

Series - Sexuality

Date/s - 24 July 2016

Topic - Returning To The Garden – Embracing God's Design for Sexuality

Speaker/s - Pastor Ben KC Lee

**Welcome** [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[www.thesource4ym.com/games/](http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/)

[www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html) < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

**Worship** [15 min]

You may select songs like 'Open the eyes of our hearts', 'Complete', 'Find us Faithful' (Steve Green)

**Spiritual Objectives**

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand the Christian way of thinking about sex
2. Embrace God's design for sexual wholeness

**Word** [45 min]

With the Sexual Revolution, which started in the West in the 1960s, the Bible was seen as a source of repression. Nowadays, many people feel free to have sex without considering the importance of covenantal marriage. As a consequence, we have unplanned pregnancies, no-fault divorce, transmitted diseases, and our young do not learn about sexuality properly but rather from pornography or mis-informed friends.

Instead of repressing sex, in the book of Genesis, there is an unblushing account of human sexuality. It is therefore important to teach sexuality and sexual wholeness in the church.

- 1) The Christian Way of Thinking about Sex
  - a) Each human being is created in God's image (Genesis 1:27a) for a purpose. Humans are designed as an eternal vessel through which to declare God's glory. It has intrinsic value and hence, abortion runs contrary to God's design.
  - b) There are 2 distinct genders - male and female persons - single image reflected in duality. Children reflect God's attributes in both dad and mum. Single people can also be whole people.
  - c) God gives sexual intimacy as a gift to strengthen a marriage relationship. (Genesis 2:24) Two are united to become one flesh - body, soul, spirit. Sex is a powerful union of these three parts. There is no such thing as casual sex. Our body is a temple of God's Spirit. Sex within the marital covenant is meant to be an act of worship of the body as a living sacrifice. God is pleased with this sexual union.
  - d) God incarnated as a man. John 1:14 Word became flesh. The body is a divine revelation and an embodiment of God.
  - e) Our body is a temple of God's Spirit and it is sacred (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). You are not your own. Like God, Christians should have high view of human body and sex.
- 2) Sexuality and Sexual Wholeness

It is the basic identity of a human to be male or female, and God has a holistic view of man. There are two concepts ie. sensual and affectionate which are in tension. Sexual desire which is natural and part of being a human should not be confused with lust, just like hunger is different from over-eating or

gluttony.

- a) Sexual wholeness – God has a holistic view of a person (Genesis 2:7). Adam was a male before he became a human being. Every aspect of life is either for female and male, however, society teaches that gender is what you think you are.
  - b) Relational intimacy (Genesis 2:18) - Singles can still live healthily as whole people without romance or sex but we cannot live without intimacy as we are not created to be alone.
  - c) Sexual integrity (Romans 12:1) – An expression of sexuality in an excellent and pure way. The thinking and speaking of an individual should be consistent with his or her core value e.g. story of Joseph.
- 3) The Garden as an Illustration- It starts with a couple in the garden of Eden. Sexuality is like the garden with a hedge around it (Job 1:10). Jesus affirmed this garden template (Matthew 19:8 and 1 Corinthians 6:16).
- a) The Bible provides a word picture of a walled garden. There is a door and we have the key. So, do I open and let any people in? Outside of the garden are weeds, abuses and serpents – these thoughts should not cross our minds and actions because there are emotional consequences. Sexual sin hurts deeply and profoundly.
  - b) God’s instructions teach us how to prepare, plant, grow and reap sexual wholeness.
  - c) Healthy relationships are the life flow of the garden

Pastor Ben Lee introduced a (3-layered) framework ‘the Sacred Garden’ to build up sexually healthy relationships, i.e., ‘4 hedges’ that define the perimeter and protect the garden, ‘7 nurseries’ that nurture and sustain the heart of the garden lake collectively and ‘Wellspring of 3’ is the source of life for this garden. Today, God’s Garden is in disrepair. At any one moment, Pastor Ben Lee shared the observation that 50-75% of congregation face sexuality issues. In Ezekiel 47:9, it says where the river flows there will be life. At the basic level, sexuality has to do with our spiritual longings for connection, intimacy, comfort, nurturing and love. We have to help one another to take responsibility for our own sexual feelings, acts, behaviours, attitudes so that we may embody this holistic vision of sexuality.

