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Welcome to week three of tough questions. This week, I want to ask a pretty tough question. Why is there so much sex gone bad in the bible? You have to admit, it keeps coming up again and again.

January 4th, you have **Ham**, Noah's son who walks in on Noah when he's drunk and intoxicated and he sees something or does something that's so bad that he's cursed by God.

January 6th, we have Abram and Sarai trying to conceive a child and they can't do that through Sarai and so Sarai gives Abraham Hagar, her hand maiden and says "Here, have sexual relations with her, maybe we can have a family that way."

January 7th, Kind of a double feature. First of all, you've got the men of Sodom who come out to Lot's house when they notice that Lot has a visitor. And they're banging on the door demanding that Lot give his male visitors over so to them so that they can have homosexual sex with them. Later that same day as you're reading your bible, you have the story of Lot's daughters who are getting older and they don't have kids yet. They don't have husbands yet so what are they going to do? Ah, I know what! Let's get our dad drunk and then we'll have sex with him and become impregnated that way. Incest, right here in the opening pages of the Bible.

And then you have January 13th. Jacob, who's in love with Rachel and wants to marry her and on his wedding night, he actually is tricked by his father-in-law and given instead of Rachel, Leah. And so he wakes up the morning after his wedding night in the arms not of his beautiful brand new bride, but of his sister-in-law.

Flip over January 15th, Ruben, one of Jacob's sons decides that he's going to have sexual relations with one of his dad's concubines.

Flip on over, January 17th, here you have the story of Judah. And Judah thinks it's a good idea to enjoy a temple shrine prostitute and so he has sex with what he thinks is a prostitute, but in reality, he's having sex with his daughter-in-law.

So right about when you're beginning to wonder, *does anybody get this right in the whole Bible?* Here we have Joseph, on January 18th. He seems like he's the only one who can keep his senses about him sexually. Why is it that that theme keeps coming up in the scriptures? How is that a part of God's plan? Let's take a look at this.

So why is there so much sexual struggle in the Bible? Well, because the Bible is an honest book. The Bible tells the truth, even about the good guys. Even the good guys mess up big time in the Bible. And we really wouldn't want it any other way. Could you imagine the Bible just being a book full of perfect little stories where perfect people always do

perfect things? Well no, God gives us enough space in our relationship with him to where we actually can resist what his plans are, what his, his direction and his designs are. And as a part of that, the story of the Bible is full of three or four sub-plots that repeat again and again and again. God creates things and it's good in what he originally designs, but humanity in our sinful self, we tend to mess up what God made good. And then God's not done. He steps into the story to redeem him. Well how does that creation, fall, redemption story work itself out with this topic that we call sexuality. Let's work on the board here a little bit today.

Well let's compare how God made sex in the first place with what sexuality has become under the influences of sin and the fall. Along with everything else God made, God made men and women and said that they were good. And so we can assume that our sexuality is a part of what God made and that it's a gift to us, a good gift. It's a gift through which we can raise families. It's a gift that God gave to be enjoyed clearly between one man and one woman. That's the context of sex. In terms of gender, God created men and women to be equal image bearers, equally reflecting who God is in being a man. Equally reflecting what God is in a being a woman. And so, there's grounds for singleness, there's grounds for cooperation between men and women. They're the perfect partners to fulfill what God's designs are for humanity. And at the end of the day, the bible says that the man and the woman were naked and were not ashamed and that means that there was no shame whatsoever in their sexuality. That they were able to be intimate and close to each other without being in competition.

Well how has the fall affected that? Well, instead of sex being a gift, sex is sometimes more of a burden, more of a source of pain, a context actually for abuse of all kinds. The fall basically says that mankind wants things his own way, on his own terms and so we part ways with the way in which God created sexuality in the first place. And so we start living out our sexuality in inappropriate and hurtful ways. And not only does it lead to abuse, but it can also lead to sex becoming an idol. Kind of like a god that we even worship. Well the other thing that happens is that the sense of context or appropriateness of the boundaries that God creates are broken down. And over here we have unhealthy boundaries that lead to things like polygamy or adultery, ignoring a boundary that God has put. Incest, homosexuality, all kinds of inappropriate sexual relationships happen when the breakdown, in what God sets up, happens. And so the inner result, instead of intimacy and partnership with one another is fear and shame and pain. And we see a lot of this in the experiences of the patriarchs here in Genesis that we're reading about. But God is still serious about his design for creation. Even in Abraham's day, it didn't work out too well for Abraham when he decided to get another wife. The men who came to Lot's house and wanted to have homosexual sex with his visitors were punished by God for doing that. And so God is serious about his standards.

A little further down the line, we're going to be introduced to more principals of how to live sexually out of the law. But before we get there, we just need to stop and look at the situation and say God is serious about what he created over here. And he's holding us accountable to everything that's a part of his design. We'll have lots more interesting passages to read about sexuality out of the law coming in a few weeks. But for here now, we have to know that God is in the business of redeeming our sexual mistakes as well. So do you remember that guy out of the Bible Judah, who is so upset when he found out that the prostitute that he had hired was actually his daughter-in-law? Well we look at that and we say well, how is God going to bring any redemption into that situation? Well as it turns out, Judah, on the deathbed of his father he's blessed lavishly by his Jacob and Jacob says that there is a great ruler that's going to come from your offspring someday, and that great ruler is going to be Jesus. And so even though we fail sexually and we wreak all kinds of havoc in our life and we may even be bringing lots of pain and shame in our experiences, God can redeem those failures, just like he did in the Old Testament. As he gives us more and more information about how to live, what he's holding us accountable to is getting clearer and clearer. We'll be at our happiest, at our, at our very best if we stay within the guidelines that God's, God's created design implies for us.

Well I hope you've got some interesting questions that come out of this session. It's been a difficult session to try to talk about, but I want to encourage you to, to go down and comment about what you've heard. Let me know what you're thinking and let me know if you have further questions.