

The Story of Sexual Brokenness (8 pages)

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“If you wish to influence an individual or a group to embrace a particular value in their daily lives, tell them a compelling story.”

In Part One of this book, I mentioned the fact that six main characters of *Friends* had a total of 85 different partners over the course of ten seasons on the air. Chandler had the fewest, with 9, followed by Monica, with 13, Rachel, with 14, Ross and Phoebe with 16, and Joey with the most, 17. More than 60 million people watched the show, but how many of them were counting these sexual partners, or taking notice of how normal, exciting, and funny sexual brokenness was becoming with every episode? It came wrapped in such a hilarious package that viewers rarely considered what they were entertaining in their minds.

Sitcoms, movies, commercials, and even news reporting have only gotten worse since the end of *Friends*. We live in a culture where families and individuals are bombarded hourly with **beautifully wrapped promiscuity**— like gilded missiles guided toward our hearts and minds. **These sexually charged alternate narratives have changed how we view ourselves, our relationships, and our families.** The male/female relationship looks nothing like that of Genesis 2, when Adam and Eve walked with God in the cool of the day, naked and unashamed. God is not present on the daily walks that men and women take today, or any day since Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Bible isn't a book of rules, but a story about **relationships**—relationships born out of love at the very beginning, and then **robbed of innocence by sexual brokenness** after **the Fall**. But there is good news: the Bible tells the wonderful story about how God works in the midst of a sexually broken people to redeem them.

A search for the phrase “sexual sin” does not reveal all that the Bible teaches about sexual sin. Individual stories that contain aspects of sexuality may not use the words “sex” or “immorality,” but they definitely tell a story about sexual immorality. Believers must read the Bible carefully if they want to construct a strong theology of sex, identifying the “sexual” stories in each era and aligning those stories to understand what the whole Bible says about sexual immorality.

Creation

In the beginning, God creates a beautiful and bountiful environment for the first couple to live and to work in. This garden demonstrates the good heart of God toward His people. He gives them only one rule: “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:16-17). God is good, and His provision is abundant; even the boundary He gives them in creation is a part of His provision. This rule gives Adam and Eve an opportunity to trust God with what they don't know—they have no context for death, as they have never seen it happen before.

Chapters 3 through 4 illustrate the **death** that Adam and Eve experience after **eating [partaking of] the forbidden fruit**. Their relationship with God changes from one of trust and transparency to blame-shifting and shielding themselves from Him and from one another.

The dominion that God intended the couple to exercise over His creation (1:26-28) is now perverted and played out in their relationship with one another, for God says, **“Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you”** (3:16b, ESV). God gives the hurting couple hope, however, by promising a future redemption—“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between **your seed and her Seed**; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (3:15). The first picture of redemption appears when God removes their poor attempts to cover themselves and replaces them with a sacrifice of His own making—the skin of an animal (3:21).

Their sons experience the bitter aftertaste of death-dealing fruit when Cain kills Abel. He rejects God, and Genesis 4 describes life outside of the presence of God as Cain's descendants **develop a culture of brokenness, which includes polygamy.**

Polygamy, which first appears in Cain's genealogy (4:23-24), demonstrates the rapid development of sexual brokenness among those who live outside of God's presence. **Lamech exercises sinful dominion by taking two wives and threatening them into submission, but this trend has not yet infected Seth's line.** Several generations pass, however, and the descendants of Seth "saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose" (6:2). Thus begins a global culture totally committed to choosing relationships by sight instead of faith in God, where "every intent of the thoughts of [their hearts] was only evil continually" (6:5), and where excess, violence, and murder, abound.

Although everyone outside of Noah's immediate family perishes in the global flood, the flood does not wipe out sexual brokenness, as Ham's behavior toward his parents demonstrates, bringing about serious consequences not just for Ham but for all of his children (9:18-25). **His descendants, the Canaanites, develop into a culture of immorality.**

Patriarchs

The Patriarch Era begins with Abraham's departure from Ur and its idolatry. God's promises to make Abraham great and bless the nations through him require him to learn to **walk with God by faith, rather than by sight.** Some time after Abraham's expulsion from Egypt, his nephew Lot moves to the city of Sodom, which is renowned for its sexual brokenness and violence— so much so that God makes a personal trip from heaven to destroy it. After Lot escapes the destruction of Sodom, his daughters exhibit the influence of a sexually broken culture when they plot to get their father drunk and sleep with him in order to obtain heirs.

