

Marriage, Dating, and Sexuality

Introduction: God's Design for Love, Sex & Relationships

We know this is personal.

For some, this topic brings up deep pain. For others, it stirs confusion, shame, or frustration. Maybe you've been hurt by people or churches. Maybe you're wrestling with identity, or your past, or a relationship that didn't go how you thought it would.

Wherever you are, we want you to know this: **you are deeply loved.**

At **Love Church**, we don't pretend to know your story. But we do believe God has one for you—and it's full of grace, hope, and truth. This isn't a rulebook. It's a conversation. A conversation about what it means to follow Jesus with our whole lives—including our sexuality, our relationships, our desires, and our identity.

God is not anti-sex. He created it. He's not against love—He is love. He's not surprised by your questions. And He's not far from your pain.

This guide is here to walk with you. Whether you're married, dating, single, divorced, celibate, or unsure—we want to help you see God's vision for sexuality and relationships. A vision that doesn't lead to shame, but to **freedom, healing, and wholeness in Him.**

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” – Romans 12:2

Section 1: What is Biblical Sexuality?

Biblical sexuality starts with identity. Before we talk about behavior, boundaries, or relationships, we have to start with **who we are**.

You are not an accident. You are not defined by your desires or your past. You are made in the image of God—created on purpose, with dignity, beauty, and worth. That truth comes before anything else.

From the very beginning, God designed our bodies, our gender, our relationships, and our sexuality with intention and goodness. In Genesis 1–2, we see that sex is God’s idea—a gift meant to be expressed in the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. It’s about intimacy, oneness, family, joy, and even worship.

But like all good things, sin has distorted God’s design. Every one of us has experienced brokenness—whether through lust, pornography, infidelity, confusion, addiction, abuse, or silence. We all need healing. We all need grace. That’s why Jesus came. Not just to forgive our past, but to redeem our whole selves—mind, body, soul, and spirit.

“Flee from sexual immorality... you are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.” – 1 Corinthians 6:18–20

At **Love Church**, we believe:

- **Sex is a gift from God** to be enjoyed within marriage.
- **God’s design for marriage** is between **one man and one woman**.
- **Our identity** is not based on our sexual feelings but on **who God says we are**.
- **We are all called to pursue purity**, regardless of orientation, relationship status, or past experience.
- **God’s grace meets us wherever we are**—and transforms us from the inside out.

We also know that when it comes to sexuality, **every single person has a story**. Some of us carry regret. Others carry wounds. Some are struggling in silence. Others feel confused about where they fit. But here’s the good news: **shame doesn’t win—grace does**.

You are not disqualified. You are not too far gone. You are not stuck in who you used to be.

“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” – Romans 8:1

God has fully forgiven you—even if you haven’t forgiven yourself—and there is freedom, healing, and wholeness available in Jesus. This isn’t about behavior modification. It’s about letting God love you into becoming the person He created you to be. That journey looks different for each of us—but it always begins with **grace**.

“Holy sexuality is not focused on what we’re saying ‘no’ to, but what we’re saying ‘yes’ to. It’s not just a list of restrictions—it’s about pursuing the ultimate good: intimacy with God.”
– Christopher Yuan

Section 2: God's Design for Marriage

Marriage isn't man's idea—it's God's. Before there were cities, laws, or churches, God looked at Adam and said, "It is not good for man to be alone." So He created Eve—not as an assistant, but as a partner. Equal in value. Different in design. United in purpose.

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." – Genesis 2:24

Marriage was God's first institution. And He didn't design it to be a burden—but a blessing. Not a contract of convenience, but a **covenant of commitment**.

Marriage is a Covenant, Not a Contract

A contract says, "I'll hold up my part if you hold up yours."
A covenant says, "I'm in this no matter what."

God's design for marriage is a covenant—a sacred promise that reflects His unbreakable love for His people. When you say "I do," you're not just saying it to your spouse—you're saying it before God. You're entering into something bigger than emotion or preference. You're choosing faithfulness.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her..." – Ephesians 5:25

Marriage is about laying your life down. Serving. Forgiving. Growing. Laughing. Struggling together. Getting back up. Learning to love like Jesus—even when it's hard.

"To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is... what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us." — Tim Keller, The Meaning of Marriage

What Biblical Headship Is Not

At **Love Church**, we believe in mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21). That doesn't mean passivity—it means humility. Husbands are called to lead like Jesus—by serving first. Wives are called to partner with strength, honor, and wisdom.

Spiritual leadership in marriage is never about control, manipulation, or dominance. If it looks like abuse, it's not love—and it's not biblical. God's design for marriage is about building one another up in Christ, not tearing each other down in pride.

