

Sexuality—part 2

Grace and Truth – part 14

July 23, 2023

DAY 1: Why are the lines of sexuality so sharply drawn?

1. Over the course of about 400 years, the nature of how we think we know who we are has changed dramatically.
2. The culture war is thought to mainly be about sex. On the *surface*, that is true. But there is something else that is deeper than sex that drives the debate about sexuality. We will come to this shortly.
3. In our current culture there are still things with which the vast majority of people agree.
 - Consent began as a Christian value,
 - Adultery, where most people see the terrible harm done to adults and children,
 - Sexual abuse.
4. Some Christian views may seem weird to our secular culture, but not harmful, like abstinence.
5. But there is one part of our sexual ethic in general, with which we are no longer allowed to agree to disagree. LGBTQ+. Affirmation is demanded.
6. Certain sexual beliefs and practices have become a new form of social *orthodoxy*. It is now *demanding* that everyone celebrate and honor these beliefs and practices. June was Pride MONTH. That tells us a tale of our day. Social *orthodoxy*. Something more is going on, and we intuitively know this.
7. **Why** has this one area of sexuality become singular in its significance?
Why is it in this one area of sexuality that Christians must dismiss the historic sexual ethic, and 2,000 years of ethical history, for Christianity to be plausible to secular culture?
8. On most issues, we can have strong disagreement about moral issues, yet still remain in relationship, in friendship, and love within a family. It's amazing that in a country as pluralistic as ours, with over one hundred different languages spoken, that we can agree to disagree and still remain friends, go to baseball games together, greet each other in our neighborhoods, kids play on the same soccer teams, and have family reunions. That is profoundly American.

This is not the case with the LGBTQ+ issue.

9. The bottom line conclusion: it is **not** an **ethical** discussion; it is an **identity** discussion.
10. What strikes you from today's writing?

DAY 2: The driver beneath sexuality: identity.

1. Identity, not sexuality is the driver of the tension in the sexual debate.
2. Here is an illustration of the real driver beneath sexuality. A tweet was sent out by the U.S. Department of Education at the beginning of Pride month.

“Everyone in the school community should feel valued for who they are, and free to be their authentic self. Our message to LGBT+ students, teachers, and staff as we begin Pride month: the Education Dept. has your back.”

3. There is a storm brewing at local school boards and parents about books and curriculum. Parents are scared to death of what their children are being exposed to at such a young age.
4. That said, the deeper driver of this issue is identity, not sexuality. The most telling part of the Dept. of Education tweet was, “Everyone in our schools should feel valued **for who they are** and free to be **their authentic self**.”
5. What will we teach our kids?
 - a. Our secular culture now believes, “Our sexuality and our gender are no longer a part of us; they are us.” When we talk about a sexual identity or gender identity, it is not sexuality or gender that we are talking about now. It is **identity**!
 - b. The source of our disagreement is not sex disagreement; it is an identity disagreement.
 - c. When that is true, you are not disagreeing with someone’s views, ethical beliefs and practices. You are disagreeing with someone’s very existence.

How did we get here? The next few days will be a history lesson

WHO AM I?

1. IDENTITY EXTERNALIZED.

For millennium, the answer to the question of identity was answered externally, outside of us. “God is the basis for my identity. I am a farmer, the son of Joe and Mary. I live in the town of Livingstone, I’m an Englishman,” etc.

That changed in the 18th century.

2. INTERNALIZING of IDENTITY.

Hyper-individualism turned us inward to answer the question of who we are. We were no longer beholden to institutions or God for our identity.

3. EXTERNAL ANSWERS to our identity BECAME our *OPPRESSORS*.

- a. Rousseau: “Man is born free and is everywhere in chains.”
- b. The idea is that the truest self is a free, autonomous, self-determining individual. But that identity has been chained by external realities. He reframed it this way: the externalities that used to answer the question of who I am are really **threats** to who you are, external authorities like family, society, laws, and religion—external authorities seeking to define you, are standing in the way of your autonomous individualism, and the quest to individually determine who you are.
- c. What strikes you from today’s writing?

DAY 3: Continuing our history lesson

Now, identity is not a dialogue with eternal realities; now it is a monologue with the self.

