

# The Australian Creed

## FOR SEXUAL INTEGRITY

### Bible Study 1: God's Blueprint for Sex

#### ARTICLE 1

We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who designed sex as part of His loving plan for humanity, and whose will for sexual integrity is clearly revealed in Holy Scripture.

#### PART A

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#### Reflection

“We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit ...”

Our God exists eternally in three distinct persons – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Their mutual, loving relationship and perfect unity serve as the source and model for all human relationships.

#### Scriptures

- Matthew 3:16-17
- John 17:20-23
- 1 John 4:7-12

#### Questions

1. How do the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit model good relationships for us?
2. How is God's trinitarian nature relevant for a creed about sex and relationships?

## PART B

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### Reflection

“... who designed sex as part of His loving plan for humanity ...”

Sex did not come about by an accident of nature. It flowed from the creative genius of God. The purpose and proper use of sex becomes clear only in the context of the divine intention. The One who made sex has communicated to us how it must be used in order to avoid harm and promote human flourishing.

Historically, Christians have sometimes erred by emphasising God’s moral boundaries around sex at the expense of the joy and beauty for which He created it. As a matter of first importance, we affirm that God, in His love, has given sex to humanity as a good gift to be enjoyed in marriage.

### Scriptures

- Genesis 2:24-25
- Song of Songs 4:9-16
- 1 Timothy 4:4-5

### Questions

1. How do secular views on the origins of sex undermine its true value?
2. How does a biblical understanding of the origins of sex elevate its value?

## PART C

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### Reflection

“... and whose will for sexual integrity is clearly revealed in Holy Scripture.”

For an Ancient Near East text, the Bible addresses the topic of sex surprisingly often. Romance and sexual love are lavishly celebrated in the Song of Songs. Many biblical narratives highlight the joy and beauty of sex, as well as the consequences of its misuse. Both the Old and New Testaments present clear sexual ethics, including the purpose of sex for unity, procreation and pleasure within the sanctity of marriage.

Sex is a potent force that can bring great blessing or great destruction, so we must heed God's wisdom on the subject.

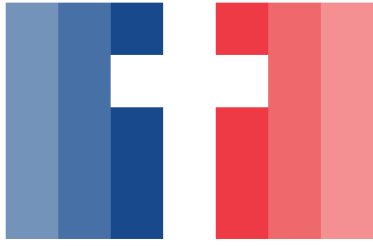
While the Bible's treatment of sex has not changed in over 3,000 years, cultural norms change over time and sometimes very rapidly. Certain practices that were unthinkable in our societies several years ago are now not only tolerated but openly celebrated. This is a powerful reminder that we must not build our sexual ethics on the shifting sands of human opinion, but on the solid rock of God's unchanging Word. It is God's will that all people live with sexual integrity, and He has made His perfect standards regarding sex perfectly clear in Holy Scripture.

### **Scriptures**

- Psalm 119:105
- Matthew 7:24-27
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17

### **Questions**

1. Which of God's clear commands about sex are most challenged today?
2. How would you respond to someone who uses Scripture to justify sexual sin?



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## Bible Study 2: Male and Female

### ARTICLE 2

We believe God created each person in His image as male or female, and any person's attempt to deny or change this distorts God's good design.

### PART A

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#### Reflection

“We believe God created each person in His image as male or female ...”

This essential claim of Christian theology has profound implications for every aspect of human life. It means that everyone possesses an inherent dignity and worth, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, beliefs or social status. It means all people deserve to be treated with love, justice, respect and compassion because they all bear the divine image and are designed to reflect the character of their Maker.

Additionally, to be created in God's image means to be created as male or female. The complementary distinctives of male and female are biologically designed by God, are reflected in society, and permanently shape a person's identity.

In our fallen world, a very small percentage of individuals are born with physical bodies whose sex may appear to be ambiguous. However, their condition does not negate the divine image in them nor add further categories to God's created order. Such people should not be used to further an ideology, but be treated with love and honour by all.

