

Cash Cab Anyone? Tim Perry

Tim Perry here – coming at you with Week 9 of Tough Questions from a little bit of a different recording studio – I’m on my way to Illinois to spend some time at my Mom and Dad’s house working with my brothers. So I thought I would have you join me here in this Cash Cab edition of Tough Questions.

Before we get going, we are going to play a round or two of Cash Cab and then we’re going to get into this week’s question. Well, you’ll remember from Week 2 or Week 3 – somewhere way back – that we talked about the issue of sexuality in the Bible and why there’s so much sexual dysfunction in the lives of the people that we read about in the Bible. Well, we’re going to revisit that theme in light of some of the laws surrounding marriage, divorce, promiscuity and illicit sex that we find in the Books of Deuteronomy of Numbers. We’re reading about those this week in Project 4:4.

Well, here we go. First of all if we’re going to play a round of Cash Cab with Tim, you’ve got to remember how it works. As long as you keep getting answers right, you get to ride along with me here on my trip across Iowa. As you answer questions, we’re just going to keep rolling toward our destination. However, just like on Cash Cab, if you get one of our questions wrong, I have no other choice than to let you out. I’m not slowing down, I’m not pulling over and put you on the side of the street, I am just going to let you go. OK?

So here we go – Question #1. In Deuteronomy 21, it says that if the Israelite nation went to war against another nation and they won that war, they had the option of marrying any of the daughters of the people that they defeated militarily. It said that if you found somebody who was attractive to you and you wanted to marry them, you had to do one of these three things. Can you guess which one it is?

1. If you wanted to marry a daughter of a defeated nation, you would have to:
 - a. give a freewill offering of 30 shekels to the to the tabernacle
 - b. shave her head, give her a manicure, give her some new clothes and then you could marry her
 - c. send her back to her parents.

So – you got like about two seconds to make up your mind here according to Tim’s Cash Cab rules. Well, the answer is “b” – you’re supposed to shave her head, trim her nails and give her some new clothes. So there it is – I hope you’re still with me.

2. According to Numbers 5, if a husband becomes jealous suspecting that his wife is guilty of adultery, he is to do the following:
 - a. bring her to the temple and have her drink a mixture of water and dust from the tabernacle floor

- b. she is to bring a grain offering and wave it before the Lord to pay for the jealousy of her husband
- c. both "a" and "b"

OK, what do you think? Well, the correct answer is "c". You are supposed to bring a grain offering as well as drink this strange mixture of water and dust from the floor of the tabernacle. And it goes on to say that if her abdomen swells and her thigh wastes away, whatever that means, then she was guilty. But if she remains healthy, then there is no grounds for suspicion and the husband should continue to be faithful to his wife and his wife should go back to live with her husband – Numbers 5.

3. Here's our last question. Hope you're still with me. According to the Levirate Marriage Law found in the book of Deuteronomy, if a widowed woman refuses to be married by her brother-in-law, she is to:
- a. remain single
 - b. remarry outside of her tribe
 - c. remove a sandal from her brother-in-law and spit in his face

The correct answer is "c". She is supposed to remove one of his sandals, spit in his face and declare to him, "You unsandaled one!" Wow!

Well, what are we getting at this week in Tough Questions? Now if we read these passages from February 28th and 29th, March 1st and 2nd – out of our Project 4:4 Chronological Bibles, we're going to read all kinds of stipulations and guidelines for sexuality. Well the reason the Bible talks so much about sex and gives us so many parameters about it – is because it's incredibly important to God. Sex is a creation of God – it's meant for men and women to enjoy intimacy – it's meant for men and women to build families. But humanity has always managed to mess up sexuality. There are so many rules about sex in the Bible because there's no much disobedience in the human family about how sexuality is to be used.

I want to build a little diagram for you that might help you think about sexuality and the Bible, and look at how it is that our world views sexuality in contrast to the Bible. I want to show you a diagram and I want you to think of it as an individual kind of at the center of the target, if you will, with several layers of consideration concentrically surrounding him. So I'm going to show you my diagram – here it is – take a look. It's about the best I could do while I'm driving. Just kidding – I didn't draw it while I was driving.

First of all, there is a societal or a cultural layer to sexuality. When God gave us guidelines for the use of our sexuality, it was to protect culture and society at large so that men and women could flourish and families could flourish. But if we just look at our culture and our society as the grounds for morality sexually – then the human family doesn't last very long. They lapse into moral relativity and whatever feels good – whatever two consenting adults want to do together – they wind up

doing together. God has to step in and say “no” – I didn’t intend for it to be that way.

