

So, this morning's message on sex was called The Naked Truth. And it will be online sometime tomorrow, so if you want to check that out, I would suggest you should.

I don't know if you've taken the time to think about sex from a biblical point of view, or you've been to maybe a good course, or read a good book, or even...

I think we get a diet of the world telling us about our sexuality that's pretty overwhelming. Is that fair to say? Like it's pretty constant.

Like it's just in your face, sexuality. So we're going to talk about it tonight. 20 years ago or so, Stephen Covey wrote a book called Seven Habits of...

anyone know? Highly Effective People. And he was part of this doctorate that he was doing.

He studied 200 years of literature about success. And he came up with this book, a really good book. It was very successful, sold millions and millions, called Seven Habits of Highly Successful People from all that success literature of 200 years.

Well, I haven't done all the reading, but certainly God has been watching every single human being for the last many thousands of years or whatever, however it's been, however long. Is that fair to say? Like God, if anyone knows about life, it's God.

And so I want to suggest seven empowering principles about sexuality that aren't necessarily linked nicely in a passage, but they're just seven truths, I think, that are true. And they come from God's word.

And I think God knows what he's talking about. It's like he's been reflecting on life and seeing it, and he gives us truth, and we neglect it to our peril. So seven empowering principles regarding our sexuality.

And don't think I'm not aware of the difficulty it is to talk to anyone about sex in today's day and age. I mean, I'm like on shaky ground. Oh, I don't want to offend there.

Don't want to go. So this is just a Baptist pastor giving you the best shot I can from God's word and a father of four and someone who's been thinking about this stuff for a good 30 years. So take it as that.

The psalmist writes, psalmate, O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth. You who set your glory above the heavens.

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have ordained, what is man, that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels.

In fact, the Hebrew says, a little lower than God himself. The first empowering principle, I think, we need to understand when we try to navigate sex, those three letters that grab our attention. Is this, the value of a person?

So whenever you are thinking about sex, whenever you are dealing with sex, your sexuality, desire, watching a movie, because they're teaching and preaching to you all the time, sometimes we've got to stop and go, whoa, what am I being taught here by

this book, this person I'm talking to, this, the impact that they are having on me? Number one, people matter, amen?

If you can get into your head, the profound dignity of every human being, you might just navigate well sexuality, that everyone has profound dignity. Genesis 1 says, God said, let us make man in our image.

I love NT Wright, his translation, Tom Wright says, let us make human in our image. It's good, sounds good.

According to our likeness, let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created human in his own image.

In the image of God, he created human, male and female, he created them. So imagine that Christianity is true just for a moment, because sometimes we have to stop and go, or is it actually true?

No, honestly, honestly, everything you know about Christianity, imagine that it's actually true, God created everything we see. Everything. He created the whole universe.

He created every marvellous thing on this earth. I mean, just start to think about it, the intricate, small, microscopic, the macro, the huge, everything He made. And if you read Genesis, it says, what gave Him the most delight?

Us. The Christian worldview says, look at the vast glory of creation, and it's nothing on a human being. Stop and think about that.

Our world is filled with a history of treating people the opposite to that. Yes. Like, honestly, like, people are treated as commodities.

People are treated as discardable rubbish. But I want you to know, if you read the Bible, you will not find a god like that. God values humanity.

Yes, there are times that are so hard to understand the Bible, holy war, and God brings judgment. I don't quite understand that. There's a whole other thing to get into.

But I think you will find throughout the whole Bible that God values humanity. People are never throw away. And we should treat people like that too.

And one of the things that really struck me years ago is that Jesus didn't choose to be an animal. He could have. God gets to make up the rules, right?

He could get the story any way he wants. So it's like, you know, he created the animals and they're just awesome. And then, what's that animal?

Oh, it's like half elephant, half bird. It's this majestic thing. And oh, that's the son of God.

This, you know, whatever. But God decided to send his son to become one of us. And this is the cool thing.

He's still a human now, isn't he? Yes. He didn't eat.

And I've said this so many times. He didn't come and put his earth clothes on and they go, oh, get this humanity off. I want me some God back.

You know, he was always God and always human, and he's still human. God did not choose to be an otter or a pick of an animal. He chose humanity.

And that makes me go, wow. Wow, the angels aren't as important as us. The devil's not as important as us.

Humanity is the most important thing under God. because Jesus is a human, amen? Like, it's amazing.

