high (and high school) students watch...most of them have sex in them, and some of them - often the most popular ones - have what we would call a lot of sex in them. The movies marketed towards you guys, whether in theaters or on Netflix...storylines revolve around sex. Your favorite social media platforms, Insta & Snapchat...wouldn’t take me very long to find plenty of inappropriate sexual content there. Billboards, magazine covers in the grocery store, the news, popular slang, lunchroom conversations. The music you listen to, even if you just “like the beat” - often filled with references to sexual things. It is all like a current in the ocean, carrying you off to a place where sex & sexualized images in various contexts is normal, without you ever getting there; it influences the people at your schools, on your teams, etc.

What I’m saying is this: No matter who you are, I believe you’re being exposed to it at some level, or will be very soon. And in this series, we want to make sure you all are at least exposed to what the Bible has to say about sex.

Sex is Created by God

Genesis 1:27-28

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number."

God is the creator of sex. He had sex in His mind when he made us male and female. Since God created it, He is an expert on the topic of sex. We see and hear so much about sex every single day but sometimes the messages we’re receiving can be incomplete or confusing. If we want to understand the whole truth about sexuality we should turn to nothing else but the source. This week we’re going to study the Bible and take a look at 5 purposes God had in mind when he created sex, and why they’re good.

Next week we’ll talk about what went wrong with sex and the week after that we’ll cover how a teenager can handle the topic according to God’s plan.

God's Good Design for Sex

1. Sex is Meant for Marriage

Matthew 19:4-6

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

2. Sex is Meant for Man & Woman

Genesis 2:20-24

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

3. Sex is Meant for Mutual Intimacy & Enjoyment

Genesis 2:24

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

4. Sex is Meant for Multiplication

Jeremiah 29:4-7

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

5. Sex is Meant as a Model (for us & Jesus)

Ephesians 5:31-32

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

We can trust God's design and faithfully follow Him in it.

If you have chosen something outside of this, or someone has chosen for you...you're not damaged goods, and you're not too far gone. You still have the choice to choose God's good design for sex.

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Week 2 – What Went Wrong?

There are some arguments that feel pretty straight-forward about why sex should be okay. Often times, we hear many of those arguments in messages that commercials, billboards, movies, TV shows, social media, and conversations with others are sending us all day everyday. Sex has become normalized and widely accepted and encouraged as a normal part of relationships and even a normal form of recreation and fun.

Here is what the world is saying about sex:

- Ready for next step in our relationship...
- In a committed relationship....
- If you really love me...
- Everyone's doing it.
- It's my business...not yours...I can do whatever I want.
- Can't expect me to stop.
- Just fooling around.
- It's unhealthy to deny my natural needs.
- Not blind...Can't help but look...
- Just a joke somebody sent over email...
- Just a video...or a picture...not actually doing anything.
- Just looking for love.
- Old rules before birth control & protection.
- I want to be sure that he's the one.
- It's not like murder.
- God created it. What could be wrong?

Review

Last week we talked about God's plan for sex by covering five aspects of God's good design for sex. Unfortunately, a lot of people out there have completely lost sight of God's intentions for sexuality. Most of what we see on the media and most the things teenagers are experimenting with is based on some really messed up lies about sex. People have tried for many years to make sex fit their plan instead of God's plan. The consequences to believing these lies about sex are tragic.

Today we're going to discuss four of the biggest lies about sex. Buying any of these lies could lead to loads of pain, disappointment, and tragedy...so pay close attention.

Lie #1 - Sex is Limited to "Going All the Way"

People have tried to put sex in a box and convince themselves that they are still following a good path as long as they don't "go all the way." The Bible does not support this viewpoint at all! The Bible clearly says that we shouldn't even have a "hint" of sexual immorality and Jesus says that even "looking" at someone in a lustful or sexual way is a sin.

You need to know that things like passionate, long kisses, grinding at parties, looking at pornography, any level of undressing or touching of private parts, sexual joking, conversations about sexual experiences, fantasizing, "sexting" and other things like this are all parts of sex and are inappropriate for someone who wants to follow God's plan for sex. You can't separate different pieces of the sexual experience and say that they are okay...it is all tied together.

Ephesians 5:3

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity,

Matthew 5:27-30

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'"

Lie #2 - Sex Can Serve Whatever Purpose I Choose

Last week we learned that sex is for 5 things: 1) Marriage, 2) Men & Women, 3) Mutual Intimacy, 4) Multiplication, and 5) Model of Jesus & the Church. However, much of the world has tried to make sex fit with their own purposes instead of God's purposes. A person might agree with purposes 2 & 3 but completely ignore the others. They might say, "If two people are in love, then it is okay." The problem is, you can't just pick and choose what sex is for...God made it and he has a plan for it, we can't just change his plan and make up our own.

