

# Letters of ENCOURAGEMENT

God Loves You  No Matter What

October 27, 2021

A Note from Pastor Jon

**Dear Friends,**

For the last couple of weeks in worship we have been talking about some difficult but important topics around intimacy and sexuality.

As a diverse people, we approach these conversations in diverse ways. Not only do we approach the conversation in diverse ways, but we all have different histories and narratives that inform the way we think, the way we talk, and the way we understand sexuality.

I grew up in a household and a church where we just simply didn't talk about sexuality. Not that intimacy and sex were bad, but it was by and large ignored — except to say, don't do "it" unless you're married.

Pre-internet, pre-smart phone, pre-information at your fingertips, the topic of sexuality could easily be avoided (except in locker rooms at schools).

As we have heard over the last couple of weeks in worship from Pastor April and Aimee Lotz, **when we don't talk about issues that might cause us discomfort, we can often allow systems to dictate how we as individuals think and operate in the world.**

Others tell us what intimacy is and how to express our sexuality, but we're not able to ask important questions or express our own feelings around these issues.

But as someone pointed out to me recently, we have to be careful not to just give an impression



that sexuality and intimacy are a free for all and we should just do whatever the heck we want.

And I agree 1000% and more.

**Friends, there is no doubt that God created human beings to be in relationship with one another,** and for some relationships to be more intimate, and even others to be expressed through our sexuality that God gifted uniquely to each of us.

There are indeed ethics that we must bring into this conversation, and I am excited to do just a small bit of that this Sunday during worship.

Just like this complicated conversation around sexuality, ethics too can be complex and nuanced. The ethics we hold to often come from a combination of influences around us and our intuitive nature created within us.

**As followers of Jesus, we have a particular ethic through which we should address all issues, including intimacy and sexuality.** That ethic is also very Wesleyan in nature: **DO NO HARM.** (John Wesley was the founder of Methodism; that's where the term "Wesleyan" comes from.)

Just because we put a framework around the ethic doesn't make the understanding any easier. In some ways this ethic can begin to complicate how we view intimacy and sexuality. When we have a framework in which to work, however, it makes the discussion a bit less intimidating and accessible.

**This Sunday I hope you will join me for worship, either in person or online, as I will begin to walk us through the sexual ethics we discover throughout scripture.**

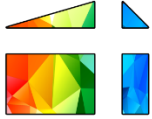
Friends, even the Bible itself can be confusing, contradictory, and downright unsettling when it comes to attempting to frame a sexual ethic.

I know I won't be able to answer every burning question you may have, but I do hope that ultimately you will see that **God created us to be in relationships to express our sexuality in a healthy and ethical way, in which we will DO NO HARM.**

Pastor Jon



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