We got someone, and that's the whole thing of a mediator. He's at the right hand of the Father, in heaven, in the realm of the heavens. And there's a good human who rose again from the dead and goes, I get you.

I get you. I'm hearing you. I know exactly what it is to be human.

So we have to get this in to us that humans have infinite value. You know what the weirdest thing is?

Well, one of the weird things, there's lots of weird things, but one of the weirdest things about having kids is you're a couple, and then all of a sudden, I mean, you sort of build up to it. Nine months, you're getting used to this thing.

Oh, wow, that's alive in there. You're sort of like, I think we're going to be parents.

But when there is a child born, you go from not looking after something of just infinite value in your estimation to suddenly having something that is priceless, amen? You do. You just go, whoa, that thing is priceless.

And what that reminds me of is the value of every human. Now, not everyone gets born in a place where the parents love them like that, but it doesn't diminish the fact that every single human being is of infinite value.

If we could get to a place where we lived our lives like that, wouldn't the world be turned on its head? But that's the key. Like, that's actually the key to treating people well, that everyone matters.

The foundational problem with raunch culture, which is just everywhere, it's just completely normal now. It's just completely normal. Raunch culture, pornography, sexual immorality, in all of its forms, is that people get treated as less than human.

That's the core of it. We're just not treating them like they're human beings. They're something less than human.

They're a service, a goods and service. They are just something to be used. They are a two-dimensional picture, a digital, a pixel.

Like, a man is a person created in the image of God, not just a face and a physique. A woman is a person created in the image of God, not just a face and a figure.

When we find ourselves grappling with some of the challenges that we do find as human beings, there's this arousal that comes, and we go, whoa, this is the whole sexuality thing. It's like heart rate's gone up, and there's chemicals going on.

Can I encourage you in the name of Jesus at that point, if there is any action to be made in response to that arousal, is every human being that is involved in this in any way being treated with the utmost dignity? That's the question. And you too.

You too. Are you treating yourself with the dignity that a human being deserves, because Jesus is one of us, and He died for us. He died to save us.

We matter. The second empowering principle is that every human being has a universal cry for intimacy.

And I think the key from that is that when we find that we have desire, I think the worst thing is sexual desire, which is coming from something deeper normally. It's the desire for intimacy to be known, to be truly known. It's a feel.

We want to feel stuff, the fun, the release, the pain release of some sort of sexual experience. But underneath it is a universal cry for intimacy. That that's what drives sex.

And it's something God gave us. Genesis 2. The Lord God said, it's not good that man should be alone.

I will make a helper comparable to him, or suitable for him, that they can have community. Are you aware of the fact that there was only one thing that was wrong pre the fall? So, everything was good, mankind, humankind was very good.

But what was wrong in that perfect world? Loneliness. Adam was alone.

And God said, this is not right. So, it's really powerful. They're in paradise.

Everything's right. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Trinity, their loving relationship, and they make Adam human. There he is, our boy, our man, and there's us, and there's creation.

Look after it. But they went, no, no, we've made you that you have a need. You've got to cry for intimacy.

You want to know someone. You want community. And so, Adam and Eve, humanity was made for relationship.

I want to actually open that up for a discussion for a couple of minutes. Is that true? I know these sort of obvious answers, yes, but I want you to really think about it.

Do you need relationship? Have you found that in life? Richard's nodding.

People are nodding up the back. Great comment. There's a big part of this morning's message about the naked truth.

In that message, and I'll really encourage you to have a look at it. Really, the sort of thesis of that message is what you're saying, that we want to be naked, relationally, and in a marriage, we want to be naked.

But we get all these layers of scarring, pain, and we can't be vulnerable. But we need it. We desperately want it.

We desperately want people to know us sort of in the raw. just who we are. We want to be known.

I don't want to say too much more about the cry for intimacy. I think we know it, but I just want to encourage you, when it comes to sexuality, and especially when you're young, like the chemicals go, I'm not a doctor, but I know. There's this burst.

I was told the biggest burst of a male, the biggest burst of testosterone that comes in is coming into puberty. Never again in your life will you have more of a boom. It's just sort of jinka, a real becoming someone different.

And that's affecting you. And then coming from adolescence into adulthood, there's a lot going on. So receive the grace in that.

I'm not condoning sin, but I'm just saying, you know, sexuality, like we have this crife intimacy. We're bombarded by the world. We don't even, it's very hard to even have anyone say what gender even looks like these days.

