

The Deconstructing Movement

“Leaving the Church Over Sexuality Questions”

Ephesians 3:14-21 – November 13, 2022

THE DECONSTRUCTING MOVEMENT		
<i>Daring to Ask the Faith Questions That Are Causing Some to Leave the Church</i>		
Date	Message Title	Bible Text
Oct 30	What is the Deconstructing Movement? (Part 1)	James 1:19
Nov 6	What is the Deconstructing Movement? (Part 2)	John 4
Nov 13	Leaving the Church Over Sexuality Questions [PG-13]	Eph. 3:14-21
Nov 20	Leaving the Church Over Justice Questions	
Nov 27	Leaving the Church Over Narrow Mindedness	
Dec 4	Leaving the Church Over Political Questions	
Dec 11	Repenting as the Church	

Main Idea: Sex has changed from *something we do* to *who we are*. Sexuality is now an identity. And yet Jesus wants to invade our *inner being*.

Sex Has Changed from *Something We Do* to

Who We Are

The Faces of this Change

*Book: *Strange New World* by Carl R. Trueman

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) – *Find your inner self*

- “We are most ourselves when we act outwardly in accordance with our inner, pristine voice of nature.”
- “Man is born free, yet everywhere he is in chains.”

Karl Marx (1818-1883) – *Economic freedom is foundational to happiness*

- “Man makes religion, religion does not make man.”
- “Religion is the opium of the people.”

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) – *Follow your heart*

- “We are artists and as such we are tasked with the art of self-creation.”
- “God is dead; but given the way of men, there may be still caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown.”

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) – *Sex is foundational to happiness*

- “Man’s discovery that sexual love afforded him the strongest experiences of satisfaction and in fact provided him with the prototype of all happiness, must have suggested to him that he should continue to seek the satisfaction of happiness in his life along the path of sexual relations and that he should make sexual erotism the central point of life.”

Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957) – Sexual codes must be shattered

- “The existence of strict moral principles has invariably signified that the biological, and specifically the sexual, needs of man were not being satisfied. Every moral regulation is in itself sex-negating, and all compulsory morality is life-negating. The social revolution has no more important task than finally to enable human beings to realize their full potentialities and find gratification in life.”

Sexuality as an Identity

Identity answers the question: Who Am I?

- **Tim Keller** – “Identity consists of two things: a sense of self that is durable, and a sense of worth that is valuable.”
- **Charles Taylor** – Moved from a “porous” self to a “buffered” self
 - Porous: Concept of being connected to others
 - Buffered: Concept of a contained self
- **Tim Keller** – “Modern secularism teaches that we can develop ourselves only by looking inward, by detaching and leaving home, religious communities, and all other requirements so that we can make our own choices and determine who we are for ourselves.”
- Example: Elsa in Frozen

Application #1 – Where has your identity been influenced by these philosophies?

Jesus Invading Our Inner Being (Eph. 3:14-21)

Background: Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus

- He is writing to explain to the Ephesians *who they are* in light of what Christ has done.
- Chapters 1-3 are all doctrine. But then he has to stop and pray.
- His prayer: For them to supernaturally understand their identity.

Verses 14-15 – “From whom every family... is named”

- **ESV Study Notes** – “To be named in biblical usage refers to the definition of one’s identity.”
- God is the creator of all, and He ultimately defines our identity.

Verses 16-17a – “In your inner being... Christ may dwell in your hearts”

- The personal presence & power of God invading your “inner self.”
- **Tim Keller** – “The great paradox of identity is that we ‘find’ ourselves... only through humbling ourselves, giving up the right to self-determination, and following Christ.”

Verses 17b-19 – “Rooted and grounded in love”

- What is your faith rooted in?
 - Parable of the soils (Luke 8:4-15)
- They weren't in love with a Person. They just believed an idea.
- The love of Christ = To *know* Him surpasses *knowledge*.
- This is the root. This is Paul's greatest desire. Is this ours?

Verses 20-21 – God is in the business of the supernatural

Application #2 – God's power is working within us to form our identity in Him. Would you pray: *Lord, I surrender my identity to you. Would you strengthen me with power through your Spirit in my inner being so that Christ would dwell in my heart through faith? Would you root me and ground me in your love? And would you do the impossible in my life... in your time and in your way to your glory? Amen.*

Applications + Questions for the Church

Where do I need to be honest and repent where I have failed?

- You have made other human beings your enemies.
- You have focused on the actions rather than going to the identity.
- You have demonized people who are hurting.
- You have not wept with those who are weeping.

Do I understand & can I articulate the Bible's view of sexuality?

- Our culture has uniquely, within history, made sex and sexuality defining. Human beings *do* have sexual desires, but it is our image bearing that defines us, not our sexuality (Gen. 1:27).
- Christian worship is about submitting our desires to the will of God (Romans 12:1-2).
- We need to stop telling a story that sex is bad or dirty yet somehow miraculously redeemed in marriage. Sex is good but it does not define us. Marriage is a gift but not for everybody. Celibacy is a sacrifice but not a second-rate option... see Paul and Jesus (1 Corinthians 7:1-40).
- *Derived from Pastor Peter Lynas

How can I show up in the lives of those who are deconstructing?

- **Rosaria Butterfield** – “Hospitality, biblically speaking, takes strangers and makes them neighbors. And takes neighbors and makes them family of God.”
- Book: *“The Gospel Comes with a House Key”*

Applications + Questions for Those Deconstructing

Are you willing to forgive those in the church who have made sins regarding sexuality seem worse than all other sins?

- **CS Lewis** – “Finally, though I have had to speak at some length about sex, I want to make it as clear as I possibly can that the centre of Christian morality is not here. If anyone thinks that Christians regard unchastity as the supreme vice, he is quite wrong... A cold, self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church maybe far nearer to hell than a prostitute. But, of course, it is better to be neither.”

How have your beliefs and opinions on sexuality been shaped by the world around you?

- Do you agree with the cultural definition of the modern self?
- Where do you agree? Where do you disagree?

Are you open to “deconstructing” the philosophies of the modern self?

Are you willing to allow Jesus to have “full claim” on your life?

- **Tim Keller** – “I want to apologize if there's anything I've said or anyone at our church has said that has made you think there's anything you have to do to receive the free gift of God's salvation... But I have to warn you: if you give your life to Jesus, there is not one inch of your life that He will leave untouched.”
- **Rosaria Butterfield** – “The difference between a Christian and an unbeliever is that a Christian doesn't own herself. So, she finds her liberty and freedom in the pages of Scripture and the person of Christ. And the unbeliever finds their freedom in their personal feelings. And *that* is the difference.”
- **Matthew 16:24-25** – *Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”*

RESOURCES

- Jim Leggett, *“Homosexuality Pt. 1”* (Hot Potato Issues) – 11/4/18
- Jim Leggett, *“Homosexuality Pt. 3”* (Hot Potato Issues) – 11/18/18
- Rosaria Butterfield – *Liberty University Convocation* – 12/2/16
- *Strange New World* – Carl R. Trueman
- *Another Gospel?* – Alisa Childers
- *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel* – Christopher Yuan
- *Making Sense of God* — Tim Keller
- *Mere Christianity* — C.S. Lewis
- *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* – Rosaria Butterfield
- *God and the Transgender Debate* – Andrew Walker