The world has come up with its own purposes for sex. Check out what they've come up with:

Sex is meant for Recreation/Fun (Hooking Up)
Sex is meant to be a Step in a Relationship
Sex is meant to Represent Rebellion against Authority
Sex is meant to Prove Maturity (Become a Man)
Sex is meant to Fulfill Instincts
Sex is meant to Help a Person Feel Loved

Unfortunately, any time any part of God's plan is ignored, there are physical, mental, emotional, and/or spiritual consequences. Sex is only appropriate, free of consequences, and truly fulfilling when it fits within the context of all five of God's purposes.

It's worth mentioning that God does not want to deny us the opportunity to have fun, deepen relationships, grow in maturity, feel loved etc. He has graciously provided other ways for us to celebrate these parts of life without the destructive side effects that come with sexuality outside of his purposes.

Lie #3 - Sex Leads to Love

Many people will engage in sexual relationships in their quest to find love. A guy might say to a girl, "If you really loved me you would..." A girl might think to herself, "Maybe he will love me if I just..." They have confused love with sex, thinking that by having a sexual relationship with someone, they might somehow manufacture the loving relationship they long for. Love is something so much more than sex. Love is a verb that is characterized by actions and commitment.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

You can never manufacture love. Love is a choice. Love is an action. Love is a sacrifice. Love is permanent. Only a wedding ring and the vows that go with it is proof of love because it means that the other person will always be there. Anyone who is not willing to commit to forever cannot be trusted in any sort of a sexual relationship.

Lie #4 - Sex Can Be Safe

Our society talks a lot about "safe sex." The truth is, sex is never safe outside of marriage. No matter how much caution you use, giving yourself to another person is always vulnerable. Your body, your heart, and your soul are always on the line when you get involved physically with another person. Always. Sex can only become safer when it is with someone you can really trust. Remember not to be deceived, you can only really trust someone that is willing to give their life to serve you in a committed, loving marriage relationship.

Proverbs 4:23

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

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Week 3 – What’s a Teenager to Do?

In the last two weeks, we've attempted to give you a little more clarity and inspiration on the topic of sex. First we talked first about God's purposes for sex and second about the lies we often hear about sex.

God's Good Plan for Sex What Went Wrong? What's a Teenager to Do?

If we're honest, most teenagers have several years of avoiding those lies until the time comes for God's purposes for sex to be fulfilled in a marriage relationship. In light of the last two weeks, today we're going to talk about specific actions that students can take to walk faithfully with God while they wait for His good purposes for sex to be fulfilled in their lives.

1. Know Your Bible & Know Your Standards

Do you agree or disagree with God's purposes for sex? Do you understand the lies that most of the people in our society believe about sex? Are you willing to stand up for and follow God's plan? Based on what you know the Bible says, what are your limits when it comes to physical relationships with members of the opposite sex?

2. Let Your Standards be Known to Others

Once you've decided where you stand, let others know all the exact details so they can encourage you and support you. Tell your Parents and your Small Group for sure. Also, you must make certain that you talk about your personal standards to anyone who wants to date you before you begin a relationship. If they don't agree 100% with what you believe based on the Bible, do not date them!

Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

3. Flee from Any & All Sexual Immorality

You're going to be tempted in many, many ways. The Bible calls us to fight sexual temptation primarily by 'fleeing' it, yet also in a pursuit of Christ to satisfy our longings.

2 Timothy 2:22

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and purity, along with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart.

Ephesians 5:3

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity,

1 Corinthians 6:18

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

1 Corinthians 10:31-33

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

Job 31:1

"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl."

Genesis 39:11-12

One day Joseph went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. Potipher's wife caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

4. Wait on Relationships Until You are Ready

Don't let yourself fall in love with someone until you are ready to follow through with serious commitment. If you get in a deep emotional relationship, you are really asking for more temptation than you can handle.

Song of Solomon 2:7, 3:5, and 8:4

I charge you: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

5. Prepare for Your Future Role

While you're waiting for God's purposes to be fulfilled, spend that time preparing yourself to be the kind of husband and wife God intends for us to be. Instead of fooling around with sexual things, pour your life into serving other people. As a married man, I can tell you that marriage is about service and sacrifice. By serving others you can prepare yourself for a great marriage.

Ephesians 5:24-25

As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her.