So how do I do with my male sexuality? And what do you do with your female sexuality? It's hard.

So I just want to say, if you're like a little confused, find it like a bit overwhelming. I want to say, hang in there. You need people to walk with you through it.

because it's not easy. And never has been, no matter what generation you come from. But there is a cry for intimacy within us that has to somehow be managed wisely.

Yes? Is that fair to say? So, if you're running, you know if you are.

If you're running headlong into pain relief, doing stuff you know you shouldn't be doing.

Maybe just press pause, just try to stop for a bit, chain your leg to something, just stop and go, is there a voice in me that I'm not listening to that's driving me to this pain relief? There's something that's, it's low GI, high GI.

It's not gonna help me out, but I'm just running with it because I want to escape. There's lots of things we want to escape in life, and sometimes we just have to stop and go, there's a cry for intimacy that I feel, and it's hurting a bit.

Feel it, feel it, and try to work with it, through it. God's given you it. We're made for people, we're made for intimacy, vulnerability, and in the right context, even, I believe, within marriage, sexual intimacy.

Number three. So people matter. We have this longing to be known, and that's amazing that God's given us.

Number three is, God is a matchmaker. God is a matchmaker. You know that God invented romance, right?

He invented romance. The devil didn't invent romance. God invented romance.

Verse 21, Chapter 2 of Genesis. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept, and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.

It's true to say, the one who appreciates our need for others more than anyone is God himself. And we have to be careful that fear doesn't drive us down the search for intimacy. Fear can do all sorts of things to us.

But can I encourage you, while Adam slept, God was at work. It's something just to lock away. While Adam slept, God was at work.

He put him into a sleep. Oh, what am I doing? He wakes up out of the sleep and says, ah, bone in my bones, flesh in my flesh.

Don't miss that. Like, just lock that one away. Put it in your phone.

Remember, that was a good point. There'll be lots of other ones. But like that, that's worth remembering.

While Adam slept, God was at work. And I want to encourage you to trust God to do the same for you. How did Adam find his mate?

God brought her to him. So, I want to encourage you, you don't have to conduct the search for intimacy alone. And I know some of you are going, tell me something I don't know, you know, like, of course.

But no, really, keep bringing it to God, saying, God, you're the one who knows the cry of intimacy. I'm just keeping on bringing it before you. I have those desires to find the person that I could share my life with.

Of course, this is another whole side that Paul talks about those who will remain single. It's not that everyone gets married or even has necessarily a very close friend they do life with. But it's probably a normal, common thing.

How will I know the right one when I meet them? Has anyone thought about that? That you haven't found the right one?

Of course, you have. He's like, how do I find Mrs. Right?

How do I find Mr. Right? Well, I love this verse, verse 24, when Adam says, this is now bone of my bones.

I don't know if this is absolutely true for everybody, but I see it there in scripture. Like, I've experienced it myself.

What if God's a matchmaker and we can actually say, God, I want to be working on myself so that I'm ready for the person You want to give to me for us to share life with. I can only work on myself.

So I'm going to work on myself, and I'm going to pray, Lord, that You give me an inner witness that when I meet the right person, I'll feel like this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. But there's a connection.

I need something more than just me doing the maths in my head. I'm looking for an inner witness inside of me that's a spirit led thing. Now, I guess I'm biased in this because when Leanne and I were going out, we knew very early on.

We were going out for about two months, and we said to each other, we loved each other. We'd never said that to anyone else. And Leanne was like 16 and a half.

I was just turned 20. And we said, we love each other. And I drove away.

I've told you this before. You might have forgotten. The girls wouldn't have forgotten, I don't think.

But I drove away, and I said, I think I just met the person I'm going to marry, Lord willing. I think we're going to have kids together. And I went and told my parents.

I said to them, not that long after that, I said, look, if anything ever happens to me, if I get killed, I want you to know. It makes me emotional thinking of it. But the love of my life is Leanne.

I want you to know that. At least that's what I felt. And there was this sense that God had taken the blinkers off.

And I want to encourage you, you know, you can pray for that.

Say, God, when the right person comes along, could you please take the blinkers off so that I will have a sense of knowing it's God's job to prepare a mate for us, and it's our job to prepare ourselves.

Does that mean that there's only one person you could marry? Another time to open up for discussion. What do you reckon?

Certainly, it sounded like I was saying there was, but what do you reckon? Is there shakes of heads at the back? Yeah, yeah.