## **Scriptures**

- Genesis 1:27
- Genesis 2:18-23
- Mark 10:6-9

## **Questions**

1. Why do you think God chose to create each of us as male or female?
2. How can we ensure our maleness or femaleness reflects God's image to others?

## **PART B**

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### **Reflection**

“... and any person's attempt to deny or change this distorts God's good design.”

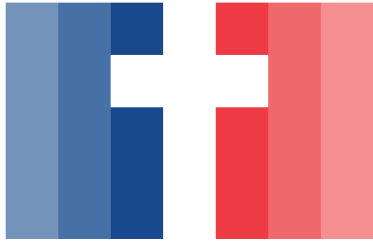
When God finished His work of creation, which included His design of male and female, He declared it to be very good. Right up to the present day, humans have been able to reproduce after their kind only because of this God-ordained binary nature of humanity. The categories of male and female cannot be erased, merged, swapped or supplemented, either in an abstract sense or in the life of an individual. Attempts to do so cannot change the chromosomal reality, but only serve to distort God's intended design.

### **Scriptures**

- Genesis 1:31
- Deuteronomy 22:5
- Romans 1:18-27

### **Questions**

1. What do you see as the strongest evidence for male and female being fixed categories in God's created order?
2. How can we model a biblical view of sex and gender in a way that reflects both truth and grace?



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### Bible Study 3: The Marriage Covenant

#### ARTICLE 3

We believe God blesses sexual intimacy solely between a man and a woman within the holy covenant of marriage, a life-giving mystery that reflects Christ's love for His church.

#### PART A

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#### Reflection

“We believe God blesses sexual intimacy solely between a man and a woman within the holy covenant of marriage ...”

Marriage is not primarily a social contract but a holy covenant sanctioned by God Himself. According to God's plan for humanity, marriage can only take place between a man and a woman.

The only sexual arrangement that invites God's blessing and celebration is the marriage of a husband to his wife. By God's grace, this blessing extends even to the union of unbelieving partners who marry in accordance with God's good design.

#### Scriptures

- Proverbs 18:22
- Matthew 19:4-6
- 1 Corinthians 7:1-6, 12-14

## Questions

1. What difference does it make that marriage is not just a social contract but a holy covenant?
2. How can Christians best respond to society's redefinition of marriage?

## PART B

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### Reflection

“... a life-giving mystery that reflects Christ's love for His church.”

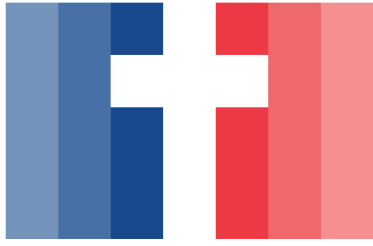
Among the many reasons God created sex for marriage and marriage for sex is that these good gifts are not ends unto themselves but are the means whereby new life comes into being. Moreover, marriage points us to Jesus Christ, the loving Bridegroom who gave up His life for His bride, the church. In its proper context within the covenant of marriage, sexual intimacy is a profound, life-giving mystery which reflects Christ and His church. The only way to ensure sex produces joy instead of guilt, generosity instead of selfishness, freedom instead of bondage, and intimacy instead of transaction is for it to stay securely within the bounds of marriage.

### Scriptures

- Hosea 2:19-20
- Ephesians 5:21-33
- Revelation 19:7-8

### Questions

1. How does Christ's relationship with the church enhance our understanding of sex and marriage?
2. What does a marriage modelled on Christ's love for the church look like?



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### Bible Study 4: The Blessing of Children

#### ARTICLE 4

We believe God calls a husband and wife to be fruitful and multiply, that every life is sacred, and that children are precious to God and must be protected from sexualisation.

#### PART A

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#### Reflection

“We believe God calls a husband and wife to be fruitful and multiply ...”

New life is the fruit of marriage. God’s first command to humanity was to be fruitful and multiply. This is a command He has never revoked. God’s good design for children is that they be nurtured in a family with a mother and father. However, in a world where death and decay have tainted God’s creation, not all marriages are able to conceive. In cases of infertility, we support such couples with compassion, prayer and encouragement.

