

Ep_41_Sexual_Identity

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sexual identity, sexual betrayal, emotional impact, core values, sexual wounding, cultural confusion, sexual purity, sexual addiction, emotional connection, sexual recovery, sexual clarity, sexual intimacy, sexual redemption, sexual education, sexual healing

SPEAKERS

Pam B., Bonny, Lyschel

- B** Bonny 00:00
Music. Before we get started, we want you to know that this is possibly triggering content. So please take good care of yourselves. Also the material discussed could be unsafe for little ears, so please wear your air pods.
- P** Pam B. 00:21
Hi, I'm Pam Blizzard from recovered peace,
- L** Lyschel 00:23
and I'm Lachelle Burkett with hope redefined. And
- B** Bonny 00:26
I'm Bonnie burns of strong wives. We're so glad you're joining us.
- L** Lyschel 00:33
Welcome back to another episode of hope for wives. Today, we're discussing a very important topic, the impact of sexual betrayal on a wife's sexuality. Join us today, as Pam and I are probably going to be sitting more in a student seat and really gaining lots of information and wisdom from Miss Bonnie. We're really looking forward to this conversation. So Bonnie, can we start off with some definitions? Can you give us some clarity around what is our sexual identity?

B

Bonny 01:12

Sure I can try. I know that it seems like it's elusive. I think it's a little more practical than most. Most understand. You know, our overarching identity has things to do with our life experiences, the sum of our personal history, the perception of your abilities, how good you are, your perception of your purpose in life, it also has to do with your core values. I mean, our overall identity corresponds to our sexual identity. When we look at our sexual experiences, you know the sum, the sum of our personal history, when it has to do with sexual things, and how capable do we feel of being sexual, or how capable do we feel that we understand sexuality and values? What are your core values? Because they do play into your sexuality and your sexual perception. So I think when we look at our big the big picture of our identity, but we pare it down into thinking about our the, you know, our sexual experiences, I

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Lyschel 02:25

could see even how I would potentially partition out my motherhood identity is that, yes, that kind of where you're headed, like we can like I have previous experiences. I know how I was raised, how my, you know, extend family, was raising family members, etc, and how that plays into the identity that I carry.

B

Bonny 02:47

Absolutely, that's it. Okay.

L

Lyschel 02:50

So what are some ways that wives are impacted in the area of their sexual identity after infidelity or sexual betrayal?

B

Bonny 02:59

Well, betrayal, sexual betrayal as a whole, creates a rupture in our overall identity. It creates a rupture, of course, in that attachment too, because he is important when we think about our sexual identity, because we've been married to him and he has influenced us and how we thought about ourselves sexually. When the truth comes to her and she's finally figured out what's been going on, she can assess where her identity was and then what has happened. So, so, so there's a spectrum here. If on one end is a wife who's been dealing with a sexual, anorexic, anorexic or a sexual avoidant. So her experience being influenced by her husband with her sexual identity is that one, if she's a higher drive wife, I've been too much or two, what's wrong with me? What's wrong with my sexuality, that he's not desiring me? So on the other side of the spectrum is the hyper sexual man with problematic behaviors, who had his constant pursuit and of her sexually, and his lack of satiation, he's never satisfied. That also creates what's wrong with me. Why can't I keep up with him? Or it totally shuts down her drive all together, and she she's not seen for who she is. She's just seen for her body, and that shuts her down totally. So the sexual identity, the personal sexual identity, as well, that I see in a vast majority of my clients, is that she has, she has. Experienced childhood, so his betrayal,

and even before she knows there's betrayal, typically, there are patterns of behavior that remind her of the past, and so she has dealt all of her life with a broken sexuality. And maybe a better word, aside from or an additional word to sexual brokenness, would be sexual wounding, not only in childhood, but in the marriage, because a wound is typically inflicted where brokenness can come from, some of our some of the lies we're believing from the enemy, or our faulty thinking, wounding is typically outside of ourselves, that it's painful, that what's the use? I've heard so many women cry out to God of why did you even create sex? It's been nothing but pain for me. So that's how sexual betrayal and and that's that's sexual betrayal, even from her childhood too, that's ruptured her identity. A clear, concise identity is what God desires us to have. And of course, when we base our identity in him, first and foremost, we can put this all back together, but I'm jumping ahead of myself. So what do you guys think of all that? I'd love to hear some input.

