

Theological Perspectives on Current Societal Issues

NORTHSTAR CHURCH POSITIONS

Sexual conduct, gender, and purity

We embrace the biblical teaching of creation and the relationship of marriage that God established as a gift to humanity through Adam and Eve. Genesis states:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27 ESV)

Western culture in the 21st century has become more and more antagonistic toward the biblical teaching about human sexuality, gender, and the expression of them. Northstar seeks to *clearly* and *graciously* communicate biblical truth to topics that are difficult to discuss and are therefore often left unaddressed.

In short, Northstar's position on human sexuality is as follows:

Sex and human sexuality are good gifts from God, given to be enjoyed within the boundaries of biblical marriage, between a man and woman.

This statement will serve as an outline for the remainder of the paper.

i. Gift from God

Human sexuality is, first of all, a great gift from a loving God. Since the first man and woman, sex has been a gift given with multiple benefits. In marriage, sex brings physical and emotional intimacy and closeness. Biblical writers even describe the results of sex as melding two people into one. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:16:

Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh."

God has also given human sexuality as the mechanism of bringing about the great gift of new life. It's through our sexuality that God has chosen to create the children that he blesses us with. God even commands sex when he tells Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it..." (Genesis 1:28)

ii. Boundaries for Sexuality

All good gifts are beneficial and enjoyable in the context in which they are meant to be used. Human sexuality is no different and God has given us clear directions on how and in which way human sexuality is to be expressed. Like a loving parent showing their child how to use a new toy on Christmas morning, God directs our use of his gift for our enjoyment and His glory.

Followers of God are provided with extremely clear guidelines on appropriate ways to express

our sexuality within the confines of biblical marriage. God established the first marriage, and His Word consistently uplifts it as a special relationship given to humanity.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

In fact, God thinks so highly of marriage, that the analogy of marriage is used to describe the relationship of Christ to the Church. Ephesians 5:22-33 describes how the marriage of a husband and wife is given honor by painting a picture that is analogous of the relationship between Christ Jesus and his people, the Church.

Marriage is esteemed, and therefore, sexuality is also given boundaries. God expects our sexuality to find its proper consummation in marriage. Any sexual activity outside of marriage is considered sinful in both the Old and New Testaments.

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. (Hebrews 13:4)

iii. Man and Woman

Because of the clear description of Scripture, Northstar defines marriage as between a man and a woman. Northstar upholds the biblical guidelines that the practice of homosexuality is sinful.

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. (Romans 1:26-27)

The Bible consistently teaches that marriage, established at Creation, is to be between a man and a woman. Where it is not explicitly taught, it is always implied as such. Jesus Himself quoted Scripture on marriage in Genesis when asked about divorce, but He also anchored marriage in *how men and women were created*:

He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let not man separate." (Matthew 19:4-6)

iv. Sexual Immorality

Northstar teaches its members that any expression of our sexuality outside of biblical marriage is sinful. This includes adultery, the practice of homosexuality, premarital sex, foreplay and even the intentional temptation towards improper sexual thoughts (teasing between dating singles, intentional flirtations, pornography, etc.).

There are a variety of temptations for men and women related to our sexuality. It's important to understand that we are constantly called to "not gratify the desires of the flesh." (Galatians

5:16) and to practice self-control related to our sinful natures.

“Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.” (1 Corinthians 6:18 ESV)

“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” (Ephesians 5:3-5, ESV)

Willingly indulging in sexual immorality is not a characteristic of God’s people.

v. Conclusion

Despite ever-changing waves of opinion in culture, Northstar is and will continue to be unapologetic about upholding the teaching in God’s Word concerning His guidelines for human sexuality.

We will do so in a spirit of grace and love. Human sexuality is a beautiful gift. We want to uphold the dignity of all people in this sensitive and often misunderstood area while esteeming God’s commands and mandates. They are given to us as from a loving Father. He desires that His people enjoy his gifts as they were intended. Indulging in God’s gift of sexuality outside of His guidelines only brings hurt, heartache, and brokenness. We worship and serve a God who is a great gift giver and desires the good of the people He loves so dearly.

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God..” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)

The manner in which we will uphold God’s Word in this area of our lives is best described in this way:

“Rather, ***speaking the truth in love***, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Ephesians 4:15-16 ESV)