

VII

CRITICAL THINKING

And applying it!

LEARNING ABOUT FALLACIES

A fallacy is something that is untrue. Here are a couple of definitions.

- A misconception resulting from incorrect reasoning
- A faulty or unsuccessful argument that appears to be a good argument
- A mistake in reasoning.

Here are some examples of fallacies that are presented to us through media on a daily basis.

- Sex is the ultimate pursuit.
- Wearing this clothing will make you sexy.
- You want to be considered sexy
- You need and have every right to know what the rich and famous get up to!
- Wearing sexy clothes is innocent fun for young girls.
- Bus stop sign "If you don't want an infection, use protection"
- Advertising that incorporates fast food will make your children eat unhealthily and get fat, but let's ignore the sexualised advertising aimed at children because that doesn't have any effect at all.
- You can watch other people fornicating and committing adultery – on heart warming films or crime shows - and it won't affect your morals, opinions, emotions or passion for godliness.

What is sex for? What is its purpose? What does the Word of God say about it?

Experientially, **not all these things will be known in everyone's lives** – due to millennia of sin and consequence.

A few ideas on what sex within a Christian framework is for:

Procreation

GE 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Pleasure – If you doubt that God intended pleasure read the whole of Song of Solomon.

Bonding/Uniting

GE 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

In it's creation, intention and design – it is very good. Something amazing, wonderful and mysterious.

GE 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

PR 30:18-19 "There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a maiden.

It is in moral freedom

GE 2:25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Release – an outlet from temptation.

1CO 7:1-9 Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfil his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all men were as I am. But each man

has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.
We'll touch back on this verse soon.

To give and receive love

PR 5:18 May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer - may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.

Intimacy. Sex does not equal intimacy, though we call it that sometimes. It is intended to be a *bridge* to intimacy. It is a way to be completely known, loved, *in* love, laid bare, without shame, known, knowing of, trusting and being trusted, vulnerable, at peace, fulfilled etc etc etc. At the fulfillment of Gods heart in the creation of sex as a gift – we find the destination – a picture of all that we can know and be *in Him*.

PS 16:11 You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

“Christian” fallacies/lies

There are many “Christian lies” about sex at work in marriages – these being far more insidious than the worldly lies around us as they are cloaked in theology and imbued with the assumed authority of Scripture. No matter how we preach it, veil it, cloud it or wrap it, if we promote a “Christian” sexuality based in self promotion or manipulation of the other - granting permission to demand, require, punish, withhold, give, distract or require - we do nothing more than live out the perpetuation of consequences for sin found in Genesis 3.

In verses 14-15 God curses the serpent:

GE 3:14-15-19 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, `You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

God's words to the woman and to the man each involve the other gender also. It is not only the man who suffers, dies and returns to dust – though the words were spoken to him. It is not only the woman who suffers in the twin consequences of desire and rule – though the words were spoken to her.

It is a simple fact that the curse and consequences for sin brought by God Himself have made relationships much harder than was in His original creation, and what was known to Adam and Eve before they sinned. It is a simple fact that self-ruling men and women will seek to control and manipulate one another.

My desire for my marriage and for yours is I think consistent with God's desire for us each also. That separately and together as couples we grow more and more like Jesus, abounding more and more in love and grace that our marriages be less about self, less about consequence or curse, less about law and more about love, grace and delight.

Some examples of faulty thinking.

Those definitions again.

Fallacy:

- A misconception resulting from incorrect reasoning
- A faulty or unsuccessful argument that appears to be a good argument
- A mistake in reasoning.

Sometimes a point of view is reached and acted upon just through lack of information.

Here are some examples.

Statement a) “My mother was such a prude, so because I don’t want my children to grow up with the same hang-ups as me about their bodies, we make sure our kids see us nude so they don’t grow up ashamed of their bodies”

Here I see logic yes – but also:

- Judgement of the mother’s behaviour (described as a prude) as wrong. Was she? We don’t know!
- Conclusion that the adult daughter’s hang ups are in fact hang ups and not perhaps natural proper inbuilt modesty.
- Blame – the mother is the cause of her issues.
- Conclusion leading to a course of action based on the blame and judgement of the mother.
- Assumption that the chosen course of action will have her desired outcome in the children.
- No thought of other possible negative outcomes for that course of action.
- No thought of Biblical principle guiding action. Forgiveness, responsibility, or whether modesty should govern nudity in the home.

The Word doesn’t have any double standards. Think about:

Psalm 101:2b I will walk in my house with blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing.

Statement b) “The reason I behaved so dangerously with alcohol as a teenager was because my parents were so against it they never taught me to handle it responsibly so we are going to allow our children to taste our drinks at home when we have a wine at night, to help them get used to it and not get drunk when they go out because their bodies will be used to having alcohol in their system. We think it’s important that they learn how to handle alcohol responsibly and learn that from us”.

Again we do see logic... it’s all been reasoned out.... But we also see:

- Judgement
- Blame
- Lack of responsibility for own teenage choices
- Sidestepping – “behaving dangerously” not irresponsibly or in defiance or deception
- Conclusions as to course of action for own children based on the above
- Assumption that the chosen course of action will bring the desired result
- No thought of other possible negatives
- No thought of Biblical principle guiding action.

