

## Restoring Sexual Respect

### Introduction:

1. “Unprecedented! What an unparalleled time in human history. Headline after headline reveals story after story of sex offenders violating victim after victim.” So began a recent article by June Hunt entitled “Restoring Sexual Respect” (Christian Counseling Today, vol. 23 no. 1).
2. Certainly sexual respect needs to be restored.
3. And certainly as the salt of the earth and the light of the world the people of God have a grave responsibility.

### Discussion:

- I. From the beginning God has defined what sexual respect looks like.
  - A. Gen. 2:24-25.
    1. A man and a wife joined in marriage.
      - a. Not a man and a man.
      - b. Not a woman and a woman.
      - c. Not a boyfriend and a girlfriend.
      - d. Not significant others.
    2. Not a relationship that is shame-based. No humiliation. Unshamed. That is, they do not shame and humiliate one another.
    3. By God’s design, the sexual experience is to be mutually respectful to each partner.
      - a. It is a bonding experience
      - b. That results in the magnificent creation of children
      - c. And is part of the soil in which children, husbands and wives thrive.
  - B. Gen. 1:27.
    1. Both male and female are created in the image of God.
    2. Both are to be equally respected.
    3. Both have intrinsic value.
    4. In this mutually respectful relationship they reflect the beauty of God’s complementary design.
  - C. Eph. 5:21ff; cf. Col. 3:18-19.
    1. Honors God’s design by referring to it as analogous to Christ and His church.
    2. It is selfless.
    3. Self-sacrificing. The love that characterizes it gives up self for the benefit of the other.
    4. Thus it is respectful.
- II. But in hardened hearts sex becomes an act of selfishness, and humiliation, of cruelty and even violence. We see it evidenced throughout Scripture.
  - A. In Gen. 19 we experience something of what disrespect for God’s design and disrespect for those created in His image looks like.
    1. The men of the city of Sodom, both young and old, made an attempt to

homosexually rape the men in Lot's house.

2. Lot, in a seemingly desperate move, offered his virgin daughters, a move to me that seems incredulous. How could he disrespect God's design and his daughters in this way? Will we present our daughters or our sons to be sexual victims?
  3. Were it not for the messages of God in Lot's house cruelty and violence would have destroyed them all. Messengers of God will not stand aside and allow sexual victimization to go unchallenged. In compassion God saved Lot and his family and probably many others also by destroying Sodom and Gomorrah. Do we act with similar compassion to punish the guilty and rescue those being assaulted?
- B. But that is not the end of the story.
1. Lot became drunk and slept with his oldest daughter.
  2. Became drunk again and slept with his youngest daughter. Drunkenness does not excuse sexual assault.
  3. Stoned out of his mind, he has disrespected his daughters and they have disrespected him. They have disrespected God's design. Selfishness, humiliation, cruelty and violence not only characterized Sodom and Gomorrah but have caused havoc in Lot's own family. The fact that Moses identifies Lot's sons by his daughters as the Moabites and the Ammonites indicates the long-term effect on Lot's descendants.
  4. What an atrocity when fathers sexually assault their own children!
- C. Gen. 38 tells the story of Judah and Tamar.
1. Tamar was a woman who had lost two husbands, both of whom had rebelled against the Lord.
  2. Judah, father to the two husbands was supposed to give his third son in marriage to Tamar. But he was afraid reasoning that he too might die.
  3. Tamar dressed as a prostitute and Judah went in to her.
  4. Judah had humiliated Tamar and now she had humiliated him and sex was the avenue for the shame.
  5. Sex is not to be used to humiliate, to create shame, to be used as a tool of power to gain control.
  6. Judah attempted to prey on a vulnerable prostitute. The tables were turned on him when Tamar preyed on his vulnerability.
- D. Joseph was sexually harassed in Gen. 39:6ff.
1. Potiphar's wife appealed to him day after day saying, "Come lie with me."
  2. When he fled she lied and said he had attempted to rape her.
  3. He ended up going to jail.
  4. This is a case of holding the victim of sexual harassment guilty, when they have done no wrong. Sometimes in our society survivors of sexual harassment and assault are humiliated, blamed and condemned.
  5. The guilt is solely on the perpetrator. The assault is not the victim's fault!
- E. Judges 19-20 describes an incident where a Levite's concubine was raped to death.
1. First, she was unfaithful to her husband.
  2. He went after her to bring her home.

3. On their way home they were invited into an old man's home in Gibeah, among the Benjaminites.
  4. Certain worthless fellows surrounded the house and pounded upon the door. They said, "Bring out the man who came into your house that we may have relations with him."
  5. The owner of the house offered his daughter and the man's concubine to them, but they refused. The man gave his concubine to them and they assaulted her all night, raping and abusing her. She made it back to the house, only to die on the door step.
  6. Who are these who commit such atrocities? Who are these men who should have protected their daughters and wives, but would give them over to rapists?
  7. Prov. 31:8-9 says, "Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all the unfortunate. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy."
  8. Psa. 7:9 says, "Let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous."
  9. In the case of Judges 19 a civil war broke out. The attempt was to bring judgment against the Benjaminites. But the first battle saw 22,000 in Israel die. The second battle saw 18,000 in Israel die. Israel had a force of 400,000, but the Benjaminites numbering only 26,700 were defeating them. Sometimes judgment comes against those who allow atrocities to go unchecked. In the third battle 25,100 of the Benjaminites died. (There is a problem understanding all the numbers in the text of Judges 20.) Apparently some 65,000 lost their lives in this episode. It marked a low point in the history of Israel!!
- F. Time will not allow us to address the rape of Tamar, David's inordinate use of power to take Bathsheba and murder her husband, but it is clear where the Bible stands on all such cases of abuse.

### III. How are the people of God supposed to respond today?

- A. We need to practice sexual respect ourselves.
  1. Men. Far be it from us to degrade young girls and women, treat them as intellectually inferior, those to be controlled, used or dominated. Surely we shall not harass them with sexually-oriented slurs and slander, nor demean them in any way.
  2. Women. Far be it from us to disrespect boys and men with "male-bashing," making them the brunt of jokes, labeling all men as sex-crazed clods.
  3. We will not perpetuate sexual assault on any. We will not use power in destructive ways. We will not act selfishly. We will not humiliate. We will not be cruel and violent toward the innocent.
- B. We will not stand idle when the innocent are being destroyed, instead we will expose the deeds of darkness (Eph. 5:11).
- C. We will protect the lives of the innocent (Prov. 31:8-9) and bring justice to bear on the guilty (Ecc. 8:11; Prov. 17:15).
- D. We will engage the world with the light of the gospel.
  1. 1 Cor. 6:9-11 is a startling passage.

2. Those who once were fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, covetous, etc. can be washed and sanctified by the blood of Jesus.
3. If such deeds are abhorrent to us, then we need to recognize that the people of the world are in darkness and bring them the light that they need. It is the message of the gospel that is the hope of the world.

Conclusion:

1. We are not exempt from the impact of this darkness upon us.
2. We are survivors from the darkness. We are testimony to the transforming effect of the grace of God.
3. If you need to escape the darkness then come. Be washed and sanctified in the blood of Jesus and walk in the light as He is in the light.