

RELATIONSHIPS IN 3s

Guys, Girls, & Jesus

- Part 1a: Morality -

Keith Lewis

April 11, 2012

INTRODUCTION

Q: *What are the biggest problems in relationships between guys/girls?*

A: *They tend to be **selfish** or **sinful**.*

Cross-gender relationships tend to be either **selfish** or **sinful**, because they fail to be a “relationship in three.” In other words...

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.)

If Jesus really is the key to God-honoring, successful relationships, why do we not include Him as we ought? *open discussion*

Over the next four weeks, we want to consider how to keep our cross-gender “relationships in 3s” by considering three relationship-issues: (1) Morality, (2) Interaction, (3) Dating

TRANSITION

By the way, why do we do this? It’s easier to ignore these issues, especially issues of morality. Single Focus is committed to two fundamental issues, and both are attacked in these areas:

1. Morality is a gospel issue!

- *God’s reputation is at stake!* (cf. Rom 1:16 w/ 1:24-32)
Gospel = God’s power = salvation from sin
- *Our evangelism is at stake!* (cf. Titus 2:5, 8, 10; 3:8)
Ongoing Christian immorality minimizes the power of the gospel and blasphemes God’s Person, which in turn undermines our evangelism.

- *Our assurance is at stake!*

Immorality and the gospel are antithetical (cf. I Thessalonians 4:7-8; I Corinthians 6:9-20; Ephesians 4:17-24, 5:3-5; Colossians 3:5-8a). When they apparently live in tandem, something is wrong. What might be wrong? *open discussion* (no salvation, broken relationship with Christ, worldliness, etc.)

- So, the power of the gospel, the reputation of God, the stability of our own souls, and the effectiveness of our evangelism is at stake!

2. Morality is a discipleship issue!

- We must labor to present each other perfect in Christ Jesus (Colossians 1:28-29; 3:16; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25).
- One issue of perfection is morality (I Thessalonians 4:3; Colossians 5:3-4).
- Therefore, morality is a family issue! This is a one another issue! This is not a private, vacuum issue!

Your sin—whether blatant immorality or careless worldliness— affects the whole body, its Head, and its onlookers.

LESSON

Q: *What is Christ’s standard (i.e., the new humanity) for our morality?*

A: *“Not even a hint”—no lust! (Matthew 5:27-28; cf. Ephesians 5:3-4)*

- Lust = “craving sexually what God has forbidden...to want what you don’t have and weren’t meant to have. Lust goes beyond attraction, an appreciation of beauty, or even a healthy desire for sex—it makes those desires more important than God. Lust wants to go outside God’s guidelines to find satisfaction” (Josh Harris, *Sex Isn’t the Problem, Lust Is*).
- Lust = “sexual desire minus honor and holiness” (John Piper)
- Lust = “covets the forbidden”
- Scripture never asks “how far can we go?” because that questions is probably spawned by lust.
- Removing ourselves from all immoral content is not the answer, because the battle is in our hearts (cf. Matthew 15:18-20).

Q: *Why is this standard so idealistic?*

A: *Because of our position—“saints,” “reconciled to God,” “raised with Christ and dead to sin,” “Christ is our life,” “new humanity,” “elect, holy, and beloved,” “forgiven” (Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:1-4, 9-12)*

Q: *Why do we fail so frequently?*

A: *Josh Harris suggests that we fail in our battle against lust because we are misguided in three key areas: We have...*

- the wrong **standard for holiness** – “not even a hint”
- the wrong **source of power** to change – God (utter dependence)
- the wrong **motive for fighting** our sin – love (a response of active worship to God for His grace in complete salvation)

Q: *How do we fight immorality in our heart?*

A: *“We must fight fire with fire. The fire of lust’s pleasures must be fought with the fire of God’s pleasures.... We must fight it with the massive promise of superior happiness.” (John Piper)*

We need godliness by grace through faith – Christ must be preeminent in our hearts (cf. Colossians 3:1-4 before vv. 5ff). The root of all virtue is godliness (Genesis 39:9); immorality and godliness are antithetical (I Thessalonians 4:7-8).

Chose godliness:

- *Pray to God for help (Galatians 5:22-23; I John 5:14-15).*
- *Preach truth to yourself.*
 - ➔ The truth about salvation.
 - ➔ The truth about immorality
 - ➔ The truth about God (Psalm 16:11).
 - ➔ Show specifics from books.
- *Praise God for victory (Ephesians 5:3-4).*
- *Practice choosing righteousness (Galatians 6:8).*
- *Persevere in fighting lust and following holiness (Galatians 6:9).*

SPLIT SESSION

Immorality is a general term:

- Can refer to the blatant and obvious sin of adultery
- Or to the thoughtlessness of immodesty

Perhaps we should just use the term “lust” then to communicate what we’re dealing with these two weeks.

Our purpose overall is really not to deal with blatant immorality (“lust in action” – e.g., pornography, sexual intimacy, self-sex, immoral entertainment, etc.). Those are obviously sinful, and tonight we’ve briefly talked about how to deal with those sins.

Our overarching purpose is to deal with issues of morality that more directly affect the family of Christ at Colonial and in Single Focus – issues of lust that we find in the church. For example...

- Where might we be contributing to lust in some other brother or sister?
- How can I lay a solid foundation for a biblically moral and Christ-honoring home that drives away lust?
- How can my boyfriend/girlfriend and I avoid lust and replace it with righteousness?
- How can I minister to or fellowship with someone when they’re simultaneously tempting me to lust?
- Where are we thinking just like the world about morality without even being aware of it?

With that in mind, we want to “teach and admonish” one another in these areas. So, what would you like to say to your sisters/brothers concerning the following three areas that we’re going to look at?

- **Morality** (e.g., dress, entertainment, language, flirting, etc.) – What would you like to thank them for? What would you like to share with them? How would you like to counsel them?
- **Interaction** (e.g., conversation, reading into things, “friend dates,” etc.) – What would you like to thank them for? What would you like to share with them? How would you like to counsel them?
- **Dating** (e.g., purpose, standards, activities, discipleship, accountability, etc.) – What would you like to thank them for? What would you like to share with them? How would you like to counsel them?