COMMON FALLACY ARGUMENTS

While we don’t use these terms in general day to day conversation, they are useful to know as you begin to be more able to detect them when they are being used. Learning to detect fallacious statements and information is a priceless life skill that takes practice.

- **Ad hominem:** an argument that attacks the person who holds a view or advances an argument, rather than commenting on the view or responding to the argument.
- **Appeal to probability:** assumes that because something could happen, it is inevitable that it will happen. This is the premise on which Murphy’s Law is based.
- **Appeal to motive:** where a premise is dismissed, by calling into question the motives of its proposer
- **Argument from fallacy:** if an argument for some conclusion is fallacious, then the conclusion must be false.
- **Bare assertion fallacy:** premise in an argument is assumed to be true purely because it says that it is true.

- **Fallacy of necessity:** a degree of unwarranted necessity is placed in the conclusion based on the necessity of one or more of its premises.
- **False dilemma (false dichotomy):** where two alternative statements are held to be the only possible options, when in reality there are several or more.
- **Naturalistic fallacy:** a fallacy that claims that if something is natural, then it is "good" or "right".
- **Negative Proof fallacy:** that, because a premise cannot be proven false, the premise must be true; or that, because a premise cannot be proven true, the premise must be false.
- **Package-deal fallacy:** consists of assuming that things often grouped together by tradition or culture must always be grouped that way
- **Poisoning the well:** where adverse information about a target is pre-emptively presented to an audience, with the intention of discrediting or ridiculing everything that the target person is about to say
- **Red Herring:** also called a "fallacy of relevance." This occurs when the speaker is trying to distract the audience by arguing some new topic, or just generally going off topic with an argument
- **Straw man argument:** based on misrepresentation of an opponent's position

EXERCISE

Choose five of the above arguments and write examples you have witnessed in life or media.

2JN 1:7-9 Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

THE GIFT - Is a real life application of critical thinking skill to the changes brought to humanity and to our present day culture on its view of Gods gift of sexuality. While written for a younger age group, it's principles are valid regardless of age.

This story was written because our son, at age 10, noticed that the "S word" seemed to be in big letters all over the place - and he asked what it was. This story helped him to know why he should be choosy over what he does so his gift isn't stolen from him, like it was from many who did not know any different. *Caroline*

THE GIFT

A long time ago, God made the world. He made all kinds of things, animals and plants. You can read all about what he made in the book of Genesis, the very first book in the bible.

In Genesis, we read that God made people. He started with one man and one woman. This was the very **first marriage**. When God started this he gave to the man and the woman a very special gift. Now you're not getting married tomorrow are you? So now is not the time to be explaining the gift to you... it is a gift meant just for when you are married. So our story is not about what the gift is but it is about **what happened** to the gift.

One day, a long, long time ago, some people found out about the gift God had for married people and they got very jealous. (Needless to say, these people were not married). In fact they **coveted** the gift. Do you know what the word covet means? That's right; it means to want something that is not yours to have. This is one of the commandments isn't it? We can find them in the book of Exodus.

So, they coveted this gift - and that was the first commandment that they broke. They coveted the gift so much that one day they **stole** it. Uh Oh!!! Isn't that another commandment broken?

Now, God made us to have a conscience. That means that when we do something wrong we feel bad until we fix up what we have done. We do that by going to God and talking to Him. Sometimes we might need to go to someone else for help to sort out what we should do next. So do you think the people who stole the gift might have felt bad? What do you think they should have done?

Sadly they did not go to God to fix things up. Instead they decided to **lie** about the gift to all the other people so no one would know what they stole. Who can see how many commandments are broken now?

You know that we can't lie to God don't you? He sees straight into our hearts so there is no lying to Him. But people can lie to other people who might try to stop them doing what is wrong. That is, breaking God's commandments.

And so they told another lie. A great big lie! In order to lie to all the other people, they had to change the name of the gift so no one would realise it was stolen, so the gift was called sex. This is a little strange because this word actually means - "are you a boy or a girl?" If we ask someone what sex their cat is, we mean - is it a boy or a girl?

Now, over a long period of time, a fourth commandment got broken. Which one do you think it was?

It was Commandment Number One. "You shall have no other God before me". Some people think sex is so important that in their life, it is more important and **higher up to them** than God.

And this is why you see the words sex and sexy everywhere. In ads for everything!!! From clothes to cars, magazines and music, socks to seafood!

It is a bit like if I gave you a beautiful Lego set, but I took half the pieces out before I gave it to you. You could still play with it but would it be as good? What about if I gave you a mobile phone, but right before I gave it to you, I dropped it in the mud in front of you? Would it seem quite as special after that even if it still worked fine?

So when people talk about sex, they are talking about **something God gave us, but in a way that has been coveted, lied about, stolen and elevated wrongly**. It is not like the original gift God gave. As you get older you will have to choose. The Original gift is always going to be better than the one that has been trashed.