

Session 2 of Identity Bible Study

The previous session from this study introduced us to Harry who wanted to be Sally and the need for all mankind to have an intimate relationship with our Creator. We discussed the orderly creation, the fall into sin, and the promised deliverance from that sin. Though Jesus has made atonement for our sin, we often are influenced by the lies of Satan through our cultural philosophies and seek acceptance where we should not because of our sinful nature. We identified life issues that arise from our disorderly thinking about human sexuality.

The second session of this study will take a closer look at how the consequences of sexual immorality affect some of the previously mentioned life issues and what Scripture teaches about marriage and why it is important.

Meet the Jones and Smith Families

Carol Jones is a lifelong Christian who was raised in the reformed church in the '60s and '70s. She married a Lutheran named Mark, and they raised four sons. She and Mark were lucky to send their children to a Lutheran school up to eighth grade. They have always been faithful church attenders and are very active in their Lutheran church's life. Carol has a checkered past. She engaged in sexual activity more than once before marrying Mark. Carol is sorry for her past behavior and knows she is forgiven through her Savior, Jesus Christ. She knows that one of the reasons she behaved the way she did was her deep need to feel loved and accepted since she never felt she fit the culture's standards of feminine beauty. Although Carol and Mark also became intimate before their own wedding, they did not openly live together. They made it clear to their sons that it was not in God's plan for couples to engage in intimacy or live together before or without a marriage. However, all four seemed to have abandoned church after becoming adults, and two of them had been living together with their girlfriends long before getting married. The Joneses despaired over what they might have done wrong in raising them.

Sue is also a lifelong Christian. She grew up in a Methodist tradition also in the '60s and '70s. She married John Smith, a professor, and after much searching, she settled upon a Lutheran church in her community. John is not a Christian, but he never objected to Sue raising their son and daughter as Christians. Sue has also been an active, thriving member of her church. When their daughter became a teacher and moved across the country to work, she informed them that she rejected Christianity and was attracted to another woman. Their daughter "married" her partner, and they are now raising a young girl together. Sue did not attend the ceremony, but her husband and son did. Her daughter's partner became artificially inseminated and bore a child, a girl. Sue is devastated, and although she strives to keep connected to her daughter, her daughter has directed her anger mostly toward Sue. Their times together, which are few, are very strained.

- What are some of the consequences of the sexual revolution which have affected the Jones' and the Smith's?
- How are these consequences life issues?

Let's take a look at what scripture says.

1. Sex without marriage- what does Bible teach about this?

- Ephesians 4:17-19
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4
- Hebrews 13:4
-

2. Same sex activity/marriage-What does the Bible teach about this?

- Romans 1:26-27
- 1 Cor 6:9
- Leviticus 18

3. How does engaging in sexual immorality affect our lives?

- 1 John 2:16
- 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20
- Proverbs 11:6
- James 1:13-14

Summary: We live in a broken world because of the fall. We see the destruction all around us and in our own lives. Yet, **thanks be to God who has called us out of death and into life through His redeeming sacrifice on the cross and through our baptisms into Him.**

Read Galatians chapter 5. It is a reminder of who we are and will help us to think in terms of living by the Spirit. We will look at more closely at Christ's redeeming action and living in the Spirit in session 4. Right now, let's look at how marriage is to be properly viewed and why.

- What is an ordered Christian view of marriage and why is it important?
 1. **Read Ephesians 5:21-33.** What is marriage a sign of?
 2. How are husbands and wives to act in relation to each other?
 3. **Read Genesis 2:18-24.** The Lord institutes marriage in verse 24. What does this verse say? When in history was marriage instituted?
 4. How does the Ephesians passage reflect the order of creation in the Genesis passage?
 5. **Read Genesis 1:28.** What blessing and privilege does God give to the first husband and wife to be fulfilled within their marriage?
 6. **Read Song of Solomon 2:1-7, 4:1-6, 6:2-3 and 7:1-11.** How do these verses help us to understand the intimacy of a married couple

Summary: The message for Christians from the Word of God is that marriage is not whatever we choose to make of it. It is what God has made it to be. It is meant to give us the proper view of our relationship with God through Christ as well as with each other. It is the picture of the mystical union we have with Christ. And since God is so merciful and just, the institution of marriage is designed to protect us and preserve us as well. Marriage is the proper place for

sexual intimacy. Keeping it within a marriage protects everyone, even those who are not married.

Below are some additional discussion questions for consideration.

- In what way is our attitude toward marriage influenced by what we see and hear about marriage in popular culture or among our friends?
- What have you observed to be one of the main reasons couples decide to live together instead of marrying?
- What confusion arises for children (regardless of how they are acquired) of a same-sex marriage regarding role models for life as a man and woman? Discuss how this can be detrimental to the identity question many children have.
- How can the institution of marriage be important for single people?
- Discuss the challenges single people have in the Christian church.

The third session of this study will focus on chastity and the proper way to think about the relationship between our bodies and souls. These concepts affect some of the life issues we have encountered in our journey with Harry wanting to become Sally as well as the Joneses and the Smiths.

Closing Prayer: Lord of Life, thank You for never forsaking us and for atoning for our sins. Because of Your Word, we dare to come to You even when we rightly suffer because of our own misdeeds. We come to You now asking that You allow our entire lives in whatever vocations You have placed us to be lives that You guide, control, and fulfill. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Departing Hymn: "O God, My Faithful God" LSB 696