And you know what? A lot of stuff in life that's not just so clear in the Bible. A much older, wise person said to me years ago, my mentor, he said, John, there's a lot of different ways you can live within the Bible.

You've got to choose who you're going to run with and just run with them. And that's the truth. Well, within a framework, you'll find lots of people in life as Christians, good Christians that love Jesus.

And they don't believe exactly the same as you. But, Jaz, if that's your heart's desire, I would run with it. Say, God, I'm looking for Mr.

Right. I'm looking for him. because the thing is, guys, once you make the decision, guess what?

They are Mr. Right. They are Mrs.

Right. I think God gives us an amazing amount of flexibility. You know, this is a beautiful thing.

What if God so loves our free will that He'll give you the best chance to find His choice, but He's also like, you know, Jazz, I want to see who you choose. I'll give you a couple of choices. And I think He actually knows who you're going to choose.

And you know what I mean? What if God actually gives us choice? What if God said, you choose?

You can take strawberry, vanilla or chocolate. What would you like? I'd love strawberry.

It's all yours. Go for it. And of course, sometimes, like we live with...

I'd take any of the strawberry, vanilla or chocolate. I can't see any. Where is it, God?

And that's part of the... There's no easy answer to that. It's just some of the challenging stuff of life.

God is a matchmaker. Fourth empowering principle. That a sexual relationship, sex is an act of covenant.

This is something we pick up in the Bible. Genesis 2. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

I don't believe the Bible teaches that sex makes you married. Sometimes people will really push in the Bible to find and say, you know, once that the Hebrew, the Jewish way was sex, and that was like the consummation to make you married.

because I've had different people say that, well, we're already married because we're having sex. So just do some little thing.

It's like, no, like biblically, it's really important that marriage is forged in a covenantal way by a public, God-honouring declaration before people. People matter in marriage.

It's a public covenant where we leave mum and dad, and often when we're older, we've already done that. We stick to a person in covenant relationship, and then the privilege of sex is yours.

I heard this years ago, and I think it's so powerful, so worth remembering. I want to do something corny and ask you to repeat it after me. This is a good way to remember.

I don't know if you've got it up there, the next one. This is how you remember what the covenant is for sex. Leave, cleave, oneness.

Leave, cleave, oneness. Can we say it again? Leave, cleave, oneness.

Leave, cleave, oneness. You leave your folks. It's a good thing to leave them at some point.

Often these days, it's like, we never leave, we go and live in the garage downstairs or whatever. But on the whole, for marriage, it's a good thing to leave. It's a good thing to leave your folks.

Cleave together, cleave, stick together in a public, God-honouring, family-honouring, marriage. And then oneness. What does society tell us in the movies?

Oneness. What would it look like? Oneness, oneness, oneness.

Oneness, oneness, oneness, oneness, oneness. It's just oneness. Leave, cleave, oneness.

There's a heap that has to happen before it's safe enough for sex to happen. That's what the Bible teaches.

The idea in the Bible with a covenant is that you get an animal, you cut it in half, and the husband and wife walk through the cut carcass with the blood everywhere, and it gets on their clothes, the blood. It's about...

this is what covenant is for an Israelite. Animal cut open, blood shed, because blood's always there in a covenant that really matters.

The couple walk through, and what they're saying is literally, if we break this covenant vow with unfaithfulness, may it be to us what has happened to this animal? It's saying, this is really serious. We don't tend to have this so much in the West.

I was in Kenya once, and we got chatting to a guy who was engaged, he was just about to be engaged to be married, and part of the process, we got chatting, it was so interesting.

He was going to a, like a betrothal ceremony to work out the bride price. And so, here's his African guy, he's about 22, I think, in Kenya, Nairobi. So he goes off, we talked to him the next day, and we're chatting.

What happened? What happened? He goes, oh, it was really heavy.

So what you do is I've got to work out what the bride price is, what I have to pay to the father and the family to marry the daughter. And we're like, oh, what happens?

He says, well, you go to this big party, and everyone's there, all the extended family.

And then all the cousins and the brothers of the dad, there's a big bunch of big guys, they get you in a room where the dad's over there, and your brides, potential brides over there, and they grill you and say, if you mistreat this woman, we're

coming for you. Like, there's a full on sense, and of course, it may not all be good, but this is culturally, there's a weightiness, and they say it's gonna be 30 goats. You're gonna have to give them 30 goats.