Marriage Is a Partnership, Not a Power Struggle

Marriage isn't about "who's in charge"—it's about "how do we love well?"

There is order in God's design—but no hierarchy of worth. Marriage is two becoming one—**not one overpowering the other**. It's about shared vision, deep friendship, forgiveness, and grace.

Marriage Takes Work

You're not just marrying someone's strengths—you're marrying their wounds, habits, and fears. Marriage takes humility, patience, and consistent intentionality. But it can also be one of the most beautiful places of transformation and joy.

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."
– 1 Peter 4:8

Some of the best marriages weren't built on compatibility—they were built on commitment.

Healthy Marriage Rhythms

Marriage works best when we build it with intentional rhythms. A few simple but powerful practices:

- **Weekly check-ins** (spiritual, emotional, practical)
- **Uninterrupted date nights**
- **Praying together** before major decisions or challenges
- **Speaking life over one another** every day
- **Practicing forgiveness regularly**—don't let bitterness take root

Marriage doesn't grow by accident. It grows by investing on purpose.

A Word About Divorce (and Remarriage)

Jesus taught that divorce was never God's original design—but in a broken world, it sometimes happens.

Scripture permits divorce in cases of:

- **Sexual immorality** (Matthew 5:32)
- **Abandonment by an unbelieving spouse** (1 Corinthians 7:15)
- **Abuse or violation of the covenant** (by spiritual principle and pastoral wisdom)

If you've walked through divorce, we want you to hear this: God is not done with your story. There is hope, healing, and restoration available through Jesus. You are not disqualified from grace. We believe **remarriage is biblically permissible** in specific, prayed-through circumstances, and we encourage those navigating it to walk in community, wisdom, and truth.

A Note to the Unmarried

If you're not married—this message is still for you. Understanding God's design helps you **pray, prepare, and pursue relationships with wisdom**. Jesus was single. Paul was single. Singleness is not less than—it's sacred, and we'll talk more about it in the next section.

Marriage Needs Jesus at the Center

The strongest marriages aren't the ones with the most romance—they're the ones with the most surrender. Marriage isn't 50/50. It's 100/100—with Jesus in the middle.

"A cord of three strands is not easily broken." – Ecclesiastes 4:12

Pray together. Serve together. Laugh together. Forgive often. Put Jesus first, and you'll find the strength to love each other through anything.

Section 3: God's Design for Sex

Let's start with this simple truth: **God created sex.** It was His idea. It wasn't a mistake or a backup plan—it was part of His original, beautiful design for intimacy, joy, oneness, and new life.

But many of us haven't heard it that way. Sex is either hyper-celebrated or wrapped in shame. It's either idolized or ignored. The Church hasn't always handled this topic well. But at **Love Church**, we want to talk about sex **the way God talks about it—with truth, tenderness, and love.**

A Biblical Vision for Sex

Sex was created by God to be **a covenant act of love between one man and one woman within the context of marriage.** We see this in the very beginning:

"That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." — Genesis 2:24

God didn't design sex to be casual, disposable, or transactional; He designed it to be sacred, powerful, and unifying—a physical expression of a lifelong spiritual and emotional commitment. **Sex is not just physical—it's spiritual.** It bonds souls. It opens hearts. It reflects intimacy and vulnerability at the deepest level.

Where It Goes Wrong

We live in a world that treats sex like a commodity—something you use, trade, explore, or consume whenever and however you want. But that kind of freedom often leads to wounds, confusion, addiction, broken trust, and emotional emptiness.

The Bible teaches that sexual sin—whether it's pornography, adultery, sex outside of marriage, lust, or even abuse—hurts both the body and the soul (1 Corinthians 6:18–20).

If that's part of your story, please hear this: You are not disqualified. You are not too far gone. God doesn't just forgive—He heals, restores, and redeems.

| So Why Does God Care About Sex?

Because **He cares about you**. God's boundaries around sex aren't about shame or restriction. They're about love, protection, trust, and long-term flourishing.

Imagine a fire in a fireplace—it warms the whole room. But a fire outside its boundaries can burn the whole house down. That's what sex is like—it's beautiful in its place.

When we follow Jesus, our entire lives—including our sexuality—come under His Lordship. That's not always easy. It requires surrender. But it's where we find healing and wholeness.

| If You're Struggling Sexually...

You're not alone, and this is not a church that leads with condemnation—we lead with compassion. Whether you're struggling with pornography, sexual addiction, hookup culture, past abuse, or even working in the sex industry—**this is not to shame you**.

