



Living Out

Living Out Day Derby

Saturday 8 June 2024

Programme

Timing	Title	Aim
09:30	The Bible and Sexuality	Exploring the Bible's teaching on sex and marriage by asking the question 'Why does God care about sex?'
10:30	Break	
10:45	Engaging With Our Culture	Exploring common beliefs about sex in wider culture, the problems with those beliefs, and the Bible's better story.
11:45	Break	
12:00	Living It Out in Church	Exploring how we can be biblically inclusive churches, welcoming and supporting all, including same-sex attracted people.
13:00	Close	



The Bible and Sexuality

People...

Two ways of determining identity

"I couldn't accept who I was and didn't want to be the person I was becoming. I didn't want to be gay...After I accepted who I was, the next challenge was whether rugby would accept who I am...Rugby has supported me and players, spectators and pundits...have all enabled me to be who I am."

Nigel Owens

What's the universe about?

God's plan for sexuality and marriage

'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?' Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate...There are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others – and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept it should accept it.'

Matthew 19:4-6, 12



'Although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him...Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another.'

Romans 1:21, 26-27

'Men who have sex with men...'

1 Corinthians 6:9

'Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman.'

Leviticus 18:22

God's ultimate plan for sexuality and marriage

'Your Maker is your husband | the LORD Almighty is his name.'

Isaiah 54:5

*'You will be a crown of splendour in the Lord's hand,
a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
No longer will they call you Deserted,
or name your land Desolate...
for the Lord will take delight in you,
and your land will be married.
As a young man marries a young woman,
so will your Builder marry you;
as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride,
so will your God rejoice over you.'*

Isaiah 62:3-5



'How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them?'

Matthew 9:15

'This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church.'

Ephesians 5:32

'Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready.'

Revelation 19:7

'One of the functions of human marriage is to express the nature of the union between Christ and the Church. We have no authority to take the living and seminal figures which God has painted on the canvas of our nature and shift them about as if they were mere geometrical figures.'

C.S. Lewis, 'Priestesses in the Church?' in *Essay Collection: Faith, Christianity and the Church*, p.401.

Using sexuality as a signpost



What are the benefits of “sexuality as a signpost”?

The shape of the Christian life

‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it and whoever loses their life for me and for the Gospel will save it.’

Mark 8:34-35

‘See what great love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are!’

1 John 3:1

The ultimate human interest story



Engaging With Our Culture

Why engage with the cultural view?

Personal discipleship

Mission/evangelism

Too often as Christians, we enter conversations that no one is having and wonder why we are not seeing the change that we are believing for. What Paul did...was profound. He joined the conversation his world was engaged in, in order to bring meaningful transformation from the inside. Answering questions no one is asking is a waste of time and energy. Answering questions that everyone is asking with game-changing kingdom wisdom is part of the mandate on every believer. Join the conversation, and then provoke it to wholeness...We do not do ourselves (or the world) any favours if we denounce conversations without journeying with unbelievers in them.'

Katia Adams, *Equal: What the Bible Says about Women, Men and Authority*, p.167

What are sex and sexuality for?

Culture's answer: achieving the goal of individual happiness.

'All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.'

Blaise Pascal



‘Whatever makes individuals happy is the dominant ethical approach.’

Carl Trueman, <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2021/11/the-rise-and-triumph-of-the-modern-self-an-interview-with-carl-trueman/> [accessed 01/02/2024]

Happiness is... finding and expressing your true self

Find your true self (through your sexuality) and then let us all know who that is.

But...

- **Identity is received from God**
- **We are more than sexuality**
- **We are not enslaved to our sexual desires**

Happiness is... having all your needs met

Physical/biological need

Adulthood/maturity need

Need = right

But...

- **Sex is not a need**



Living Out Day

- God meets all our needs

Happiness is... having all your desires met

How can you deny yourself and be happy?

But...

- Our desires conflict internally
- Our desires conflict with the desires of others
- This view doesn't work with reality
- In dying to self we find life
- God answers and fulfils our deepest desires with Himself

Happiness is... intimacy and connection

Sex is how we express/experience intimacy

But...