Our culture around us all the time – sends us messages about our sexuality. So we need to be very cautious looking at the world around us as though the world somehow reflects what God’s intentions are as is. That’s really not the truth. It couldn’t be further from it.

Well, the next layer in on my little chart that I want you to take a look at – has to do with the structure of the family. So if we look it in terms of society, the next layer in is to look at it in terms of family. Sexuality has huge family implications. Not only is it the way in which we raise a family – through sexual intercourse – husbands and wives can become pregnant and bear children – but our families are the environments that we are most intimately tied in with. So much of how we draw our identities sexually – much of how we identify what our gender roles are, is prescribed by our family. So God wants to protect sex because it is so important to the health and livelihood of a family.

Well, what about the third layer in? The third layer in has to do with what I call – worldview. Here’s what that looks like on my handy dandy little chart. At the worldview level, we are told by God what the actual meaning of sexuality is. Just like any other story that we find in the Bible, it follows the narrative of scripture – creation, fall, redemption and fulfillment. That’s the story of our sexuality as well. God initiated sexuality when he created human beings. So it’s God design. But humanity misused that design and so we brought upon ourselves all kinds of failures. Ones that are prescribed in the book of Deuteronomy – things so vile in some places it’s embarrassing to even talk about them. But anytime that we stray from what God’s created design for what sexuality is – we invite pain and problems. So whenever we drift outside of sexuality between a man and woman in a committed relationship, we begin to have problems. Whether that’s homosexual sex or whether that’s sex before marriage or whether that’s promiscuity or adultery or God forbid other forms of misuse of our sexuality – it brings pain and brokenness.

But that’s only part of the story then. God reaches into the human story through the power of the cross, through what Jesus has done for us – through forgiveness, through the sacrificial system even of the Old Testament – and brings about restoration and healing and hope. So our broken sexuality doesn’t have to stay that way. So much of our culture is stuck in that paradigm of broken sexuality. Just because two people who are broken get together and they share the same form of sexual brokenness doesn’t mean that that’s a valid way for society or culture or families to live out their sexuality. God still has a plan to redeem and to heal our broken sexuality.

Then the final chapter in the worldview of scripture in the narrative of the Bible – is that one day we won’t need our sexuality. We’ll be able to be united with God and with each other in eternity future and we won’t need to be propagating the race

like we are in this earth bound existence. So the ultimately fulfillment is not so much the gratification of sex itself that our culture is so hungry and addicted to – but it's to reach a point of being united with God and being able to enjoy him in His immediate presence. So fulfillment sexually for us will one day be being able to be with God in heaven where our sexual wounds will be completely healed and where we won't need our sexuality in the same way that we need it here on earth.

Then the last level that I want you to look at in my little diagram here – has to do with the very core of our sexuality. What is at the very core of this thing that gets so easily broken and distorted in our world? Well check it out here. At the core of our sexuality is being known by God. Being loved by God. There are all kinds of prescriptions in the law that give shape and form to our sexuality – guidelines – prohibitions. But what was the law that was at the heartbeat of all the other laws in the Bible? Well, it was the command to love God. The command to love God and love your neighbor as you love yourself is what is essential about having a foundation for our sexuality. We could try to build that foundation by reaching up into that layer in my chart. We could try to fix our family brokenness. We could try to go out and fix society with all kinds of rules and regulation that we impose on our world, but at the core of it are the two fundamental issues of worldview and love for God. If we believe God's story – God's worldview about sexuality – then sexual sanity is possible because we believe then that sexuality is good even though it is broken. That it's redeemable even though it's flawed. And then at the heart of the heart of the matter of sexuality is our very own experience of being loved by God. The people who struggle the most sexually – are struggling internally with the love of self that is rooted in the love of God. If we appropriately love ourselves, then it means we are in agreement with God that we are a lovable individual. If we are a lovable individual in God's eyes, then we're not so filled with lust and thirst to be loved by other people. We're not so prone to skip over all other forms of love and try to skim off of sexuality whatever kind of gratification and fulfillment we can.

So as we read these guidelines and prohibitions about sexuality in the Bible, it's not because God is up there as some celestial killjoy trying to restrict our sexual satisfaction, He's trying to give shape to it. He's trying to protect what's essential about true love. If true love is what we're after, then we need to put that as foundational to everything else.

Well, I hope this has been an interesting video for you – albeit shot in a kind of a bizarre environment here while I'm driving on I-80 to Illinois. But I hope you enjoyed this conversation. If you've got a comment or two, hit on the comment link. I'd like to hear from you. Thanks for being with me and helping my trip not be so long and boring.

Hope you have a great day. This is Tim Perry, Pastor of Spiritual Discover at Christ Community Church. We'll see you next week for tough questions.