

The “S” Word

■ by Charlene Brouwer, MA, LAMFT

“So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them.”

~ Genesis 1:27



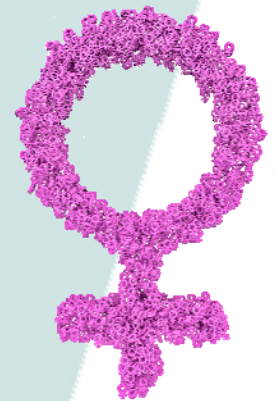
It seems fitting that the topic of sexuality comes up in the very first chapter of the Bible, doesn't it?

The first question that we ask after the birth of a baby is related to sex: is it a girl or a boy? Or the recently popular Gender Reveal Parties surprise the guests and often the expectant parents themselves with this important information through things such as cake or balloons in either pink or blue. Without sex, our world as we know it would not exist. You and I would not exist. Our sexuality is an incredibly important part of the human experience.

In this increasingly complex world, the way we talk about sex continues to change. Consider the terms sexuality, sex, and gender. “Sexuality” broadly encompasses everything involved in a person's state as a sexual being. According to the World Health Organization, the biological and physiological characteristics that make us either male or female are understood as “sex” categories. “Gender” refers to masculinity or femininity, and the roles and behaviors that our society considers appropriate for men and women.

In our therapeutic work at Chicago Christian Counseling Center, many of the issues for which we see clients are related to sexuality. For example:

- Restoring marriage relationships following extramarital affairs
- Recovering from compulsive sexual behaviors, such as pornography use
- Healing from childhood sexual abuse or date rape
- Choosing healthy sexual boundaries and appropriate use of social media
- Moving forward in light of miscarriage or unplanned pregnancy
- Developing clarity and compassion regarding gender identity confusion
- Growing in understanding and empathy while working through sexual dysfunction



There seems to be an interesting dichotomy regarding sexuality. On the one hand, our world exudes and fixates on sexuality. This is evident in news, advertising, television, films, books, and shopping malls. It is nearly everywhere for all to see. On the other hand, our sexuality is the most private, intimate, defining part of our self. It is something many people find difficult to talk about, even within the walls of a confidential counseling office. And problems with sexual function or compulsive behaviors are often surrounded by secrecy and shame.



Another dichotomy related to sex and sexuality is its power to bring both joy and pain into our lives. Sex can draw a couple closer together in their marriage commitment, or drive them apart. It can be experienced as a healthy and joyful part of an individual's identity, or as a source of misery.

Wherever you find yourself today related to this topic, be encouraged by these words of Jesus in John 10:10, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” Prayerfully consider how these words may apply to your sexuality. What is “life to the full” as it relates to your sexuality? What new work of healing, restoration and growth may God be guiding you to at this time in your life?

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