#### Scriptures

- Genesis 1:28
- Psalms 127:3-5
- Psalms 128:3-4

#### Questions

1. What makes the family the safest place for a child to be raised?
2. How can Christians lead the way in lifting up the value of family?



## PART B

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### Reflection

“... that every life is sacred ...”

Every life is valuable, but more than this, every life is sacred, having been made in the image of God. From conception to natural death, every life matters to God and deserves our protection and care.

### Scriptures

- Exodus 20:13
- Psalms 139:13-16
- Matthew 10:29-31

### Questions

1. How does Scripture speak to the issues of abortion and euthanasia?
2. What are some practical ways for God’s people to demonstrate the principle that life is sacred?

## PART C

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### Reflection

“... and that children are precious to God and must be protected from sexualisation.”

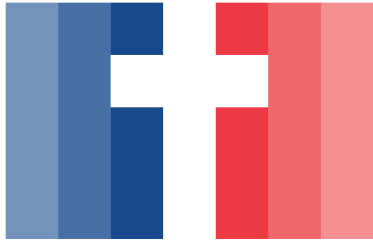
God has a special place in His heart for children. He fiercely protects them, as evidenced by the strong words Jesus spoke against those who would harm a child. Caring for children includes their physical, spiritual and psychological welfare. Exposing children to sexual content, ideas or actions inflicts unspeakable harm on them. It strips them of their sexual innocence and entangles them in a web of sin and shame at a vulnerable age. We deplore those societal pressures which sexualise children, and we commit to protecting them from such harm.

## **Scriptures**

- Proverbs 4:23
- Proverbs 22:6
- Matthew 18:6, 10-14

## **Questions**

1. In what ways does our society sexualise children?
2. What actions can Christians take to protect children from sexualisation?



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### Bible Study 5: The Joy of Chastity

#### ARTICLE 5

We believe God calls all people to the joy of living a chaste life, by celibacy in singleness and faithfulness in marriage, and that His commands are given for the common good.

#### PART A

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#### Reflection

“We believe God calls all people to the joy of living a chaste life ...”

Since God has given the gift of sex to be enjoyed solely within the sanctity of marriage, living a chaste life involves refraining from all sexual activity outside of marriage. This is God’s high calling for all people, since they all bear His image.

#### Scriptures

- 1 Corinthians 6:12-17
- Colossians 3:5-10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

#### Questions

1. Why does living a sexually pure or chaste life lead to greater joy?
2. Whether single or married, how can Christians encourage each other in a commitment to chastity?

## PART B

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### **Reflection**

“... by celibacy in singleness ...”

Celibacy is a noble, worthy and righteous pursuit. Some people choose the path of singleness in order to dedicate themselves to God more fully. Others find themselves single for reasons beyond their control, including divorce or widowhood. Yet, it is God’s will for the unmarried or no longer married to remain celibate, a virtue that was modelled by Jesus Christ Himself.

### **Scriptures**

- Isaiah 56:3-5
- Matthew 19:11-12
- 1 Corinthians 7:7-9, 32-35, 38

### **Questions**

1. How does singleness enable a person to be more fully devoted to God?
2. What practical lessons about singleness can we learn from the life of Jesus?

## PART C

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### **Reflection**

“... and faithfulness in marriage ...”

Marriage does not grant permission for sexual licentiousness or exploitation by either partner. Within marriage, sex is to be stewarded for the benefit of both partners, and the marriage bed must be kept pure and undefiled. Faithfulness in marriage entails more than just abstinence from sex with other partners; it entails a loving expression of mutual respect and life-long commitment, as well as finding sexual fulfilment in one’s spouse alone.

## Scriptures

- Proverbs 5:15-20
- Hebrews 13:4
- 1 Corinthians 7:1-5, 10-11

## Questions

1. What are the major differences between the Bible's vision for marriage and our culture's view of marriage?
2. What daily choices help cultivate a loving, faithful and lasting marriage?

## PART D

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### Reflection

“... and that His commands are given for the common good.”