In Egypt and in the Philistine territories, powerful men establish harems, collecting beautiful women for the purpose of sexual pleasure. God delivers Sarah twice from sexual exploitation, once in Egypt, and again in Gerar. Even Hagar's foray into Abraham's bed for the purpose of securing a male heir isn't strange in these cultures.

When God speaks to Abraham in Genesis 15 regarding the future of his descendants—their return to the land of Canaan—He describes the trajectory of Canaanite culture: "And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the **iniquity** of the Amorites is not yet complete" (15:16, ESV). The word "**iniquity**" signifies perversion or **twisting of something good into something evil.** God is giving the Amorites 400 years to continue to sin so that there will be no doubt that they deserve His judgment. **As we will see in Leviticus 18, the Canaanites will terribly twist God's design for the female/male relationship—and all others.**

After Abraham, Isaac's life appears to be free of sexual sin. Jacob's life is a different story. His family includes two sisters and two concubines, a situation that sets him and his children up for painful jealousy, conflict, and hatred. The dynamics are so twisted that Jacob's eldest son, Reuben, has sex with Bilhah, Jacob's concubine and the mother of two of his brothers. The family experiences sexual violence among the Canaanites when Jacob's daughter Dinah is raped by a Hivite prince named Shechem. Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, compound the violence by killing all the men of Shechem's city and taking their wives and children captive.

Around this time, **Jacob's son Judah marries a Canaanite,** and they have three sons. Their sons are so wicked that God kills two of them, leaving Tamar—who had been given to the eldest, and then to the second (Gen. 38:6-10)— now pledged to marry the third son and basically exiled to a life of barrenness as a widow. After Judah's Canaanite wife dies, he sleeps with Tamar, because she has disguised herself as a prostitute. He sleeps with his own daughter-in-law. You can't make this stuff up!

When Joseph ends up in Egypt, his boss's wife tries to seduce him, and then frames him for rape when he refuses her. Her sinful desires cost him dearly.

God does not sanitize the lives of the patriarchs before writing them down in His Book. Why? Because they are all of us. Their sexually broken world is our sexually broken world. None of what we see today is new.

Exodus

After Israel's deliverance from Egypt, we see them default naturally to sexual sin and idolatry. These two themes appear together throughout the Scriptures. While Moses is on the mountain receiving the Law, Israel demands a god they can see. Instead of restraining them, Aaron asks for their gold and forms it into an idol, which they venerate and then celebrate in unrestrained lawlessness (Ex. 32:1-7, 25). **In Numbers 25, Israelite men commit harlotry with the women of Moab and then immediately bow down to their gods.** Paul references these events in his first letter to the Corinthians, warning the believer to avoid such behavior: "And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and **rose up to play.**' Nor let us commit **sexual immorality**, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell" (1 Cor. 10:7-8). Their sexual immorality has a terrible cost, and it should be a lesson to God's people.

Immediately following the scene in Exodus 32, the LORD renews His covenant with Israel, promises to do marvels in their midst, and urges them to develop self-restraint. He tells Israel, "**Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst**" (Ex. 34:12). He also begins to introduce the idea of Israel's "**playing the harlot**" with other gods (34:15). **God clearly considers idolatry as a form of sexual immorality towards Him.** Israel must not participate in it, nor marry the daughters of the land, who "play the harlot with their gods and make [Israel's] sons play the harlot with their gods" (34:16). He has warned them. **Intermarriage with pagans quickly leads to full-blown idolatry and always affects the next generation.** The concept of Israel's "Playing the harlot" appears throughout the rest of the Old Testament.

The LORD continues to give His people boundaries regarding sexual activity. He introduces the list of sexual boundaries in Leviticus 18 by distinguishing between Israel and everyone else, specifically setting them apart from Egypt in their past and Canaan in their future (18:3). Abraham's descendants may not participate in the culture of sexual sin that characterizes the Egyptians and the Canaanites. What defiles others must not defile Israel. Leviticus 18 especially prohibits incest, bestiality, and homosexuality as perversions.

