

Loving the Sexually Broken

“Sex” = _____

Sexual Brokenness has an _____

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1 Corinthians 6:18

John 4

8 Ways to Love:

1. Realize the depth of our own _____ (and the depth of God’s _____).
2. These are _____, not just _____.
3. Create a safe _____.
4. Watch your body _____.
5. Watch your _____.
6. Watch your actual _____.
7. Seek to _____, not to be _____.
8. Give people _____.

SEXUALITY TERMINOLOGY*

Gender dysphoria: The experience of distress associated with the incongruence wherein one's psychological and emotional gender identity does not match one's biological sex.

Transgender: An umbrella term for the many ways in which people might experience and/or present and express (or live out) their gender identities differently from people whose sense of gender identity is congruent with their biological sex.

Cisgender: A word to contrast with transgender and to signify that one's psychological and emotional experience of gender identity is congruent with one's biological sex.

Gender bending: Intentionally crossing or "bending" gender roles.

Cross-dressing: Dressing in the clothing or adopting the presentation of the other sex. Motivations for cross-dressing vary significantly.

Third gender (or third sex): A term used to describe persons who are neither man nor woman, which could reference either an intermediate state; another sex or gender; or having qualities of both man/woman in oneself.

Transsexual: A person who believes he or she was born in the "wrong" body (of the other sex) and wishes to transition (or has transitioned) through hormonal treatment and sex-reassignment surgery.

Male-to-Female (MtF): A person who is identified as male at birth but experiences a female gender identity and has or is in the process of adopting a female presentation.

** All terms and definitions come from Preston Sprinkle's book **Embodied: Transgender Identities, the Church, and What the Bible Has to Say***

Female-to-Male (FtM): A person who is identified as female at birth but experiences a male gender identity and has or is in the process of adopting a male presentation.

Genderfluid: A term used when a person wants to convey that their experience of gender is not fixed as either male/female but may either fluctuate along a continuum or encompass qualities of both gender identities.

Genderqueer: An umbrella term for ways in which people experience their gender identity outside of, or in between, a male-female binary (e.g., no gender, genderfluid). Some people prefer a gender-neutral pronoun (e.g., "one").

Drag queen: A biological male who dresses as a female (typically flamboyant dress and appearance) for the purposes of entertaining others. Such a person may not experience gender dysphoria and does not tend to identify as transgender.

Drag king: A biological female who dresses as a male (stereotypic dress and appearance) for the purposes of entertaining others. As with drag queens, such a person may not experience gender dysphoria and does not tend to identify as transgender.

Transvestism: Dressing or adopting the presentation of the other sex, typically for the purpose of sexual arousal (and may reflect a fetish quality). Such a person may not experience gender dysphoria and may not identify as transgender. Most transgender persons do not cross-dress for arousal and see transvestism as a different phenomenon than what they experience.

Intersex: A term to describe conditions (e.g., congenital adrenal hyperplasia) in which a person is born with sex characteristics or anatomy that does not allow clear identification as male or female. The causes of an intersex condition can be chromosomal, gonadal or genital.

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JOSH'S STORY:

Josh is 16 years old, and he's been going to The Creek with his family since he was 5 years old. Over the years, you've laughed with Josh and watched him grow. You've had a decent relationship with him and have loved seeing him week to week at church. He's always been kind but has also been shy. For the past year, though, you have noticed that Josh avoids eye contact with you and really doesn't look happy to be at church. You learn from your daughter that Josh has come out as gay on TikTok and said that he is "sick and tired of the bullying and the judgment." He came out soon after a cluster of LGBTQ+ teen suicides around the nation. The church wasn't aware of these deaths even though they were covered extensively through social media. Josh's parents know about his sexuality but haven't reached out to any church leaders for guidance or counsel. Josh seems to use TikTok as a place to rail against the church. He describes the church as an isolating and hateful place. He says his parents never want to talk about anything. If he had the choice, he wouldn't go to church at all; he's waiting to turn 18 so he can be on his own and stop attending church altogether. You reach out to Josh, and he says he's willing to have coffee with you.

What are some significant aspects of Josh's story that you should think through?

How should you be (or what should you do or not do) during your meeting with Josh?