4. ENLIGHTENMENT: THE AGE OF REASON

The Enlightenment “discovered” that we don’t need God. Result? Autonomous individualism.

5. ROMANTICISM: THE AGE OF EMOTIONS

- a. These philosophers believed we are more compelled by our desires than by our ideas.
- b. The problem: Romanticism’s emphasis on feelings disconnected feelings from reason.

The result regarding identity:

6. Autonomous individualism + Romanticism’s emotions=Internal *EMOTIONAL* identity

“Who am I?” Not my thoughts, but my feelings.

7. SIGNUMD FREUD

- a. For Freud, everything comes back to erotic desires.
- b. Romanticism said we are defined by emotions and desires. Freud said we are defined by **sexual** emotions and desires. Because sexual experience is the strongest emotional force, we must “seek the satisfaction of happiness in this life along the path of sexual relations and make genital eroticism the central point of our life.” Happiness –the sexual as highest; genital eroticism the highest happiness.

The result? Who am I? **Internal, emotional, sexual** identity

8. THE KINSEY REPORT.

- a. In the middle of the 20th century, Kinsey released his study of sexuality in America. Kinsey was a flawed individual, and determined that his results match the current sexual trends.
- b. He can be considered the “father of the sexual revolution of the 1960’s-to the present.
- c. There were two major shifts because of his reports.
 - (1) Kinsey “normalized” virtually all sexual behavior, including sexual behavior that had been considered deviant.
 - (2) Historic norms, including biblical norms, were jettisoned.

What strikes you from today’s writing?

DAY 4: History continued...

Identity has taken its next shift. Charles Taylor calls this...

9. THE ETHICS OF AUTHENTICITY.

- a. This is now PARAMOUNT. When someone comes out of the closet, this is what you most hear. "I was living a lie. I wasn't being true to myself." The spirit of our age is the spirit of authenticity.
- b. Remember the Department of Education tweet. "...free to be your **authentic self**."

10. SEXUAL REVOLUTION OF THE 60'S

- a. In the 1960's, the revolution was to cast off antiquated moral boundaries that had served humanity for millennia.
- b. It was the quest for sexual freedom.
- c. That then morphed into the quest for sexual **liberation**.
- d. That then morphed into **personal liberation**.

The result:

- e. You are not just *sexually* liberated; **YOU** are liberated. You are free to be you. You are free to follow the feelings of your sexual desires and practices. You **are** your sexual identity.

IN TODAY'S WORLD

1. We are experiencing a casting off of traditional religion. However, no human being can live with that vacuum. We will fill the vacuum with something.

Sexual Identity is the new religion.

2. And now we can understand why LGBTQQ+ sexuality and practices are the new orthodoxy. It is a combination of identity of sexuality AND the fiercely held devotion to this way of thinking in the same way we are fiercely devoted to Jesus.

3. They don't view this as **part** of them. They view this **AS** them.

4. Tolerance, respect, kindness, and love are not enough. Agree to disagree is not enough. You must AFFIRM.

5. WHY? "BECAUSE SEXUALITY **IS ME**; TO NOT AFFIRM MY SEXUALITY IS TO NOT AFFIRM ME. You're not disapproving of my sexuality. You are disapproving of **my very existence**.

What strikes you from today's writing?

DAY 5: Biblical Doctrine of Identity

This history should beg the question: What is the doctrine of biblical identity?

1. We are image-bearers of God.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

a. Our ultimate identity, our deepest identity, is rooted in God's creation of us as people. Adam and Eve were the crown of creation (Genesis 1). So are we.

b. This is the basis of an *inherent* dignity and love. It is done, and nothing can change that!

c. But being an image-bearer is more than the basis of our significance and love. We **ARE** image-bearers of God.

2. God **wants** to be our Heavenly **Father**.

Matthew 6:9 "Our Father, who is in heaven..."

Whatever your experience was with your earthly father, whether tragic, dreadful, or wonderful, God wants to come alongside as a father should – and wants to!

3. God **wants** to include us in His **family**.

John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

4. God wants to **adopt** us into His family.

*Galatians 4:4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. ^e ⁶ Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "**Abba, Father.**" ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.*

5. We are raised to be **Christ's brother!**

Hebrews 2:11 Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

What strikes you from today's devotional?