### Discussion Questions

1. **Pastor Ben Lee talked about the Christian way of thinking about sex. Recall the five things he listed on this. Share briefly how each relate to embracing God’s design.** [10 min]

**Leader’s Notes:** *This is a recap & relate question. Pastor listed 5 brief principles about the Christian view on sex:*

*a. God created human being in His image (Genesis 1:27a).*

*Man and woman are created in His likeness. Both genders are able to reflect God’s attributes. For eg. Children can see God’s characteristics in father and mother.*

*b. God created one humanity comprising of male or female genders (Genesis 1:27b).*

*Man or woman is capable of wholeness with his masculinity or her femininity. It is being able to identify with his or her sexuality and enjoy relational intimacy as individuals.*

*c. God gives sexual intimacy as a gift to strengthen a marriage relationship (Genesis 2:24).*

*Sexual intimacy is only for the husband and wife. God is serious about sexual purity. Sex is fulfilling and safe within marriage, but harmful and destructive outside of those confines.*

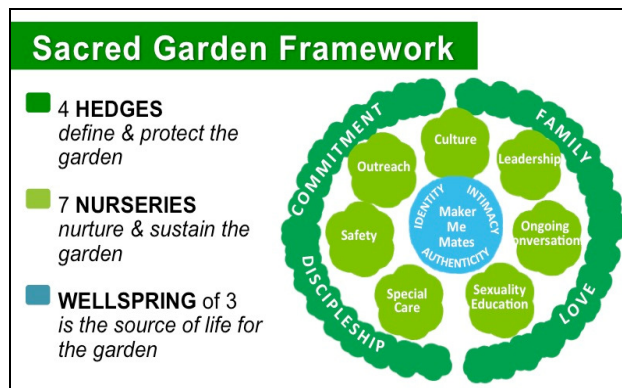
*d. God incarnated as a man (John 1:14).*

*The human body is a vehicle of God’s revelatory glory. This is where the divine find earthly expression. The Son of God Christ came in the male person and walked among us.*

e. God’s Spirit resides in us – our body is a sacred temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).  
The bible says that we are redeemed with a price and we ought to honour God with taking care of our body.

God has designed us as individuals with our own sexuality to enjoy wholeness. Sexual wholeness therefore applies to everyone whether single or married. We can be whole and capable of relational intimacy with one another.

2. **The Garden is used to illustrate sexuality. We hold the key to this garden in order to protect it. Why is this so?** [15 min]



**Leader’s Notes:** A relate & reflect question. Briefly, sexuality refers to both sensual (physiological) and affectionate (emotional) make-up of a person. It has to do with our spiritual longings for connection, intimacy, comfort, nurturing and love. Sexual wholeness is the well-being of our gender which reveal how our gender is intricately hard-wired into every part of our being and way of life (choices & needs). Each gender would think and usually behave according to his or her sexuality. Sexual integrity indicates if what we do or how we conduct ourselves is consistent with our gender.

In the sermon, there is a wall that surrounds this Garden like a hedge. It acts to protect our sexuality and therefore, our sexual wholeness. The Garden can be broken into via this hedge with a key. The key represents the responsibility we have to ensure that ‘foreign’ objects or persons do not enter the garden and destroy it. It also shows our accountability as we are to nurture the garden and let the plants grow healthily which is analogous to what a gardener should do with love and care. What may these ‘foreign’ things be? Discuss about the possibility of how one might be ‘tempted’ to open the door of the garden to seemingly attractive things that are outside the garden. What may these temptations be? Get cell members to share about what these may be to singles and married.

3. **Pastor Ben Lee mentioned that “we cannot live without intimacy as we are not created to be alone.” How can we build relational intimacy that is God-honouring in our relationships (marriage, family members, colleagues, small groups and community)?** [10 min]

**Leader’s Notes:** This is a response question. Firstly, know that in order to enjoy God’s design of wholeness for our lives, boundaries are needed in most healthy relationships. It is also obvious that with different persons, we would have different levels of intimacy. Invite members to think of a specific relationship and what is the one thing he/she needs to seek God, partner with Him to improve or halt the relationship with the individual/s. Should we walk in ways that bring dishonor and break the heart of our ABBA Father? As we pray that we ‘be like Jesus more and more’, may we live lives where God finds us faithful according to

*His Holy image.*

*Leader can decide to separate the guys and the ladies for separate sharing. Or cell members can pair up as prayer buddies (singles or married) to close in prayer for one another.*

**Works** [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Every RiverLifer to embrace the Christian way of thinking about sex & God's design for sexual wholeness.

**Announcements****1. LIVING THE GOSPEL**

19 Aug – 24 Sep | Worship Centre (3 Fri night & 1 Sat)

Registration closes on Sun, 14 Aug (e-Life sign up through cell leader)

For more information, please contact Christine Tan at 65114145, or email her at

[christinetan@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:christinetan@riverlife.org.sg).

**2. JOINING THE FAMILY**

Sat, 27 Aug | 2–5pm | Faith Chapel

Sign up at the Information Counter by Sun, 21 Aug

For more information, please contact Clara Tan at 65114160, or email her at [claratan@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:claratan@riverlife.org.sg).