P

Pam B. 06:38

First of all, can I just acknowledge the feelings that come up for me, and I've seen come up for other women when this subject comes up, is fear, feeling vulnerable, feeling anxious, feeling some shock, feeling shame. I shame, feeling maybe even guilty, just all the emotions, because it is such a tender, tender subject, and there's likely been a lot of pain before, just because of our culture and all of the conflicting, confusing messages culture says we are to be always sexual on the outside, to dress in a way that is sexually attractive and that it's one of our primary qualities and and, but yet, you know, our moms and the church is telling us, be pure, don't dress to provocatively, don't show too much. Your body parts are to be hidden. They cause men to stumble. So it's confusing as to whether our sexuality is a good thing or a bad thing, and it's not something we openly discuss and can get clear on very often. And so I'm grateful for this discussion, and because it can be so overwhelming emotionally, and I just want to, I just want to stop and acknowledge that for anybody who's listening, who might feel some anxiousness and anxiety about the whole topic, you're not alone. I still feel it in this moment. I think that's natural, and we're sorting it out. We'll get there.

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Lyschel 08:46

I'll just add like I didn't necessarily grow up with a narrative of sexual purity before I got married. I didn't grow up in a faith based home. There was a lot of confusing definitions when it came to sexuality and your identity with it. So when I when I first read about us talking about this topic, immediately I thought I didn't even know that I had a sexual identity. But as you've been talking Bonnie and kind of giving some definition, I definitely see how my historical experiences, whether it be by choice or as a victim of sexual abuse, plays into my identity and the way that that was impacted in my story, or really created a lot of confusion for me when I realized that he was viewing porn on a regular basis, even to the fact of like, viewing it, as soon as we would finish having sex, he would eventually just disappear in the middle of the night and continue to go do that. And I could not figure out I thought I did what I was supposed to be, you know, or like, we. Were here, I was here, I was present, and yet still choosing to go view things online. So that was definitely confusing, and I'll just add this as a component of my story. So my story came out when I was in my 20s, right? And I don't know how old you all were, but I feel like I have a different respect and expectation of sex at different seasons of my life, like so I my story, this infidelity, came out before children, and I definitely have a different sexual life post children, right and now, even going into what is the perimenopause or whatever, like,

everything looks very different throughout our lives. So I just want to add that as an entity to our conversation. But when I read this question, one particular story came back to mind, and I just thought I would share this for our listeners. I actually had a wife say to me she was so angry that pornography had stolen her sexual identity, and she said, Because I am a sexual person, I enjoy that that's just who I am as an individual is enjoying those types of things, and now I can never feel like I can be who I am and not assume either he thinks I'm reenacting pornography or he's already seen it from somebody else. And that sounded like that really hit home when I listened to her understanding that impact, that something that she felt so natural at and was a part of who she was, and all of a sudden that was taken because of this betrayal. When I discovered in the original days, when I discovered that there was pornography use, my immediate thought was, well, I got to step it up. And I joke with women in our groups. But I said this, I became a sexual kitten. I was like, I will sex you out of pornography. I had no idea what even that meant, but I was fully convinced that I would lure you away, like Delilah and, you know, get you to not desire that like, I'll just step it up. I'll step up my game and be more for you. And so that when the information that I was starting to gather about pornography, addiction and infidelity has really has nothing to do with sex, that was a really hard truth for me to sort out. It took me a long time to be like, okay, but that seems like the solution, because I was having, you know, even, not necessarily, that I even had people in my small group. I had women that I was trying to confide in, saying, Hey, this is what's going on. And their first question was, well, are you guys having sex, right? Because that is a basic understanding or knowledge is that there's a need that's not being met, so they're going to go somewhere else to fulfill it. And again, we just have to go back in and stress that, that this isn't, this isn't about sex, and I think that's also why it impacts so much of our identity. Is being like, well, if it wasn't about that, it was about something else. But I'm definitely impacted in this area.

