

“Why do we love sex?”

In our first article in this series we said that our bodies “speak a language” precisely by the fact that our bodies are gendered. It is the language of “gift.” Being able to read the “language of our bodies” helps men and women to understand “why” they are male and female which in turn allows them to know “how” to be male and female and therefore how to truly be for each other. But, I have a question for you and please be honest: Raise your hand if your greatest most burning desire in life has been to live a life completely without love, sex, marriage, children, intimacy and friends?

For as many times as I have asked this question to audiences I have never, ever had anyone raise their hand and say, “Yep, that’s me!” So my next question is, “What is so great about love, sex, marriage, children, intimacy and friends?” These things must be huge because I cannot find anyone who will say that they really, really want to live a life without these things. I believe that the answer lies in a very huge source.

Let’s consider for a moment the Christian or Biblical concept of God: Three distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit yet united together as one God. Huh!? Hey, it’s a mystery, OK? Don’t try to figure it out. These three persons exist in an eternal exchange of love between themselves. The Biblical God is a God who is like a family within Himself, or in other words a union and communion of persons. But this God did something marvelous and incomprehensible, something that much of the world celebrates on December 25th: God took on human flesh. He moved outward from the Trinity while still remaining in the Trinity. He united Himself freely, faithfully, fully, intimately and fruitfully with His own creation without ceasing to be God! Now, stop trying to figure this stuff out! Just go with it. It’s a mystery. Enjoy it. The predominant analogy that the Bible uses to describe this action of God intimately uniting himself with His own creation is “marriage.” Mystically speaking God becomes the “groom” and we become his “bride.” The great modern day Polish philosopher, Karol Wojtyla called this the “Spousal Mystery.” (Wojtyla would later become known as Pope John Paul II.)

The very first thing said in the Bible about human beings is that we were created in the “image and likeness of God.” Consequently, like the Biblical God, we too, as human beings are made to become a union and communion of persons that seeks to make a free, faithful, full and fruitful gift of self. There is no denying this because it is stamped in our very bodies as male and female. And this provides the great “why” behind the reason that no person can imagine living without love, sex, marriage, children, intimacy children and friends. These are the things that make us most like God. Our search for intimacy, love, sex, and fruitfulness lies behind both our worst and best choices in life. In one way or another we seek, seemingly in desperation, love, intimacy and fruitfulness.

It is precisely through our genders that we as human beings can actually love as God loves. We can enter into this “Spousal Mystery.” In fact, philosopher Wojtyla proposed that the Spousal Mystery is the “fundamental element of human existence!” Our sexuality is an icon of the very interior life of a God who is three persons, yet one God.

This Spousal Mystery is like the DNA of the created order. Think of a beautiful, bright moon on a clear starry night. The moon is bright only because the light of the sun moves outward from itself. The moon, like the “bride” receives the sun’s light and in reciprocal fashion reflects back the light of the sun. The seashore, like the “bride,” receives the waves of the sea (“groom”) and then in reciprocal fashion sends the very same waters back out again into the sea. The participation of the created order in this Spousal Mystery comes to its fullness in the human person, and in particular through our gendered bodies.

Gender is therefore purposeful. It is not arbitrary. It is not just a preference or even a mistake. Gender reveals God and enables us to participate in the way God loves. To know “why” we are a man or a woman is the secret to knowing “how” to be a man or a woman and therefore how to be for each other. The great “why” is told in the “language of our bodies. “