



#1. THE CHRISTIAN WAY OF THINKING ABOUT SEX

- Each human being is created in God's image.

^{27a} "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them..."

Genesis 1

^{27b} God created one humanity - the male and female persons.

"... in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

Genesis 1

- God gives sexual intimacy as a gift to strengthen a marriage relationship.

²⁴ "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh."

Genesis 2

- God incarnated as a man

¹⁴ "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father..."

John 1

- Our body is a temple of God's Spirit

¹⁹ "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your body."

I Corinthians 6

#2. SEXUALITY & SEXUAL WHOLENESS

- Two concepts in tension: the sensual and the affectionate.

- Our basic identity as males and females

- A holistic view of man

⁷ "The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

Genesis 2

- Relational intimacy

¹⁸ "The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone..."

Genesis 2

- Sexual integrity

¹ "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship"

Romans 12

#3. THE GARDEN AS AN ILLUSTRATION

- Scriptures begin with a couple in Eden and end with the descent of the New Jerusalem out of heaven as a Bride adorned for her husband.

¹ "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God.... ² On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." Revelations. 22

- Jesus affirmed the garden template.

¹⁸ Jesus: "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning." Matthew 19

- Paul pointed to the garden template.

¹⁶ "Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." I Corinthians 6

- The Bible provides word pictures of a walled garden (Job 1:10)
- God's instructions teach us how to prepare, plant, grow and reap sexual wholeness.
- Healthy relationship is the life flow of the garden.

#4. INTRODUCING THE SACRED GARDEN

- Structure to organise thinking and efforts to build up wholeness.
- Purpose is to build sexually-healthy disciples.
- Applies to both the home and the congregation.

#5. MY GARDEN IN DISREPAIR

- At any one time, 50-75 percent of the congregation faces sexuality issues.

⁶ "They made me caretaker of the vineyards, but I have not taken care of my own vineyard." Song of Solomon 1 (NAS)

⁹ "Where the river flows everything will live" Ezekiel 47

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Genesis 2:18. This Scripture is usually taken to refer to marriage.
Q: Could perhaps this also refer to relational intimacy?
(Singles can be fulfilled relationally whilst married people can be lonely.)

2. Read Genesis 2:24.
It's been said that God gives sexual intimacy for procreation and for marital bonding/pleasure.
Reflect on how sexual intimacy strengthens a marital relationship.
Consider how sex is more than just a physical act.

3. Read 1 Corinthians 6:18
Sexual sin hurts so much because it touches you deep in the core of your heart and soul. Consider the holistic nature of humanity. Note: This relates to reflection point 2 above.