



Let's Talk About Sex



⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

¹⁴ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”





Individuals experiencing a midlife crisis are often searching for an undefined dream or goal. We may have a deep sense of remorse for goals not yet accomplished. We may fear humiliation among more successful colleagues. We often desire to achieve a feeling of youthfulness.

At the root of all these things is a sense of something being missing. There is often a tragic wisdom in mid-life crises, as individuals realise the emptiness of much of what they used to strive for (even if what they replace it with is not always particularly wise).



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²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, ‘Of all the commandments, which is the most important?’

²⁹ ‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one.³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” ³¹ The second is this: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.’



³² ‘Well said, teacher,’ the man replied. ‘You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.’

³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.



Marriage is a gift of God in creation through which husband and wife may know the grace of God.

It is given that as man and woman grow together in love and trust, they shall be united with one another in heart, body and mind, as Christ is united with his bride, the Church.

The gift of marriage brings husband and wife together in the delight and tenderness of sexual union and joyful commitment to the end of their lives.

It is given as the foundation of family life in which children are born and nurtured and in which each member of the family, in good times and in bad, may find strength, companionship and comfort, and grow to maturity in love.



N, will you take *N* to be your wife? Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

I, *N*, take you, *N*, to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part; according to God's holy law. In the presence of God I make this vow.



Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let these rings be to *N* and *N*
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness,
to remind them of the vow and covenant
which they have made this day
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let these rings be to *N* and *N*
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness,
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Opinion

What's Lust Got to Do With It?

Why would a woman go home with a man, decide she's not attracted to him but have sex with him anyway?



A college student's telling of drunken hookups inspired Joanna Coles to write a book about pursuing relationships in the digital world. Bryan Derballa for The New York Times



“Getting naked and having sex with strangers is hard,” she tells me. “We portray it as fun and we pretend it’s fun. But people crave intimacy, which is not easy to create in a hookup. That’s why Britain just appointed a loneliness minister.”



“to attempt to separate emotions from sex is not only illogical, given that emotion intensely augments pleasure, but also impossible for almost all women.”



“Good sex is a wonderful high,” Coles says. “It’s what great novels and great music are about. And it’s free! But we’ve lost track of what a brilliant thing it is. It’s so transactional now, it’s bleak.”

Our God-given desire for intimacy is, for women at least, often more about emotional intimacy than sex; it's a longing to find a soul-mate. I know from personal experience that however much support we have from family/ friends/ church family, it is not the same as sharing our lives with a partner. So being celibate is not the issue, it's being alone. And that fear of being alone can drive people into unhealthy relationships which then break down and intensify the loneliness.

So how can we help one another to build and sustain healthy, faithful, long-term relationships at every stage of our lives; and how can we encourage people who don't feel 'called' to be celibate but through life's circumstances find themselves alone?

² At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered round him, and he sat down to teach them. ³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴ and said to Jesus, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' ⁶ They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷ When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' ⁸ Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and asked her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?'

¹¹ 'No one, sir,' she said.

'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared. 'Go now and leave your life of sin.'