JACOB AND KATIE'S STORY

Jacob and Katie are both in their mid-twenties and have been attending The Creek for about four months. Neither of them grew up in the church and in fact, none of their family attends church at all except for Katie's grandmother who recently passed away. They have been dating for close to three years. Jacob's parents went through a rough divorce when he was in middle school, and he has never really witnessed a healthy marriage. While Katie's parents are still married, they are visibly unhappy and don't get along very well. Jacob has a steady job but wants to pay off some debt before getting married. He loves Katie and believes she is the person he wants to marry. Katie has a teaching license and loves teaching, but through COVID both experienced the loss of her sweet grandmother and the weight of the changes at school. Now she's quit teaching and is looking for work elsewhere. When Katie quit her job, she and Jacob decided to cut expenses and move in together. They have been sexually active since the beginning of their relationship. About a month ago, they decided to be baptized through their experience with Rooted. They're now new to the faith and in your life group. They're not aware they've even made choices that aren't God's design for their relationship.

What are some significant aspects of Jacob and Katie's story that you should think through?

How should you be (or what should you do or not do) as you lead them in your life group?

What do the next steps of discipleship look like for Jacob and Katie?

DOUG AND LEAH'S STORY

Doug has been a member of your circle of friends at church for several years now. He's in a life group and is an active member of the church. He serves in Kidustrial Park as a fifth-grade small group leader. He has been divorced for a while after his wife's unfaithfulness. He raised his daughters in the church even after his wife left. One of his daughters, Leah, has been in a same sex relationship throughout her college years. You and several other friends have been praying with Doug for Leah's relationship with Christ to be real and to grow since she hasn't been to church at all since high school. Doug has maintained a loving relationship with Leah, even though he has tried to have conversations to confront her relationship. Doug has just told you that Leah announced her engagement to Ann and they're getting married six months after graduation. Doug has asked you and a few other friends to attend the wedding with him, so he doesn't have to go alone.

What are some significant aspects of Doug and Leah's story that you should think through?

What questions would you want to ask about Leah?

How should you be (or what should you do or not do) as you walk alongside Doug?

JAMES AND EMILY'S STORY

James and Emily both grew up in the church and have been married for almost two years now. They faithfully attend church most weeks except for when James is out of town for work. Each of them looked forward to getting married and anticipated a "honeymoon" kind of life, especially in their intimate life. They had both looked forward to sex in marriage, since they had not had sex in their previous relationships. Growing up, Emily was sexually abused by a teenage cousin as an elementary-aged child. She shared the abuse with her parents, who seemed concerned, but didn't really want to talk too much about it because of their own embarrassment and the fear of what shame it might bring to their whole family. As a result, Emily still struggles with sexual intimacy, even with James. What they thought was going to be a great part of marriage has only been a place of difficulty for them. Now it's been almost a year since they've had sex. James has since turned to pornography to take care of his sexual desires on his own. What began as an occasional viewing has become a full-blown addiction, leaving Emily feeling rejected and alone. She's been talking with her close Christian friends about their situation and is considering a divorce.

What are some significant aspects of James and Emily's story that you should think through?

How should you be (or what should you do or not do) as you have conversations with them?

What do the next steps of discipleship look like for James and Emily?

CHRIS' STORY

Chris finally got up the courage to walk into church for the first time this Sunday. Chris is biologically male, but since middle school has experienced intense gender dysphoria. Chris sought counseling for years, but began identifying/presenting as female several years ago, which included dressing as a woman and preferring female pronouns. Chris began gender reassignment about three weeks ago. Chris wears a dress and heels to church. Chris has felt throughout life like something is missing and just assumed it was the wrestling with gender and not a desire for relationship with God. Chris' family has not been supportive of the gender transition. None of them have any relationship with God, but they've struggled with shame and embarrassment over Chris' choices. Chris works as a makeup artist at a local beauty supply chain. This week, for whatever reason, Chris decided to finally come to church. It's been a thought for a long time, but this is the first time there's been enough courage to take action. Now Chris is sitting next to you.

What are some significant aspects of Chris' story that you should think through?

How should you be (or what should you do or not do) as you have conversations with Chris?

What do the next steps of discipleship look like for Chris?

How do you help Chris feel welcomed and loved by God?