- A need becomes a right
- Many people are excluded from experiencing intimacy
- Intimacy is found in our unity with God
- Intimacy is found in friendship and church community



A Better Story

'We all look for happiness, but without knowing where to find it: like drunkards who look for their house, knowing dimly that they have one.'

Voltaire

Case Studies

How could you answer this question?

What's good in it? What can you agree with? How can you empathise?

What needs and truths are they expressing? What assumptions are they making?

How does the Bible speak to those? What's the better story?

How could you come alongside this person?

Not just having a one-off conversation or convincing someone of a certain sexual ethic, but expressing genuine care and compassion for them, and pointing them to Jesus.



Emmanuel is a gay Christian guy struggling to figure out how his faith & his sexuality can work together. “Does God hate me? Will I never be loved?”

Kerry & Tessa are a couple who come to your church one Sunday. They aren’t Christians, but they are interested in what Jesus has to say. “Do we have to stop being who we are to follow Jesus?”

Amara is 14, growing up in a Christian home, and has recently come out as gay. Her father, **Tom**, is grappling with what to do. “Our faith doesn’t make room for her experiences... I just want her to be happy.”

Lucas and Claire are a Christian couple. Though not married, they have been together for five years and are sleeping together. “Why does it matter? We’re not hurting anyone.”



Living It Out in Church

Living Out Audit

1 Peter 2:12

Leaving a question mark behind...



Answering the questions...

How do you respond to Pride?

John 4:14

Reasons for hope



QUESTION TIME

Space for your notes



NEXT STEPS

1) What does your church need to appreciate about our changing culture?

2) How could your church better share the biblical vision for human flourishing?

3) In what ways does your church need to become more biblically inclusive?

4) How has God most challenged you to change today?



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- **Living Out website**

<https://www.livingout.org>

The Living Out website has been completely revamped in the last year and now contains a wealth of resources:

- Brief animations around the theme of marriage as a trailer and the cultural messages on sexuality and gender.
- A podcast from the team considering big questions – now into series three.
- A weekly blog with a mixture of testimony, cultural reflection and Biblical insights.
- Reviews of the latest books on the subject of the Bible and sexuality.
- Video stories of Christians who experience same-sex attraction
- Articles on key issues.

- **True Freedom Trust**

<https://truefreedomtrust.co.uk>

Living Out doesn't provide pastoral support for those living with same-sex attraction. However, we are very grateful for our friends at True Freedom Trust who do seek to do this - for individuals, families and churches.

See this flyer for more information about them:

https://truefreedomtrust.co.uk/sites/default/files/square_flyer_2020_redacted.pdf

- **Books on sexuality**

- Sam Allberry, *Is God anti-gay? And other questions about homosexuality, the Bible and same-sex attraction* (Good Book Company)
- Ed Shaw, *The Plausibility Problem: The church and same-sex attraction* (IVP)
- Ed Shaw, *Purposeful Sexuality* (IVP)
- Rachel Gilson, *Born Again this Way* (Good Book Company)
- Preston Sprinkle, *People to be Loved* (Zondervan)



- **Transgender**

- Andrew Bunt, *People not Pronouns: Reflections on Transgender Experience* (Grove Books)
- Preston Sprinkle, *Embodied: Transgender Identities, the Church and what the Bible has to say* (David C Cook)
- Talk by Andrew Bunt: <https://www.livingout.org/resources/talks/4/transgender-an-introduction-for-parents-and-youth-leaders>

- **Cultural resources**

- Glynn Harrison, *A Better Story: God, Sex and Human Flourishing* (IVP)
- Carl Trueman, *Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution* (Crossway)
- Talk: Tim Keller on *Our Culture and Identity* and *Christ and Identity*
<http://www.livingout.org/resources/identity-in-christ-conference-interviews-talks>
- Andrew Bunt, *Finding Your Best Identity: A Short Christian Introduction to Identity, Sexuality and Gender* (IVP, 2022)