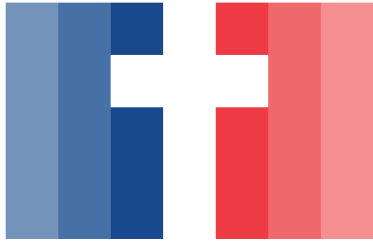
God's commands are expressions of His kindness. He has given us His moral law not just for the benefit of the individual, but for the health, safety and prosperity of whole societies. History is replete with examples of the ways in which sexually deviant and promiscuous societies debase men, degrade women, endanger children and impoverish everyone. God cares deeply about sexual integrity because His heart is for the wellbeing of all humanity.

### Scriptures

- Psalm 19:7-13
- Matthew 19:11-12
- Romans 13:8-10

### Questions

1. How do the Scriptures above correct our culture's overemphasis on individualism?
2. What are some of the specific ways in which our personal pursuit of sexual purity contributes to a safer society?



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### Bible Study 6: God's Standards for Sex

#### ARTICLE 6

We believe sexual activities outside these bounds are sins which grieve God's heart, injure others, and enslave people to idolatry.

#### PART A

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#### Reflection

“We believe sexual activities outside these bounds are sins ...”

Every thought, word or deed that transgresses God's moral law, including in the area of sex, is a sin that warrants the judgment of God.

#### Scriptures

- Leviticus 18:1-30
- Matthew 5:27-30
- Galatians 5:19-21

#### Questions

1. Why would Scripture be so specific about the types of sex that are forbidden?
2. How can Christians cultivate a deeper conviction regarding God's standards for sex?

## PART B

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### Reflection

“... which grieve God’s heart ...”

God created humanity in His image that we might know him personally, glorify Him, and enjoy Him forever. When we disobey God, we dishonour the privilege of being image-bearers and thereby sever our relationship with Him. Our sins personally hurt and offend God, grieving His heart.

### Scriptures

- Genesis 6:5-6
- Psalm 51:1-4
- Ephesians 4:30

### Questions

1. How does God’s taking offence at sin change the way you think about the culture’s taking offence at your Christian beliefs?
2. How can we encourage non-Christians to have empathy for God’s good design of sex?

## PART C

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### Reflection

“... injure others ...”

The problem with the laxity of society’s sexual ethics is that they place the needs, desires and proclivities of the individual above all else, with consent as the sole safeguard. In reality, all sin affects other people, even when consent is given. This is especially true of sexual sins, where abuse can be subtle or overt, regret and shame can take time to surface, diseases can spread unnoticed, and consent itself can be extracted and exploited. God knows the human heart and has set His boundaries in place to keep us safe from the sins of others.

## Scriptures

- Proverbs 14:12
- Romans 1:28-32
- Galatians 5:13-15

## Questions

1. What are some examples of sexual sins, even with consent, bringing significant harm to other people?
2. What are some boundaries that can be put in place to keep us from the harm of other people's sexual sins?

## PART D

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### Reflection

“... and enslave people to idolatry.”

All sin is idolatry because it directs our loyalty and worship away from God to something else. Given its incredible beauty and wonder, sex is especially vulnerable to misuse and will lead our hearts far from God when pursued apart from its intended use. Sexual sins can be highly addictive, enslaving people to spiritual darkness. The good news is that God can deliver people from any addiction, including unwanted sexual desires.

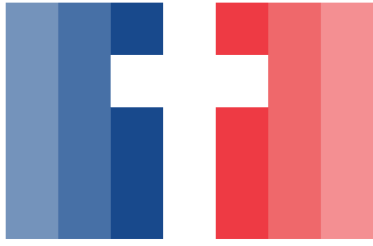
### Scriptures

- John 8:34
- Romans 1:18-27
- Romans 6:15-18

### Questions

1. According to Scripture, what are the connections between idolatry and sexual sin?
2. What does freedom from slavery to sin look like in the Christian life?