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Bonny 13:27

So yeah, absolutely, because I think so. Did that feel authentic to you when you became a Sex Kitten? No,

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Lyschel 13:34

no, I would, quite honestly, I would cry pretty consistently after engaging because I started to feel like I was just selling myself. I was not living within my values. I was trying to be something I wasn't. It was difficult. I mean, it was super hard. And I'm so thankful that my husband was attentive enough and kind enough to not perpetuate that like he was like, No, absolutely not. We were both lost, right? Neither one of us knew how to fix this, but he could see that that was not the solution. He was not going to let me stay in that place of pain emotionally. And so he was like, yeah, no, we're not doing this. Yeah, it was totally against my my value system of trying to show up and be somebody I wasn't.

P

Pam B. 14:19

Can I just say that my experience mirrors yours. And in addition to me thinking that's the solution, I had therapists telling me that the creatures right, that that was the solution. And so all of a sudden, I'm the one with the problem. I'm the problem here. I'm the one that needs to fix this. I also did things that were I didn't want to do, and I kept and I kept gaslighting myself,

telling me, but I should like this. I should enjoy this. What's wrong with me? I'm broken. I was but not for that reason, and I. I had terrible shame afterwards for the things that I did, and I give myself Grace now that I know that this is a normal, common thing that that wives will do, thinking it's their responsibility or their ability to fix the situation, not understanding that we're applying the wrong solution to the wrong problem. As Michelle you say, it's not a sexual desire problem or sexual fulfillment problem or a sex drive problem. It's a it's a trauma based dealing with the inability to deal with emotions and thoughts problem?

L Lyschel 15:43

Yeah, and I'll add that there's probably a listener going, but my husband says it is a sex problem. My husband says that I'm not available enough, and we hear that consistently like and what that is telling you is he doesn't understand his problem, right? He's still carrying around the definition that is a very high level understanding of what's going on. And so for her, just to be able to affirm her and be like we know that that's oftentimes a thing that's been said. I could go into so many heartbreaking stories of how someone has blamed another person for not being available, and so it justifies their choice to go do something unfaithful. But that is not that it's it just is an indication that there's not enough there's not enough education at that point to really understand what's going on with you that you need to go choose to do this?

B Bonny 16:43

Right? Absolutely not. I think what the sexual identity rupture from betrayal, and I'm going to use one of Pam's words here, and you're going to Don't hate me, the ultimate gift of this, and I think we're going to get into it next is that you can rebuild. You can be have redemption, which is not even rebuilding. You're not even reclaiming, you're creating a whole new thing. And this when we see the unhealthy patterns that we've lived with while he was an active addiction. We can choose how we want our sexual intimate life to look like once we get into recovery, right? Whereas get to Yeah, we get we get

P Pam B. 17:36

to decide who we're going to be, what our sexual identity is going to be, what we like, what we don't like, what our boundaries around our sexual interaction with our partners are going to be. We get to recreate that, and that's kind of exciting. So

L Lyschel 17:54

let's talk a bit more about that. What are some ways a wife can heal, first her as an individual, because I think you're already starting to talk about the couple ship. But what are some ways that she can heal from the rupture to her sexual identity, and then maybe we can tap into what are some ways the couple ship can heal from the rupture to their sexual identity, which is probably a whole episode in and of itself.

