

Snapshot: The sexualised world and the Christian response

All around us, sexual appeal and gratification seem to be increasingly the ultimate goal - the source of satisfaction and happiness. Is this a problem? How should I respond as a Christian?



01. What is sexualisation?

noun: to be inappropriately defined by your sexual identity

Sexualisation is a social process by which a person is inappropriately and disproportionately defined by their sexual identity. We see ourselves and each other, more and more as purely sexual beings, defined by our sexual orientation and prowess, and less and less as anything else. This is evident in trends and platforms like social media, advertising, television, fashion and pop culture more generally.

What's the problem with sexualisation?

Is the sexualised culture empowering or destructive?

Sexualisation has well documented negative effects on mental and physical well-being. At a deeper level, it's founded on assumptions fundamentally contrary to the Christian world view. Sexualisation assumes that the world, and all of reality, is ultimately only physical. If this is the case, then the purpose of life is to maximise our sensory stimulation, ticking off that bucket list and seeking the most physical pleasure as possible – which our culture tells us is epitomised in sexual appeal and gratification.

02.

03.

What is the bible's view and how do we respond?

Christianity challenges the root of sexualisation - the physical world is not all there is

The Bible is very positive towards the physical, natural world (1 Tim 6:13). However, there is a supernatural reality beyond the physical world. Sexualisation doesn't give us a big enough vision of what it means to be truly human. We're not merely physical bodies, with our highest value being physical pleasure; we are relational beings, in the image of God. We're not fundamentally defined by what our peers, or lover, think about us or by sexual gratification; we're defined, first and foremost, by the attitude that God has towards us, in Christ. When we come in faith to Christ who died for us, his enemies, he justifies us, and adopts us to be his children. God's salvation reorients us to find the true goal of our existence.

Sex is a good gift from God, given for the confines of marriage between a man and a woman. But there's also more to life, to being human, than sex. Sex as God intends it is also more than just physical, erotic pleasure or a performance: it is a relational act of entrusting oneself completely, 'body and soul', to another.

As the church, we are called to be counter-cultural. We are to "avoid sexual immorality" and control our "own body in a way that is holy and honourable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God" (1 Thess 4:3-5). This is an aspect of modern-day martyrdom – to take up our cross and follow Christ, in the midst of a world that hates us because it hated him first (John 15:18).