

While this Statement on Sexuality seeks to express the truth of Scripture, this truth must always be expressed with the spirit of grace found in Jesus Christ, who came to us full of grace and truth (John 1:16–17). Similarly, we ought to approach others with that same spirit of grace and truth.

God's Intention: Creation

Sexuality is created by God and is good. We are created and embodied as male and female. In community we reflect God's image and accomplish His purpose in the world (Genesis 1:26–28). We are created for committed, intimate community, free from shame (Genesis 2:24–25). For a man and a woman, this intimacy may be expressed and consummated sexually when they are united as one flesh in marriage (Genesis 2:24). The pleasure of sexual union is intended to express not only a bodily intimacy but also an intimacy of heart, soul, and mind. The divine purpose for sexual union is to reproduce children who represent God and extend God's rule to the ends of the earth (Genesis 1:26–28).^{*} Our created sex and sexuality are gifts from the Creator to be embraced with gratitude and worship.

Our Distortion: The Fall

Any rebellion against God's perfect design is sin. It separates us from God and distorts intimacy. All of us have experienced sexual brokenness in some fashion. No longer naked and without shame, Adam and Eve clothed themselves with fig leaves (Genesis 2:25; 3:7). Differences between sexes meant to complement have led to dysfunctional, domineering, neglected, and even abusive relationships (physically, emotionally, and sexually [e.g., rape and incest]) (Genesis 3:16). Some seek to redefine the created nature of our sexuality in rebellion (Romans 1:24–27). They desire the intimacy or pleasure of sex without the commitment of marriage between a man and woman (1 Corinthians 6:16; cf. Genesis 2:24), such as homosexual or extra-marital sexual activity. Others seek an illusion of intimacy through actively indulging in lust, fantasizing, and/or pornography. All of these are indicators of our rebellion against God.

In all the brokenness of our sexuality, the church has often failed to recognize, understand, or show compassion to those wrestling with these realities. Particularly, the church has struggled to walk in a redemptive manner with those who experience same-sex attraction and/or question their created and gendered identity. Because of the Fall, our struggles with sexuality cannot simply be reduced to our choices or environmental background, but our choices remain significant.

Our Redemption: Jesus

God loves us in our brokenness with a love so boundless that He sent Jesus to redeem what sin had distorted. Even Christians who had previously embraced many sexual sins are now described in this way: And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11). These realities can be true for us today. There is nothing out of reach from the power of Jesus to cleanse and forgive when we turn to Him in humble repentance and submission. God floods our sexually broken world with grace and mercy to wash our sinful natures clean and

makes us new creations in Jesus Christ (Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Out of forgiveness rather than condemnation, we are empowered to pursue sexual wholeness and freedom from the distortions of the Fall (John 8:11). God is restoring His creation, including His purposes for sexuality, through Jesus Christ, the firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15–20).

As the Body of Christ, we walk together in our sexual brokenness toward maturity in Christ. We do so by speaking the truth with understanding, love, and compassion (Ephesians 4:15). While Jesus inaugurates the restoration of all creation, its full restoration is not yet realized. However, because of Christ's provision, it is our privilege to choose to "walk by the Spirit" and by so doing "not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Galatians 5:16). We can experience the promised blessing that God desires to who will "fill [us] with all joy and peace as [we] trust in him, so that [we] may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13). Therefore, we are freed from condemnation (Romans 8:1) and can overcome the power of sin (Romans 5:17) and Satan (Revelation 12:11) by the power of the cross of Jesus Christ!

Our Hope: Fulfillment

While Jesus' death on the cross freed us from the penalty and power of sin, only His Second Coming will free us completely from the presence of sin. On that day, we will see him face to face (1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 13:12), enjoying a true intimacy without shame. The battle for purity will be won (Revelation 19:8), and we will be presented blameless in His presence with great joy (Jude 24).

* While not explicitly included in the Genesis creation account, sexual union is for pleasure (Song of Songs). Furthermore, reproduction of people who represent God and extend God's rule to the ends of the earth is not limited to physical reproduction but also occurs through discipleship multiplication; the creation language of being fruitful and multiplying greatly is used in the New Testament for how the Word of God bears fruit to multiply disciples (e.g., Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20; Colossians 1:6, 10).