

Tackling Tough Topics - God & Sex

What does God have to do with sex?

One of the best ways to prepare for children's questions about sexuality is to review Pope John Paul II's teachings on "The Theology of the Body." From 1979 to 1984 the pope presented 129 homilies defining who we are and how we are to live. His wisdom shares the true meaning of God's gift of human sexuality.

Questions about sex & God:

- Is sex good or bad? (#1 question)
- Does God think human sexuality is important? If so why?
- Does sex have anything to do with the church or being a Christian?
- Adults say sex is a beautiful thing. Why don't they want us to have it then?
- What does the Church have against porno?

Questions asking for HELP:

- What does the Church expect of me?
- How do you avoid the temptation of sex?
- What are you to do when you have feelings about sex and you want to try it?
- What are some ways that you can avoid being sexually active with others?
- What are some places to get help about sex and avoiding it?

Who are we?

- God created us in His image. "Let us make man in our image." (Gen 1:26)
- We are the only earthly creatures God created in His image and likeness.
- We are persons - beings with a mind and a will.
- We are different from the animals because we can think and choose.
- The body is a physical sign of who I am. The body expresses the person.
- The body cannot be separated from the person.
- Our bodies express our unique persons, what we know and choose.

What does God want us to do?

- We are called to act like God, to express God-like love.
- We are called to love because He loves.
- In loving as God loves, pleasure is not the end in itself.
- Love includes the body because the body is a sharer of spiritual love.
- Jesus reveals how we are to love. His death on the cross was a freely given gift of self. For a man and a woman to love each other as Jesus loves, their sexual union should be a free gift of self, that is a total giving, faithful and life-giving.
- Our bodies can make the love of God visible in our world.

Tackling Tough Topics - God & Sex - continued

Why did God create two sexes?

- The Ache of Solitude –“It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him.” (Gen. 2:18)
- God created man and woman with different bodies so “two could become one flesh.” (Eph 5:31) The male and female bodies do not make sense alone.
- Male and female bodies were created to express this act of love.
- The call to be one is not just a physical call; not just parts fitting together.
- Man and woman's desire for each other is inspired by God so they can share their love with one another. The whole focus is to love one another as God loves us.
- When a man and woman give themselves to one another, it is not only biological but a union of the innermost being of the human person.
- “The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.” (Gen. 2:25) When the gift of sexuality is used as God intends – to love another more than you love yourself, to be faithful to that person for the rest of your life and to be open to the creation of a new life – there is no shame.

What is unique to married love?

- Man and woman are meant to love and be life-giving in their union.
- Marriage is the natural institution that does this. It provides the sacramental grace to support the mother and father in their lifetime commitment to each other and any children that they may have.
- The husband and wife give themselves to one another through acts which are proper and exclusive to their spouse.
- When one loves as God asks us to love and is loved in return, this love shows the world not just how the married couple loves but how God loves.
- The bond of a man and woman in marriage is a unity of persons. It mirrors and reflects the unity of the Trinity.

The crisis in our culture, the misuse and abuse of sexuality

- Look at the messages behind slang terms.
- Men and women are used for their partner's gratification.
- If we do something to someone's body, we do something to the person.
- If you use someone's body, you use the person.
- Each person is “a special order.” We are each an unrepeatable being as no two persons are alike.
- Human beings have a dignity and value greater than anything else on earth.
- Pornography lies about the meaning of the body. It portrays the body to incite lust i.e., craving sexual activity for the sake of selfish pleasure. It degrades the person. The woman allows herself to be used and the man uses the woman.
- Instead of a self-giving love, man and woman seek a distorted version of love by allowing themselves to be used, dominated or manipulated.

What is God's answer for our world?

- "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God." Purity of heart allows us to see the face of Christ in every person; to see a person, not a thing to be used.
- God's goodness and beauty are still within us. We are called to reclaim this vision. It can be experienced, not perfectly, but progressively with God's help.
- Modesty, showing respect for ourselves and others in the way one speaks and dresses, protects us from lust.
- Lust, the unrestrained desire for sexual gratification, alters our intentions and how we see one another.
- JPI I calls us to experience a victory over lust, to be purified from lust. We are called to live morally, to be attracted by what is good, not just follow rules.
- The "Power of the Gospel" - when God penetrates the human heart, there is no imposition because then we desire not to sin. St Paul, "For those who follow the spirit, they are free from the law." (Rom 8:2)
- Jesus calls us to do what we can't. St. Paul "When I am weak, I am strong." (2 Cor 12:10) By acknowledging our powerlessness to live as called and accepting Jesus as our savior, the power of the Holy Spirit becomes a part of our lives. The Holy Spirit enables us to do what we thought we could not by ourselves.

How can we love as God loves?

- God has given us the gift of human sexuality with instructions for happiness, not rules to take away our pleasure.
- We don't always do what we should do. Just because we have an inclination or desire, doesn't mean we should do it. We become what we want to be.
- When you love someone, a spouse or a child, you can be transformed. As you love another more than yourself, you become less selfish and more free to love.
- God has given us many gifts to help us love as he loves; the sacraments, the Mass, scripture and prayer. The challenge is how to encourage children to use these gifts.

A Parents' Challenge

- Good News/Bad News, Children learn by what they see not what we tell them. They learn about love and service to others from their family.
- Teach children to love as God loves. It is important to surround your children with people who will teach them what love is all about and how to love. Know the parents of your child's friends and foster good friendships.
- How do parents respond to stress and anger? With courage and honesty?
- How are arguments settled in the family? With forgiveness?
- Does the family pray together, go to Mass and receive the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation?

Eucharist transforms us by the love and self-sacrifice of Jesus.

Reconciliation frees us from sin so we can go back and love others.

Scripture helps us learn more about our loving Father, how we can follow Jesus and how the Holy Spirit can strengthen us.