And he says, it's not because we're primitive, and they love goats. It's about relationship. How cool is that?

They're saying, mate, you are not gonna steal their daughter, our family member, and run off with her. You have to come back 30 times with a goat, and you won't be able to do that easily. because it's embedding relationship, covenant, family.

It matters. Does that make sense? I'll just encourage you.

Find that. Find the depth. Don't...

you need 31 days' notice anyway, but don't go find Elvis somewhere to marry you. Like... unless you so love Elvis, but...

Like people often say, oh, I don't want to have family. They're not... Marriage is a communal thing.

Like it matters to have people around. And publicly, and in a God-honouring way, you're saying, we're in this. We want to make it as hard as possible to walk away from it.

It's not easy to walk away from it. We're in it. We've made the choice.

Again, that question, is he or she the right one? The only one for you? Once you stand up the front and you say, I do, I will, you're saying, yeah, I'm in this for the long haul.

I'm going to do this by God's grace. The fifth part, the holiness of sexuality. We talked a lot about this this morning.

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed. I'm not going to go into it too much now, but it's been a long time this morning, talking about it.

I really believe that there is a strong argument to say, and it sounds a bit weird, but within the context of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, they have a oneness that's very hard to describe, or even, it's a mystery.

But there is something in sexual oneness in marriage that is deeply spiritual and images something of the Trinity, something of the union.

I think for a married couple, it takes faith to believe that because sexual union becomes pretty normal, but to actually have this awareness, now, this is the holy thing. This is not just something, a throwaway. Sex is not ordinary.

It's not ordinary. When God wanted to tell us about things that are holy, he told us about the holy of holies. You know, when the high priest would meet the God once a year in the holy of holies, was that an ordinary place?

No way. And I think what he's trying to say is there are things in life that are so precious, they're so sacred, they're holy. But society has a habit of changing the price tags.

I told a story this morning of when Josiah was about 10 or 11, and we talked about him starting to play the saxophone. And there was an ad in the paper to say a couple of free saxophone lessons.

And so I said, hey, mate, do you want to learn the saxophone? He said, yeah, sure. This is before the cello and all that.

And I had like three saxophones. The only one that he could sort of play, it wasn't too big for him as a 10-year-old, was my straight soprano sax. And it was this Selma Mark II silver-coated, silver-plated soprano, blah, blah, blah.

And I had got it off my dad. He got it off his cousin in France. And it's like a cracking saxophone.

But I didn't buy it. I didn't really know what it was worth. So anyway, we go to this first lesson, and Josiah pulls out this beautiful, shiny Selma silver-coated Mark II saxophone.

And the guy's eyes just open up, and he goes, do you know what that is? And I'm like, that's a Selma Mark II silver-coated soprano. And he goes, yeah, can I have a look at that?

And he actually said, oh, I'd love to take a copy of the serial number of that. The house is so red. That's worth like \$6,000, do you know?

I wouldn't be clanging that around in the primary school band. So I went, oh, we won't be. We won't be.

I put it away and went and bought him a \$1,000 little saxophone that he could play. But I say that because it's a good illustration of just like, if you don't know what something's worth, you treat it differently.

And the devil, Tony Campola had this saying, you know, someone went around the shop and switched the price tags on everything. You've got to know, guys, the devil has switched the price tags on sex. If you think it's ordinary, you got it wrong.

It's not ordinary, it's not ordinary. It's immensely powerful. And go near sex.

It's like welding without goggles on if you're not married. That's what I would say. So welding without goggles on.

God, this is fine. It's fine. I mean, I'm blind.

I can't see a thing. You just can't go near it because it's so holy. You can't go near it without the safety net that God has given of marriage.

Now, just because you're married doesn't mean it's going to be sort of safe because there's so much bad stuff that goes on in bad marriages. But it's the way, I believe it's the way God has structured things. It's holy.

Number six, the problem of the fall. So we have all this intimacy that we're designed for, sex as a powerful way to stick people together, to leave cleave oneness.

It sticks a husband and a wife together, powerfully, spiritually, emotionally, physically. But sin is part of the world, and it's messed all this up, the fall.

Genesis 3, Then the eyes of both of them were open, and they knew that they were naked, and they sowed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. You know what fig leaf is like? You ever heard this story?

Fig leaves are really sharp and like, it's horrible. They're all prickly. Imagine that.

They're naked, and they go, oh, what are we going to use? Oh, why did you pick a fig leaf? It's something soft.