B Bonnv 18:21

Bonny 20:11

Yeah, let's, let's, let's focus on her right now, in my own story, the shift came for me when I started to learn what the Bible really says about sex. Now we get a lot of we've had a lot of we've been hit on the head with the hammer around First Corinthians, seven, five, which talks about, Do not deprive I'm not going there. We need to go way back to Genesis. Oh, yeah, no, we need to go way back to Genesis, because God created sex before sin even entered the world. So sex was not, yeah, sex was not created as lust management. Now we and as we've just said, sex addiction really isn't about sex. It's about unmet needs that are getting met illegitimately. God created sex as a, as a, as an intimate knowing. You know in Genesis two, when it says that Adam knew Eve and she conceived that K, N, E, W, that word in Hebrew is yada, and that word yada is used several times through the Old Testament for God knowing us intimately, like Psalm 139, God knows us we. He knew us before we were knitted in the womb. That new is yada and another, I can't think one off the top of my head, but there are other verses where he wants us. Us to yada him. He wants us to know Him on a deep, intimate level. So sex, sexual intimacy, was created as as a reflection of that deep knowing and that oneness God wants us to have with him, and it's Satan who has ruptured our sexual identities, it is Satan who has created this brokenness around sexuality, because what is most sacred is what Satan will defile. And sex was created as that sacred space between you and your husband and so when sex addiction happens, that's and the betrayal happens. That's why it feels so personal, because it is and it's different than an alcohol addiction. It's different than a narcotics addiction, because it affects our personhood and our body. And that is not why God made sex. God made sex as an overflow and abundance to physically express that emotional connection. So I know that many and most all of you listening have not had that emotionally connected sexual experience, and that is the goal, and that's why God created sex.

P

Pam B. 21:26

Wow, that's beautiful. And that reminds That'll preach. That reminds me of this thing that we say that is so true, we all only want to be seen and heard and known. We want to, we want to fully know every thought, emotion, desire, will of God, and then we want to, we want that with our partner, and we want to be seen and heard and known by God. So thank you for giving us the translation of the word known and to know that's beautiful, yeah.

B

Bonny 22:10

And so her first step towards healing is to understand that God made sex for good. I think once we see sex not as dirty, not as gross, not as shame filled, but but that God made sex for good, and it's Satan who has defiled it, I think that's the first step toward even wanting a sexual identity, because sometimes you don't even want it back because it's hurt so badly.

P

Pam B. 22:43

And there's some religious structures that will also teach that sex is only purely for the reason of creating children.

B

Bonny 22:52

Well, let me, let me say, God made our bodies. God created our bodies, and God created something called Okay, trigger warning. He called he he created something called a clitoris. The only purpose for the clitoris is pleasure. It has nothing to do with procreation. So God, I this is Bonnie's personal opinion, I don't think God would create a clitoris and make it pleasurable if the only reason was for procreation. Now, I do understand those faith communities, and I'm not. I'm not disrespecting that, but that's that's for my my study, and plus, also we see in the body that I know.

L

Lyschel 23:44

I was just thinking, you know that there's some listener that's like, Thank You, Lord, that I put you on my ear pod this morning instead of on the car radio, so I don't have to answer the question from my children in the back seat. The thing I would just go back to as a basics, part of our healing is just telling the truth to ourselves and potentially to people who can help us. I think that's one of the first steps in all healing journeys. Is self awareness and then being able to say, Hey, this is what's going on, giving it a name that would be my my additive there to just saying there, that's where you start, and then being able to unpack all the beautiful things that you've just given us. Bonnie sitting with the Lord, asking him those questions. What does this mean? Why did you do this? How does this? How does this? What does this mean for me, that that type of question so

B

Bonny 24:46

and I think when we start to see the goodness of sex, sexual intimacy, we start to see the goodness of our sexuality and who we are as women, we start to shed those. Burdens of objectification, we can see ourselves more holistically, and we don't compartmentalize our sexuality as much.