We don't know your full story, but we know this: **Jesus does, and He hasn't turned away**. He's not afraid of your wounds or your patterns. He doesn't flinch at your past. He moves toward you with truth and grace.

| **"Shame doesn't bring change. Grace does."**

At **Love Church**, we believe **God's grace is greater than our history, and His Spirit is strong enough to lead us into a new future**. We want to walk with you—not just toward behavior change, but toward heart transformation.

LGBTQ+ & Same-Sex Attraction

| What does God's Word say? What does love require of us?

This is a deeply personal and often painful topic. If you're reading this and you identify as LGBTQ+ or you're wrestling with same-sex attraction, please know: **you are loved, seen, and not alone.**

We don't approach this topic to win an argument; we approach it because we believe truth and love are not enemies—they belong together in the way of Jesus.

| **"Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." —John 1:17**

Many people have experienced deep hurt from churches mishandling this conversation—with harsh judgment or painful silence. **At Love Church, we commit to neither.** We won't avoid what God says, but we'll never weaponize it. We're here to walk with you. Not shout at you.

| What Does the Bible Say?

Let's begin with what Scripture teaches about God's design for sex, relationships, and identity. From Genesis to Revelation, the biblical framework is consistent:

- **God designed sexual intimacy for marriage between a man and a woman** (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4–6).
- **Any sexual activity outside of this covenant**—whether heterosexual or homosexual—**is described as sin** (1 Corinthians 6:9–20, Romans 1:24–27, 1 Timothy 1:9–11).
- **God calls all people**—regardless of orientation or attraction—**to live in holiness, self-denial, and submission to His loving design.**

Some argue these Scriptures have been misinterpreted or taken out of context. But when studied carefully and in their original language and setting, the historic Christian interpretation remains the most faithful: **Same-sex sexual activity—like all sexual sin—is outside of God's design.**

We don't single out homosexuality. The Bible calls out many expressions of sexual brokenness—**pornography, adultery, casual sex, lust, even selfishness in marriage.** Paul calls sexual sin "a sin against our own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18) because it impacts us at the deepest level. Our culture may call that outdated, but we believe God's design is not repressive—it's protective and redemptive.

| What If I'm in a Same-Sex Relationship Without Sex?

This is a sincere and important question: "If we're not sleeping together, is it still sin?"

Sexual activity matters—but romantic **covenant also matters**. Even when sex isn't present, same-sex romantic partnerships still step outside of God's design for marriage. The Bible doesn't just speak to behaviors—it speaks to relational intention. Romantic love and emotional intimacy intended to mirror marriage are reserved for a man and a woman, according to Scripture. That doesn't mean same-sex friendship is wrong. It means romantic covenant is sacred—and God defines it.

So, even if there's no physical intimacy, **God lovingly calls us to surrender relational patterns that aren't aligned with His design.**

| If You're Struggling Sexually...

As we said earlier, **you're not alone**, and this is not a church that leads with condemnation—we lead with compassion. Whether you're struggling with pornography, sexual addiction, hookup culture, past abuse, or even working in the sex industry—**this is not to shame you.**

We don't know your full story, but we know this: **Jesus does, and He hasn't turned away.** He's not afraid of your wounds or your patterns. He doesn't flinch at your past. He moves toward you with truth and grace.

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What Now?

Maybe you're reading all this and feel conflicted. Maybe you agree with parts, but not all of it. Maybe you're hurting. Maybe you're hopeful. Maybe you're still figuring it all out.

Wherever you are on the journey, we're here to say: **God's not done with you.** Following Jesus isn't about fixing yourself—it's about surrendering to Him. He meets you where you are, but He never leaves you there.

At **Love Church**, we believe:

- **Grace is greater than guilt.**
- **Jesus is better than sin.**
- **And healing takes time—but God is patient and kind.**

So what now?

- **If you're in a sexual relationship outside of God's design** (gay or straight), take a prayerful, humble step toward repentance. God's kindness leads us to change.
- **If you're struggling with identity, attraction, or shame**, we invite you into a safe, grace-filled community where you're not alone.
- **If you've been hurt by churches or Christians** in this conversation, we grieve that. We want to be different. We don't throw stones. We extend a hand.
- **If you want help navigating your story**, our team would be honored to walk with you. You're not a project. **You're a person, loved by God.**

Let's move toward Jesus—together.

A Final Word on Belonging

At **Love Church**, we know not everyone will fully agree with everything we believe—and that's okay. **You don't have to have it all figured out—or fully agree—to be loved, to belong, or to walk with us.** We're a church full of imperfect people learning how to follow Jesus together. That means we create space for questions, wrestle with truth in community, and walk in grace as we grow.

You're welcome here.

You're wanted here.

And we're honored to walk this journey with you—wherever you're starting from.