Of course, it's there for a reason, isn't it? But when sin came in, suddenly, what was meant to be a beautiful thing to be naked was like a shameful thing, guilt and shame.

What are some of the things that have been messed up by the fall, by sin, regarding our sexuality? Well, it obscures the value of personality because people are seen as flesh targets. Yes?

Fair to say? This is bad. It's not a good thing.

There's this tendency to exploit and dominate rather than relate in truth and love regarding sexuality. There's a tendency to selfishness. Meet my needs.

Who cares if it offends your morals, damages your integrity, wounds your emotions? If you love me, you would do it. This is totally from the pit, I think.

It's from sin. And the need for intimacy that we talked about, it drives people to do crazy things when someone will go from one predator to another.

An abusive situation to another, and that's not to pour judgment on them, but it's just to say, we get really messed up because of sin.

When you put lust in the driver's seat, and you have one relationship after another, one of the first things you'll find is you stop talking.

If you're ever in a relationship, and you used to talk, heaps, because talking is like the essence of relationship, and suddenly you both go, oh, let's let lust rule the way. I promise you, you won't talk as much anymore.

So if you're never ever in a relationship, you go, we used to talk more. just check yourself and go, yeah, that's probably because we started letting lust have the way, and it ruins things. It ruins things.

It's not treating people with love. Preached on this stuff once before, and it was really great to have a doctor get up and talk about sexually transmitted diseases.

I mean, we could talk about it all the years, and go, oh, I don't know if I agree with that. And there's Gary.

He's going, oh, I can tell you as a doctor, local doctor, people that are promiscuous, like, it's tough, the sexually transmitted diseases out there, it's tough. Like, there's a reason why God says, don't go down that path.

It's just, it can be awful. So the seventh thing, what is it? Healing is available.

Healing is available. Many of us are really affected by our past and our involvement in sex. And if that's not you, then, oh, really, praise God, that's a really great thing.

What do you do about that? Well, Jesus said, if the sun sets you free, you will be free indeed. There is a freedom that we can find.

There's healing that can be found. I don't think it really ever comes without pain, because you can't mock God. You do something that sows for the sinful nature, and from it, you tend to reap stuff that has a pain, suffering, quotient involved in it.

I remember preaching on this years ago. We're talking about the spirit of virginity, and like the purity of virginity.

And this guy comes up to me at the end of the service, and he's just like in a daze, and he just says to me, I'm talking about virginity. Like that is so... Like that word, virginity, for me, that is so long gone.

I can't even comprehend that you're even talking about it. For me to get healed from my sexual past, like I just... It's just there in a spin.

But there is healing. There can be healing because if the sun sets you free, you'll be free indeed. But we've got to want to be healed.

We want to bring that junk before God and say, I don't want to be this anymore. Before marriage, the biblical term for a single person is that they are a virgin.

Their bodies, their sexual intimacy is off limits until they find their life spouse in marriage. But I want to encourage you that even after marriage or after the loss of virginity, there is something called the spirit of a virgin.

And I actually think it's a really powerful concept. That as a married man, I could carry myself with the spirit of a virgin. Which means I'm not on the market.

I'm off the market. You could be a married woman, and it can be helpful to know, no, I carry myself with the spirit of the virgin. I'm off the market.

I'm not on the market. because a man and a woman can be married to different people, and carry themselves as though they're on the market. Do you know what I mean?

So I'm on the market, the way I act. But something so profoundly beautiful, if you get that in your head, no, I'm as squeaky clean as a virgin. I want to be that god.

I want to be set apart. I don't want to have the attitude that I'm available and on the market. You know, one of the really powerful things I was taught years ago is this from Paul.

He said this to Timothy. Treat the older women as mothers, the younger women as sisters with all purity. 1st Timothy 5.

Now, I would put it to you blokes. If you're going out with somebody, if you can live under that truth, you're going to do really well. You're going to get to the day of marrying that young lady.

And you'll be able to look at her father in the eye, or her special person that would give her away, and you'll be able to say, you know what? I treated her like she was my mother or my sister, because God's word told me to.

That would be pretty cool, wouldn't it? Now, a lot of us can't do that. I'm not standing up here judging you.

I'm just like, that's something to shoot for, isn't it? Anyone? The women would be out, young women would be able to say, if I'm going out with someone, I want my boyfriend to know that I'm going to treat him like my dad or my brother.