God's Law aims to protect women. Among His laws are statutes protecting women who are falsely accused of adultery, demanding that men practice self-control (the number of weeks of abstinence following a woman's giving birth, as well as abstinence during menstruation), and prohibiting the coveting of another man's wife. All of these laws limit human selfishness and make life safer for man and woman alike. Human flourishing does not occur where there are no boundaries regarding sexual expression.

Conquest

Even within these stories of sexual sin we can see God working redemptively. When the two Israelite spies enter Canaan, they encounter Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute. She has heard the story of Israel's great God, and she chooses to align herself with Him and His people. **She abandons Canaanite idolatry and raises a righteous son, Boaz. She has no idea that she will be listed in the genealogy of Israel's Messiah.** She is an early fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that his descendants will be a blessing to the nations.

Judges

When everyone does what's right in his own eyes, the stage is set for sexual immorality and idolatry. After Joshua and the elders die, Israel embraces idolatry and sexual sin. The Bible describes their decline:

Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and **served the Baals [false lords]; and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them** They forsook the LORD and

served Baal and the Ashoreths Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they *played the harlot with other gods*, and bowed down to them. (Jdg. 2:11-13, 16-17, emphasis added)

The worship of the Canaanite fertility goddess Asherah involved ritual prostitution and divination. Her male counterpart was Baal, also a fertility god. Believing that the sexual union of Baal and Asherah produced fertility, their worshipers engaged in ritual sex to cause the gods to join together, ensuring fertile harvests and wombs.⁶¹ Israel indulges in these practices from the time of the Judges until they eventually go into captivity.

The period of the Judges lasts over 300 years. **The book of Judges highlights the connection between sexual sin and idolatry beginning with Israel's intermarrying with the Canaanites:** "Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods" (3:5-6). **Relationships with idolaters lead to relationships with idols.**

God responds to Israel's sin by raising up **oppression against them**. When they cry out to the LORD, He raises up Othniel to deliver them. **Deliverance from oppressors doesn't cure Israel of sexual sin and idolatry**, however; on the contrary, **they return to immorality and idolatry over and over again.**

Israel plays the harlot in the time of the Judges. After God uses Gideon to deliver Israel from the Midianites, he takes up an offering, collecting gold to make into an ephod which he sets up in Ophrah. There Israel "played the harlot" with it (8:27). Immediately afterwards, **the author of Judges records that Gideon had many wives, who gave him 70 sons, and a concubine in Shechem (8:30-31)**. Immediately after Gideon's death, Israel "again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god" (8:33). Israel's heart is so unfaithful to the Lord!

The Lord loves His people. He has made a covenant with their forefathers to make them a blessing to the nations. Yet here they are, rejecting the infinite God for an image made by human hands. They've "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness . . ." (Rom. 1:23, 28). **Idolatry and sexual immorality go hand in hand with a total rejection of God.**

In this era, the Angel of the LORD appears to a couple from the tribe of Dan and promises them a son, whom they are to dedicate to the LORD as a Nazirite. We immediately move from Samson's birth to his seeing "a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines" (14:1), whom he marries. The Philistines threaten her with death unless she betrays Samson, and after her betrayal she is given to another man as wife.

Samson then goes to Gaza, where he sees and hires a prostitute (16:1). Later he falls for Delilah, who betrays him and delivers him into the hands of the Philistines, who bind him, shave him, and blind him. After his hair grows back, Samson calls on the LORD, who restores his strength, and Samson kills more Philistines in his death than he did during his lifetime. **Samson's eyes always get him in trouble, just like the children of Israel, who also do "what is right in their own eyes" (17:6)**. People want what they see. When they look at what God has forbidden rather than what God has given them, they default to sexual sin and idolatry.

