

RELATIONSHIPS IN 3s

Guys, Girls, & Jesus

- Part 1b: Morality -

Keith Lewis

April 25, 2012

INTRODUCTION

Biblical guy/girl relationship = guy + girl + Christ

- Without focus on Christ = **sinful** relationship (immorality – and resulting issues)
- Without focus on other = **selfish** relationship (immaturity – limited edification, ministry, etc.)
- [NOTE: both *sinfulness* and *selfishness* are obviously “sinful”]

We’re going to talk about just *being friends* as guys/girls and *dating* later. Today, we’ll just deal with *morality* & its issues.

LESSON

We want to avoid both **sinfulness** and **selfishness** in our relationships by working (1) to keep Christ preeminent (Colossians 1:18) and (2) to present each other perfect in Christ (Colossians 1:28).

So, we want *God’s Word* to inform our decisions (#1), and we want to learn from *one another* (#2) in these issues.

- (#1) God does express black-and-whites, even in morality (e.g., “no lust,” Ephesians 5:3-4; Romans 13:14).
- (#2) Beyond that, we might acknowledge some “gray” area in application. But even there it is important to recognize that...
 - On the one hand, yes, none of us “lives unto/for himself, but unto the Lord” (Romans 14:7-12), but...
 - On the other hand, we “live unto the Lord” by living with others in mind (Romans 14:13-23).

Now, that’s a mature, submissive, counter-cultural conclusion; but, we need to start that way, because much of our discussion on morality is going to be interactive as we hear from each other. And if we aren’t willing to live with others in mind, then we’ll really struggle with **selfishness** in this area of morality (even if blatant **sinfulness** is avoided).

Let’s demonstrate what we mean. What are some issues of morality that we would consider blatantly **sinful** in light of Christ’s standard in His Word?

- ACTUAL – *adultery, pre-marital sex, masturbation, etc.*
- VISUAL – *pornography*: “printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity” - e.g., videos, websites, clubs, magazines, books
- VERBAL – *sexual humor*
- AT THE HEART [MENTAL] – *lust* (“vicarious immorality”)

These are the issues that were being addressed with our last lesson, which can be reviewed online. Our purpose in this lesson is not to deal with those blatantly **sinful** sins of immorality. Our goal is to deal with issues of morality that more directly and publicly affect the family of Christ – issues that are usually related to our own **selfishness**.

What are some issues of morality that we would consider to be engaged in **selfishly**? In *Respectable Sins*, these were the issues of immorality that Jerry Bridges considered “worldly” (def. “going along with the values and practices of society around us without discerning if they are biblical”).

- Immodesty
 - Girls as the ones dressing [guys can be immodest, too]
 - Guys as responders and future wife-/daughter-disciplers
- Dating guidelines

1. What is immodesty?

- Broad definition: “lacking humility or decency” (dictionary)
- Specific definition: relating to dress and one’s body
 - ➔ Dress immodesty is connected to the issue of physical morality, since it has to do with the physical body, which is the context of physical morality (cf. I Corinthians 6:18). NOTE: It is important to emphasize that physical immorality starts in the heart; nonetheless, like the water which draws the tea out of the tea bag, it is the physical body which draws lust out of one’s heart.
 - ➔ Thus, dress immodesty is also governed by God’s standard for morality – i.e., no lust.
 - ➔ PART 1: *Immodest dress, then, is that dress which provokes lust.*
 - ▶ *Caveat 1:* People will lust, and dress won’t stop that. Just because someone lusts at a particular garment, style, etc. doesn’t mean that garment, style, etc. is immodest.
 - ▶ *Caveat 2:* Some “immodest” dress is the simple result of not thinking. In other words, the garment was not chosen for its “sex-appeal”; it was inadvertently selected for its cuteness, convenience, etc. This person is not being so much “immodest” as he/she is being selfish or “worldly” (cf. the definition above).
 - ➔ However, some garments, styles, etc. do purposely contribute to lust. And they do that by accentuating the catalyst of lust, which is the physical body.
 - ➔ PART 2: *To purposefully chose to dress in such a way as to thrust attention on your physical body and thus cultivate lust is to dress immodestly.*
 - ➔ To dress that way inadvertently may also be a problem (i.e., of worldliness, of being unconcerned about others, etc.), especially if it is a regularity. So, we can’t afford to not think about how we are dressing.

Excellent Resource: C. J. Mahaney, *Worldliness*, Chapter 5 entitled, “God, My Heart, and Clothes” and Appendix A and B.

2. Does God’s Word address modesty?

- Genesis 3:7, 21 – In the Garden of Eden, clothing was given because an effect of sin was that nakedness became shameful. The beauty of nakedness was punished with shame, as a reminder of the destruction of sin. Attempting to uncover what God has covered seems to demonstrate a toleration of sin and an ignorance of its problem. A lack of shame over nakedness demonstrates a lack of sobriety regarding sin.
- I Timothy 2:9-10 – In the context of the gospel, Christ wants recreated believing women to adorn themselves in such a way that underlines godliness. Their “good works,” rather than their “adorning,” is what He has ordained to emphasize His salvation (cf. Titus 3:8; I Timothy 2:3-4).

3. What’s wrong in the heart of a purposefully immodest individual?

- Pride (immodesty of the heart)
- Self-centeredness
 - Toward God (idolatry)
 - Toward others (lack of discipleship)
- Low appreciation for and commitment to the Gospel

4. Is immodesty a big deal?

- It is a big deal when it’s being knowingly practiced and fearfully tolerated within the body of Christ. Remember what’s on the line: we’re hurting Christ (a gospel issue), we’re hurting each other (a discipleship issue), and we’re blinding the world (an evangelism issue). We’re trying to lay a foundation for a prosperous new humanity in the future homes of our churches.
- It is not a big deal it’s being practiced by an unbeliever to whom we’re ministering. Those people first need the gospel, before they even have a framework in which to consider this issue.

5. What are some practical case studies to consider?

- What do you do when you’re walking down the hall on Sunday with a girl who’s immodest? What should she do? What should he do?
- What should you do when you’re married, and you’re pressured to practice the sensual, show-off dress ethic of the newly marrieds? What should the husband do? What should the wife do?