L

Lyschel 25:09

And I think it's important, can I just add this? I know Pam was offering some validation about being anxious, about being anxious, to talk about this, this, this valley around your sexual identity and the brokenness in your relationship can be a long journey, particularly if you are discovering sexual identity and you are discovering broken pieces and parts to your guys's your relationships dynamic, but he's still not there yet, right? Like he's still trying to do the internal work, or the family of origin work, or the whatever like this can be a very long journey to get to that part of glory that Bonnie's talking about, the appreciation for what God's done, the understanding of his purpose, etc. So I just want to offer that validation or just a little bit of encouragement to our listeners as well. Like, this isn't a it's not a fast thing, which I think we say on every other podcast with us. This isn't fast. Just want to add that, Okay, ladies, so what hope can we leave our listeners today?

B

Bonny 26:27

We all have issues. I think we all go into marriage with wrong, dysfunction, disordered thinking around sex, because because of the the culture we live in, as Pam alluded to earlier. Um, so I think we just have to give ourselves grace and then do a reality check. And the hope is God can

think we just have to give ourselves grace and then do a reality check. And the hope is God can absolutely redeem your sexuality, he absolutely can Jesus. Jesus was a man, and I believe he had all, all the you know, physical desires, yearnings. He understands you. He understands and his his redemption and Resurrection can deliver you, can actually pluck you out of this mess for you personally. I'm not talking about the marriage right now, just your confusion. He can pluck you out of that and deliver you and put you on a shore of clarity. But it takes a walk with Him. It takes a really vulnerable walk with Him, because talking to him around your sexuality and what you want sexually feels weird. I I have a lot of friends who say I cannot pray about my sexuality. Well, it says to bring all things in Philippians, it's bring everything to him with thanksgiving. So he you know God created it. He knows it's there. So you can talk to him about it.

P

Pam B. 28:14

The Hope I want to leave our listeners is that sexual betrayal is sexual wounding our consent has been taken from us. We've been disempowered by it. And as with all wounds, God created us so that we can heal. He gave us the ability to heal. And I just want you to know that you're not alone. It's if, even if it's not talked about in your circles, your recovery circles, very often, you are not alone sexual betrayal, of sexual wounding, and you shouldn't have to just figure it out by yourself. Nobody can, and that you can take this to the Lord, and he does listen, as Bonnie said, he does listen. He does understand. There is no shame in taking this conversation to Jesus and finding reaching out and finding other experts. There are experts out there, maybe we can put some in the show notes and other resources to listen to. You get to figure out what you what your yes and your no is. That's up to you and you alone.

L

Lyschel 29:37

I probably will just kind of add to the hope that Pm is already extended, but just I go back into this pretty consistently for myself, is the Lord knows. So he knows the brokenness that you've experienced in all the different places after betrayal. He knows the questions that you have. He knows your comfort level. Right now around this topic, and he's enough to sit with you in every one of those places. So my hope for your encouragement would be just to seek His face first and have those conversations with him before you begin to put any pressure on yourself to be something other than what you are. You have permission to be right where you are right now, absolutely.

B

Bonny 30:25

Yeah. One other thing I'd love to mention is that I've developed a course for betrayed wives called Sexual clarity for Christian women, and that is how to discover who you are sexually. What does God say about sexuality? And we do not you. We actually, we unpack all of those verses that were used against your sexuality. We unpack those. We really look at them. So, yeah, it's not your it's not your typical go have sex class. It is not that it's helping you discover what you want, what you need, what's what, what are your values around it. So anyways, it's called Sexual clarity for Christian wives, and it is we'll have the link in the show notes. Great.

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Lyschel 31:17



Lyschei 31:17

Well, thank you for joining us today. We hope to be a bright spot in your recovery journey. If you'd like to leave us a question or comment, please use the contact button on our website, hope for wives.com and that's spelled F, O, R. Also, if this podcast has helped you, please leave a five star rating or review on iTunes to help other people find us when we reach 500 ratings, Apple podcast promotes us in a different way, and we can't wait



31:44

Bye. You.