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## FOR SEXUAL INTEGRITY

### Bible Study 7: A Life of Sexual Integrity

#### ARTICLE 7

We believe our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, that Christ calls and empowers us to repent from all sin, including sexual sin, that His mercy abounds to forgive and restore, and that by living with sexual integrity we glorify God and humbly embrace His wise and loving plan for human life.

#### PART A

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#### Reflection

“We believe our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit ...”

In ancient times, many people saw the material world as evil and only the spiritual realm as good. Today, we have the opposite problem, with many assuming the material world is all that matters and the spiritual realm is unknowable or irrelevant. In fact, the material and spiritual worlds are interrelated, and both are profoundly important according to Scripture. Thus, sex is not merely a physical act but also a spiritual one, and it can be a force either for spiritual corruption or righteousness. The Bible declares that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, we must treat sex not merely as a physical activity but a sacred gift, and a means of honouring God and growing in holiness.

#### Scriptures

- 1 Corinthians 6:18-20
- Ephesians 2:19-22
- Romans 12:1-2

## Questions

1. What evidence is there that sex is not just a physical act but also a spiritual one?
2. How might a person glorify God through sex?

## PART B

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### Reflection

“... that Christ calls and empowers us to repent from all sin, including sexual sin ...”

Repentance was a central message in the life and ministry of Jesus. His command to repent from sin was non-negotiable. Sexual sin is not a special class of sin; it is simply a subset of all sin, which Christ conquered once and for all through His death and resurrection. We avail ourselves of the salvation Christ has won for us by repenting of our sins and putting our faith in His finished work.

What Christ commands, He also enables. It is Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, who grants us the power to repent of our sins and walk in newness of life.

### Scriptures

- Ephesians 4:22-24
- Hebrews 12:1-3
- 1 John 1:5-9

### Questions

1. What comfort can we derive from the knowledge that the Spirit of Christ empowers our repentance?
2. How can we maintain an ongoing heart of repentance in our Christian life?

## PART C

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### **Reflection**

“... that His mercy abounds to forgive and restore ...”

Jesus Christ came to seek and save the lost. His mercy is not limited by our shortcomings, but is a bottomless well of divine love. Through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, everyone who believes is granted complete forgiveness, a restored relationship with God, and everlasting life. Jesus offers hope and healing to everyone who turns to Him with a repentant heart. His salvation not only cleanses us from our past sins but transforms us to live new lives of holiness in devotion to Him.

### **Scriptures**

- Psalm 103:8-12
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- Ephesians 2:1-10

### **Questions**

1. What is the difference between forgiveness and restoration?
2. How does the grace of God motivate us to walk in newness of life?

## PART D

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### **Reflection**

“... and that by living with sexual integrity we glorify God ...”

There are many good reasons to live with sexual integrity, whether for our own mental wellbeing, to nurture healthy relationships, to contribute to a safe and high-trust society, to model respect for others, to practise self-discipline, or even to avoid the judgment of God. But the greatest reason to live with sexual integrity is to give God the glory He deserves. God created us for His glory. Our deepest purpose in life is found when we glorify God in every aspect of our lives.

## **Scriptures**

- Matthew 5:16
- Romans 6:11-14
- 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

## **Questions**

1. How is God glorified when we live with sexual integrity?
2. What are some practical ways Christians can model sexual integrity in an unbelieving world?

## **PART E**

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### **Reflection**

“... and humbly embrace His wise and loving plan for human life.”

Sexual sin has made powerful inroads in Western societies thanks to a movement centred on human pride. The proper Christian response to pride is humility – a humble embrace of the perfect plan of God for human life and for sexual integrity.

The preamble to Australia’s Constitution describes Australians as people who humbly rely on the blessing of Almighty God. This creed was born in a nation whose founders understood that God blesses the humble in heart and raises them up. We offer this creed to be affirmed by believers in every nation of the world, that they might the blessing of Almighty God.

### **Scriptures**

- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Micah 6:8
- James 4:6-10

### **Questions**

1. What is the biblical connection between humility and receiving God’s blessing?
2. How can we help others humbly embrace God’s design for sexual integrity?