The final two stories in the book of Judges highlight the spiritual and moral failure of the Levites, whom the LORD has appointed to teach His Word. First, in Judges 17 and 18, one of Moses' grandsons becomes the family priest of a man named Micah. Micah has a shrine, an ephod, household gods, and a son who leads the family in worship. He is thrilled to hire an actual Levite to take over for his son, and he assumes that God will bless his idolatry because a Levite presides over it. The tribe of Dan arrives on the scene because they have not yet conquered their own territory, and they seize Micah's gods and his priest. They are delighted to have access to a Levite, and the Levite is delighted at his promotion to being a priest over a whole tribe. The Danites serve Micah's idol until Israel goes into captivity.

In Judges 19, a Levite from the territory of Ephraim takes a concubine from Bethlehem, Judah. She “play[s] the harlot against him” (19:2) and then runs back home to her father. The Levite pursues her, and after her father finally grants him permission to take her away, they begin their journey home. At nightfall the Levite refuses to seek shelter in a nearby Jebusite village. They travel a bit farther to stay in Gibeah, a Benjamite village, where an old farmer invites them in for the night. That night, the men of Gibeah surround the house, demanding that the Levite come out and have sex with them. He sends his concubine out instead. They gang-rape her and leave her to die on the threshold. The Levite takes her body back home, chops it into 12 parts, and sends a piece to each of the tribes of Israel. They rally together to attack the Benjamites, and thousands of people die. Only 600 men of Benjamin remain, and Israel decides to seek wives for them, to rebuild the tribe. They brutally steal 400 young virgins from Jabesh Gilead. Another 200 virgins are kidnapped for the men of Benjamin while dancing at an annual feast at Shiloh. This is the domino effect of sin.

What do these two stories reveal about sexual brokenness? **When God’s people cast His Word behind their backs, they default to idolatry and sexual sin.**

Kingdom

Two Levite stories characterize the sexual brokenness of Israel as it transitions from the Judges Era to the Kingdom Era. Eli serves as Israel’s high priest, and his sons are having sex with the women who bring sacrifices to the Tent of Meeting at Shiloh (1 Sam. 2:12, 22). Hannah’s story occurs at the same time. Her husband Elkanah is a Levite (1 Chronicles 6:27-28), and he has another wife besides Hannah. Although Hannah is barren, she prays to the LORD, and He opens her womb and gives Israel its final judge. Hannah’s son Samuel interns under Eli and faithfully serves the LORD all of the days of his life. He anoints Israel’s first two kings.

God has already prepared Israel for the Kingdom Era. Moses had recorded God’s instructions in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, with the five regulations for Israel’s king:

- He must **not** be a foreigner (17:15).
- He must not return to Egypt to build his military might (17:16).
- **He must not have multiple wives**, lest his heart turn away from the LORD (17:17).
- He must not abuse his position by creating wealth for himself (17:17).
- He must write for himself a copy of the law in a book, read it all the days of his life. and obey all that it says (17:18-20).

These regulations require **Israel’s kings to trust the LORD and live disciplined lives**. How do the kings of Israel measure up in the multiple wives category?

Saul has one wife and one concubine. He’s muddying the waters.

David has at least eight wives and ten concubines (1 Chron. 3:1-9; 2 Sam. 5:13). As if the first seven aren’t enough, he commits adultery with the wife of one of his mighty men, has him killed, and then marries her. Sexual brokenness also cast its dark shadow over the lives of David’s children when one of his sons rapes his half-sister (2 Sam. 13).

Solomon has 700 wives and 300 concubines. Is it any wonder that Solomon warns his son about the way of the immoral woman (Proverbs 5:1-20) and the man whose wife’s breasts don’t satisfy him (5:19)? He’s had a lot of experience!

Early in Solomon’s story we are introduced to two prostitutes who have babies. They come to the king for judgment because one prostitute rolled over her baby in the night and then switched her dead baby with the other’s live one. Solomon resolves the dispute by calling for a sword to split the son between the two mothers. The real mother speaks up to keep the baby alive. The text is so matter-of-fact about the two women that prostitution must have been widely practiced.

Divided Kingdom

Solomon's son Rehoboam fails to learn from his father's bad example. Rehoboam has 18 wives and 60 concubines (2 Chron. 11:21). The kings of Judah who follow do no better; as the writer of 1 Kings notes:

Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all their fathers had done. For they also **built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree.** And there were also perverted persons in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. (1 Kings 14:22-24)

These abominations include the Canaanites' flagrant sexual immorality.

