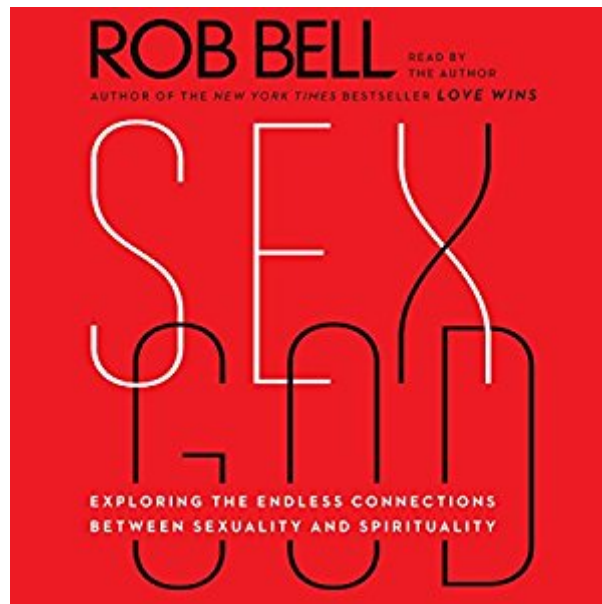


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Sex God: Exploring The Endless Connections Between Sexuality And Spirituality



Synopsis

Sex. God. You know the two subjects are connected; you just don't have the words for how they are connected. And they cannot be separated. Where the one is, you will always find the other. When you actually live and feel and engage, you discover that the physical things around us are like windows into more. And when you talk about sexuality, you quickly end up in the spiritual - because "this" is always about "that". Something deeper. Something behind it all. You can't talk about sexuality without talking about how we were made. About how we relate to each other. About how we were made to relate to each other. And that will inevitably lead you to who made us. At some point you have to talk about God. To make sense of the one, we have to explore the other. That is what this book is about.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I agree with other reviewers that the title of the book is misleading (whether this is a reflection of crafty marketing or Rob Bell's uber-creative whimsy is debatable). This misnaming is unfortunate, because I think it confuses the reader (myself included) as to the overall goal of the book. However, a simple addition of a "/" renders the title more accurate: "Sex/God." As Bell emphasizes in his introduction, "This" (sexuality, intimacy, marriage,) is always about "That" (God and his loving relationship with humanity). When read this way, I think the book becomes more coherent and compelling. In fact, I think it is one of the most inspiring theological statements on love, marriage, and intimacy that I have read. Rather than the typical, predictable, shallow Christian answers to

defend traditional marriage and sexual purity, Bell provides a sweeping vision of how our intimate relationships reflect the self-giving love of our Creator. Not only that, but our self-giving love for one other person actually helps to manifest God's love to many other people. Even the pain of a failed relationship reflects the pain God feels and the risk God takes by loving us humans. Bell challenges us to think of sex, intimacy, and marriage in the most holy and reverent - yet also in the most realistic and practical - of ways. Through all this, "Sex God" cleverly and somewhat subtly tells us as much about "God" as it does about "Sex." While we think we are reading about human relationships, we find ourselves learning about the Gospel - God's supreme love for us, manifest most explicitly in the sacrificial love of Jesus. "This" is really about "That." "Sex God" is biblically grounded, yet never in predictable ways. I always enjoy Bell's trademark usage of vivid cultural context.

First of all, this book is not so much about that, despite the title. The title almost immediately sets you up for an anti-climactic rest of the book. The title is good marketing, but not necessarily truth in advertising. This is ok. Buying this book is not about that. Think about why you bought it first. You bought it because you really like Rob Bell, and in your mind you run through conversations that you'd like to have with him when you two are hanging out at Starbucks, which I'm sure he'll have time for. Given that that's what this is about, just realize that you're getting the next best thing. You're hanging out with him. He's talking about what's on his mind. You get to listen in. Even though it's a monologue, it kind of scratches that itch that all of his fans have been having. So for that reason, it's a pretty good book. In keeping with the postmodern, emergent ethos, which Bell leads while disavowing, the book is not linear. He starts out with a provocative introduction which broaches the sacramental without using that word, and then a powerful first chapter that reaches into our deepest longings for the dignity for which we were created. Immediately we are on board and want more. Particularly in hopes that he gets to the s-e-x. The second chapter skirts around our "disconnection" from the created order, which makes me wonder if we're walking through a systematic theology of creation, sin, salvation (I was soon dissuaded). I'm also wondering if we've taken on a neo-Tillichian doctrine of sin-as-victimization, but I don't think the book's theology is quite so intentional.

Yes, this book is about that. Rob Bell delves into the link between our sexuality and our spirituality, and the result is a work that will open your eyes to the relationship that God seeks with humanity. The basic premise is that we are all broken, always seeking a connection with others

since our connection with God has been severed. We all want to be known and accepted as we are. Only God can provide us with this, but sex is the next best thing. So we all walk around with distorted concepts of who we are, searching for that connection through physical relation rather than spiritual. The book is engaging, and Bell has a talent for teaching by using stories (sound familiar?). He is able to weave Bible history, Jewish customs, and contemporary culture together to form a picture of the relationship God desires with mankind. I especially enjoyed a passage on page 70 that describes that Garden of Eden as good, and for it to be truly good, it couldn't be forced on people. Hence, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. A few criticisms, however: On page 63 Bell describes the universe as unfinished. He claims that "God's intent in creating these people was for them to continue the work of creating the world, moving it away from chaos and wild and waste and formlessness toward order and harmony and good." I just can't agree with that statement. When God created the universe, it was good. He rested on the seventh day, content with His creation. There was "order and harmony and good." Then we, humanity, screwed it up. I get the gist of what he's saying, but the statement just doesn't make sense. The other problem is on pages 20 and 22.

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