And there's some stuff that is just so unacceptable to do with your dad or your brother, isn't there? Right? So, then you say, yeah, nice, but it's just completely, you know, just doesn't work.

We had good friends, Leanne and I didn't do it, but we had good friends that decided they weren't going to kiss until they got married. Their first kiss was at the altar. I'll leave that one with you.

seriously, it's a powerful verse, 1st Timothy 5, 2. How do we get there? How do we get to the Spirit of the Virgin, especially when we have failed?

And, you know, of course, you may not have had sex with someone, but, you know, we all know the fantasy world that exists now, and, you know, the Internet is basically Solomon's harem, right? That's what it is.

It's like, oh, I know, I've kept myself pure, but my heart is the heart of Solomon. My heart is the heart of Solomon. I just want to have this harem of women, that fantasy.

Like, it kills you. It's not going to give you life. It's going to give you death.

How do we get there? First of all, we need forgiveness. 1 John 1.9 is so clear, and you need to hear it.

We all need to hear it. There is a way, no matter what. It says, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us of all unrighteousness.

He's going to cleanse us. He wants to purify us. His heart is to go, what, you feel guilty?

Come here. Come here. I want to get you clean.

Come here. The devil wants to say, that father, he'll never have you back. But we know, remember the younger son that said, I want my inheritance.

I'm going to go. He spends it on all the bad stuff. And he says, I wonder if I could come back.

And he says, I have sinned against heaven and my family. And he comes and he's walking from a far way off. And the father does what?

Anyone? Runs to him. That's our God.

Guys, hear it. Hear it. We all fail.

Don't ever let the devil come to you and say, you're a miserable failure. You know what you have to do? You have to look him straight in the eyes, metaphorically, and say, you know what?

You're right. Why do you think I'm not a sinner? I know I'm a sinner.

And that was a good shot. You're a good marksman. And you go, you know that one there that you got me, the arrow?

There. I'm taking that wound to Jesus. Amen.

seriously, that's what we have to do. There's nowhere else to go. There's only more pain and sin and more guilt and shame.

Take the pain and the guilt and the failure to God and say, I need forgiveness. And you know what the father says? That would be why I sent my son Jesus to die on a cross.

Amen. Like, that's what God says. He's not like, oh, what will I do?

I never thought this would happen. He's like, yeah, come here. Let's talk about this.

Let's feel what's going on. Let's get some wisdom into you. God made Christ who never sinned to be the offering for our sin so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

2 Corinthians 5. We can ask for forgiveness because Christ has taken our punishment. What do we need to do to walk with the Spirit of the Virgin?

And I just walked through this. This is some good stuff. Have a look at this online.

Take a photo of it and just have a think about some of these things. I think this is a great commitment to make. I'm going to make a decision.

If I want to live with the Spirit of the Virgin, that I'm off limits to the world sexually, I'm keeping myself either for the husband or wife that I already have, or I'm going to keep myself in that way, pure.

My life belongs to Christ, and He has a plan and a purpose for my life, including my life's partner. I don't believe that. Now, I'm going to have to make some choices along the way, but I'm going to trust Him.

For those who are married, my spouse is my choice. I've made the choice, and I will be faithful to them and to my marriage vows all the days of my life, as God's grace enables me. It's going to take effort.

For all of us, we can say, I affirm for men, I affirm that the women around me are my sisters, to be honored, protected, and valued above life itself.

And for the women, I affirm that the men around me are my brothers, to be honored and dignified, protected if you can, and valued above life itself. I will not only live as a physical virgin, I will maintain the spirit of a virgin.

My heart is separated for God's will and purposes in my life. My sexuality is not on the market. My search for intimacy is tied to God's plan for my life.

This is something you can pray through. And pray, I receive from God His complete healing. I really encourage you, if you know you need this, get a hold of it.

It will be online, and just look at it, and pray through it.

I receive from God His complete healing for my sin, His complete removal of my guilt, and all my shame, His complete gift of freedom, His complete and holy offer of the robe of righteousness in Christ my Lord.

And for those who are not yet married, you could pray through this. I will keep my virginity for the one God has chosen for me, as a gift to be unwrapped on my wedding night. Or, I will give it back to Christ when I enter paradise.

What an amazing thing that would be, to be able to say, God, my heart was always with you, Jesus. And if you gave me a lesser picture of what that would be, well, that would be great, but you didn't, so I'm giving it to you.

And it's always been for you.