In the north, Israel's fifth king, **Ahab, marries Jezebel, a Sidonian.** Jezebel encourages Ahab to round up and kill God's prophets (18:4), kill innocent people to take their land (21:1-16), and commit idolatry (16:29-33). The Bible describes Jezebel as Ahab's greatest influence: "But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up" (21:25). Clearly, his marriage to a pagan is a factor in his devotion to idolatry. Sadly, Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, marries his son off to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. She murders all of her grandsons (except for Joash) to become Judah's queen (2 Kings 11:1). Ahab's alliance with evil has generational and transnational repercussions.

Captivity

By the time God sends Israel and Judah into captivity, they are spiritually and morally broken beyond repair. Before the LORD raises up the Babylonians to remove Judah from the land, He calls Jeremiah to prophesy against His people. Jeremiah begins his prophetic ministry by calling Judah out for "playing the harlot" (Jer. 2:20, 3:1,6,8). After the captivity begins, Ezekiel prophesies against Israel's refugees in Babylon for playing the harlot (Eze. 6:9). He actually uses extended metaphors full of sexual imagery to describe their drift into idolatry in chapters 16 and 23. God does not sanitize Israel's unfaithfulness to Him.

During this period, Esther's story stands out for a number of reasons, primarily as it demonstrates God's covenant faithfulness to an unfaithful partner. Sexual brokenness is foundational to the story. The Persian king Ahasuerus removes Queen Vashti from her throne because she refuses to exhibit her beauty before a drunken audience of men. The king holds an empire-wide beauty contest to select a new wife, and Esther's beauty brings her before the Persian authorities. Ahasuerus takes her into his harem and elevates her to replace Queen Vashti, but God has really placed her there strategically to save His people. This brief story highlights how God works in a culture of sexual brokenness and exploitation.

Return

After years of exile, the Jews return to their land, and Bible literacy becomes a core value. They read from the Book of Moses that no Ammonite or Moabite should come into the assembly of God (Deut. 23:3; Neh. 13:1), and they respond by putting away their foreign wives. Nehemiah describes his rebuke to them for intermarrying with pagans, saying, "So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, 'You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves'" (Neh. 13:25). He finishes his rebuke by referring to the bad example of King Solomon who, although he was loved by God, married pagan women and fell into sin (13:26). Ezra also deals with Judah's intermarriage with pagans when the leaders approach him and complain, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands . . . For they have taken some of their [the Canaanites] daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that **the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands**" (Ezra 9:1-2). He calls the people to repentance, and they put away their foreign wives.

Gospel

The Silent Era develops the diverse culture into which Jesus is born, lives, and ministers. It is just as sexually broken as previous generations. Powerful Roman governors abuse their positions and commit adultery. Herod kills John the Baptist for confronting him for taking his brother's wife. Sexual brokenness spills over into every facet of Jewish life as well. Jesus deals frequently (and redemptively) with prostitutes, harlots, and women caught in adultery. He confronts Pharisees and Sadducees for the lust in their hearts. One of the longest dialogues recorded in the Gospels is Jesus' conversation with a serial wife of mixed ethnic origins who has given up on marriage after five husbands and is now living with a man (John 4). Jesus also has to confront questions regarding divorce (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:3-12). None of these issues has ever gone away.

Church and Missions

Problems with sexual brokenness exist during the Church and Missions Eras. Gentiles are coming to Christ in droves, creating discussions about the role of circumcision in Gentile-background believers. The church gathers a council in Jerusalem to resolve this issue. They conclude that the rite of circumcision does not contribute to salvation and therefore is not necessary for Gentiles to be followers of Christ, and they urge the believing Gentiles to "abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood" (Acts 15:20). Sexual immorality remains a temptation, even for believers.

Paul writes frequently about sexual sin. **He begins his letter to the Romans by linking sexual sin to the futility of thinking that occurred when the first couple did not glorify God as God. That led to idolatry and to sexual sin**, as image-bearers became image-makers and lost their identity. They became "filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness . . ." (Rom. 1:29). What was true of those first generations continued throughout history until Christ bore our sins on the cross, died in our place, and rose again to give us new life. That new life offers a new identity and a greater attraction to God that resists the gravitational pull of sexual sin.

In his first letter to the church in Corinth, Paul addresses sexual sin head-on, calling out a man who is having sex with his father's wife. He adjures believers to separate themselves from those confessing Christ but living in sexual sin (1 Cor. 5). **He issues a warning about the continued practice of sexual sin, saying, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10).** To those who repent, he also offers this hope: "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (6:11). Jesus transforms those who trust in Him. In 2 Corinthians, Paul describes the Christ-follower as "a new creation" (5:17). Only the gospel changes people so fundamentally.

Paul addresses sexual brokenness in most of his letters to the churches:

- Gal. 5:19 - Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lewdness are manifestations of an unregenerate person. **Those who have been born of the Spirit have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**
- Eph. 4:17-24 - Those who are in Christ put off their former conduct, and, through the renewing of their minds, have "put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness" (24).
- Philippians 3:18-19 - Those who set their minds **on earthly things are enemies of the cross.**
- Col. 3:5 - **Believers must "put to death . . . fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."**
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 - **Sexual immorality and being driven by the passion of lust are characteristics of people who don't know God.**
- 1 Tim. 2:8-3:13 - Paul commends women and men who live temperate lives.

2 Tim. 3:1-9 - The list describes the last days and includes those who are lovers of themselves, lovers of pleasure, those lacking self-control, and gullible women who are loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts.

Clearly, those who've been born of God's Spirit live differently from those around them. **Sexual immorality is not appropriate for the believer, since the body is viewed from a new perspective. It is the temple of the Holy Spirit, purchased by God for God (1 Cor. 6:18-20).**

The Apostle John describes those who've been **born of God** in his first epistle. In it he calms the doubting heart of the true believer by describing evidence of genuine faith, and he disturbs the false assurance of those who do not display such evidence. **He proclaims that those who have been born again have God's seed in them (1 John 3:9).** He makes three statements about God: God is light (1:5), God is love (4:8), and God is righteous (2:29). John connects these three attributes of God with credible evidence in the life of a believer. **Those who have been born of God love other believers, walk in the light, and love righteousness.** Those who don't love believers, who walk in the darkness, and who don't love righteousness have not been born of God. Believers will not manifest these characteristics perfectly, but there will be evidence of their growth in believers' lives. Finally, John mentions the word "overcome" several times. Believers will "overcome the wicked one" (2:13-14), overcome the spirits that speak against Christ, (4:1-4), and overcome the world by faith (5:4). Believers will not walk like the world in sexual immorality and idolatry; they will overcome.

End and New Beginning

I've wondered lately of all the things we wouldn't know if the Bible had ended with Jude instead of Revelation. We wouldn't know several important truths about sexual brokenness. The resurrected Christ who ascended to the Father still has His eyes on His church and assesses her; repentance over sexual sin is still necessary (Rev. 2:14-16, 20-23). Unrepentant sinners (including the sexually broken) will be condemned forever to the lake of fire (21:8). Only the repentant and spiritually reborn will inhabit the New Jerusalem (22:15).

Sexual brokenness characterizes life outside of Eden. Only those who've been born again and live lives submitted to Jesus Christ meet the temptation to yield to unrighteous sexual desire with overcoming power. The awareness of sexual brokenness will only evaporate when we receive our redeemed bodies, as Paul describes:

Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Cor. 15:50-53)

One day we will rise, and we will never struggle with sexual brokenness again. Christ's beautiful bride will live with Him forever, sin will reign no longer, and we will be completely free.

Global truths about sexual brokenness emerge from the story the Bible tells:

- Those who live outside of the presence of God embrace sexual immorality.
- Sexual immorality travels in a pack with idolatry, violence, murder, social brokenness, and other sins.
- God's people are not to be men and women given over to the flesh, but to the Spirit.
- Bible illiteracy creates a vacuum in which sexual sin thrives!
- The Holy Spirit does not dwell in a temple of stone but in the bodies of new covenant people, giving them power to resist sin.
- God commissioned sex to be an active part of a married couple's life. It is not to be neglected or abused by either party (1 Cor. 7:1-5).