

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT SEX

A **MANNAHOUSE** RESOURCE



INTRODUCTION

The subject of sex is a sensitive and delicate issue to many people. Some individuals feel awkward, uncomfortable, and slightly embarrassed when discussing the subject. Yet, it is a crucial area of concern which we are repeatedly confronted with.

Furthermore, **the subject of sex is not a taboo topic as far as God is concerned. The Bible does not ignore this vital issue, but addresses it in a healthy, candid, and informative manner.** Since the scriptures are not silent regarding this issue, we should earnestly endeavor to determine what the Bible has to say.

This counseling booklet approaches the subject of sex in a comprehensive yet concise manner. It carefully examines this controversial subject in a sound and sensitive style. It strives to establish the biblical guidelines, perspectives, and understanding needed in order for God's people to be properly instructed and informed concerning this important area in the human experience.

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SEXUAL PRESSURES FROM SOCIETY

The sexually stimulating spirit of our age creates a constant climate of sensuality and sexual arousal which exerts tremendous influence upon your emotional, mental, physical, social, and spiritual well-being.

A great deal of pressure, confusion, and misinformation is often the direct by-product of society's extreme emphasis upon sexuality.

Western society is so obsessed with the subject of sex that it borders upon unofficially deifying it. Sex has become one of the major topics of concern in casual conversations, in business, politics, television, magazines, movies, theater, and the arts.

The emphasis upon sex and sensuality has become so commonplace and commercialized that the advertising media has used it to sell everything from toothpaste to soft drinks, bluejeans to cigarettes.

Its emphasis is so inescapable that one writer noted, “ One would have to be a hermit to avoid the sexually arousing stimuli of our day.”¹
Our senses are literally bombarded by a constant glorification of sexual promiscuity, permissiveness and outright perversion.

The world often packages and promotes sexuality in a distorted and reckless manner which encourages sexual gratification outside the boundaries ordained by God. **Society’s attitude toward sex is often based upon a carnal system of amoral ethics which openly challenges and contradicts the clear teachings of God’s Word.** Often, what society has deemed culturally acceptable is totally unacceptable to God’s standard of righteousness.

The steady stream of sexual misinformation is responsible for misdirecting many. The popular emphasis upon permissiveness creates confusion for believer and unbeliever alike. **On the following pages we will examine the scriptural guidelines concerning sex to determine what the Christian response, perspective, and attitude should be.**

WHO CREATED SEX?

God was the creator of sex. Man did not invent sex. Even though society and Satan have abused, perverted, and distorted the sexual experience, **God was the one responsible for originally instituting sex as a healthy, creative, and normal facet of the human experience.** Contrary to the misconceptions of some, sex is not a result of sin or the fall of man, but a divinely instituted dimension in the human experience which came into existence before sin and rebellion even entered the world

In the beginning, God created male and female with the instruction to “*be fruitful and multiply*” (Gen. 1:27, 28). He also called them to be “*one flesh*” (Gen. 2:24). These facts clearly involve nakedness and intimate sexual union, and demonstrate that God was the original author of sexual intercourse.

WHY DID GOD CREATE SEX?

God ultimately created sex for the pleasure and fulfillment of man.

Contrary to certain teachings, sexual contact was not primarily intended for procreation. Though the conception of children and the propagation of the race is an important outgrowth of sexual intimacy, this was not the sole purpose intended by God.

Sexual intimacy, within the framework structured by God, was intended to be a profoundly beautiful and gratifying activity to enrich the human experience between a man and a woman. The scriptures capture this fact well when they encourage the pleasures of physical sexuality between marriage partners:

“ ... rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love” (Prov. 5: 18, 19).

WHAT IS GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SEX?

Within its godly context, sex is never scripturally characterized as something lewd, shameful or unhealthy. Neither is it depicted as an act which God reluctantly tolerates as a necessary evil or obligation within the marriage contract. God clarifies this fact when He declares: "*Marriage is honorable among all, AND THE BED UNDEFILED*" (Heb.13:4).

God's attitude towards sexual intimacy is never restrictive, prudish, or Victorian. The Bible portrays godly sexuality as a beautiful, rewarding, and wholesome experience. Neither is God ashamed to discuss the subject, for it is mentioned in almost every book of the Bible. In fact, the central theme of the Song of Solomon involves the sexual pleasures between married lovers.

God's attitude should not only challenge the corrupt concepts embraced outside the church, but should also check the unhealthy, negative, and scripturally unsound attitudes harbored within the church concerning the subject of godly sexuality.

GOD'S ORDAINED STRUCTURE FOR SEX

"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). **God has ordained the marriage covenant as the proper sanctuary for sexual gratification and involvement.** God strongly condemns sexual permissiveness and experimentation outside the boundaries of marriage. God's sexual policy and program remains intact in spite of society's repeated challenges against it.

Even though society may condone sexual permissiveness and promote premarital sex, extramarital sex, and homosexuality, God has confined sexual involvement to the marriage structure. This is His divine framework for sexual pleasure and fulfillment. He also established it as an important safeguard against sexual sin: *"Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband"* (1 Cor. 7:2).

SEXUAL SINS PROHIBITED BY THE BIBLE

The scriptures condemn a wide variety of immoral, sexual acts. We will examine the more predominant ones as follows:

I. FORNICATION

Fornication is simply defined as “sexual intercourse between unmarried individuals of the opposite sex”. The word fornication is mentioned forty-seven times in the New Testament where it is strongly characterized as a sexual sin and denounced as a deviation from God’s ordained pattern for sexual fulfillment.

The word fornication comes from the Greek word “PORNEIA”. It is where we derive the English term “pornography”. In a broader sense, the word fornication includes more than just illicit sexual intercourse. It covers a wide range of sexual sin and perversity such as incest, rape, prostitution, bisexuality, transvestism, sadomasochism, bestiality, exhibitionism, and voyeurism.

The following selected scriptures prohibit fornication:

- **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither FORNICATORS, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals . . .”** (I Cor. 6:9).
- **“Now the body is not for FORNICATION, but for the Lord . . .”** (I Cor. 6:13, K.J.V.).
- **“FLEE FORNICATION . . .”** (I Cor. 6:18, K.J. V.).
- **“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, FORNICATION, uncleanness, licentiousness . . .”** (Gal. 5:19).
- **“But FORNICATION . . . let it not even be named among you, as it is fitting for saints”** (Eph. 5:3).
- **“For this is the will of God . . . that ye should abstain from FORNICATION”** (I Thess. 4:3, K.J.V.).

II. ADULTERY

Adultery is defined as “sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than their mate.” The Bible strongly condemns extramarital sex because it violates the sanctity of the marriage covenant. It is a sexual sin which is strictly forbidden by the Ten Commandments: **“You shall not commit ADULTERY”** (Ex. 20: 14). The Bible repeatedly challenges the sin of adultery:

- *“Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor’s wife, to defile yourself with her”* (Lev. 18:20).
- *“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God! Do not be deceived Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor **ADULTERERS**, nor homosexuals . . .”* (I Cor. 6:9).
- *“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled, **but fornicators and ADULTERERS God will judge”*** (Heb. 13:4).

(See also Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22; Prov. 6:29; Rom. 13:9)

III. PORNOGRAPHY

Pornography is defined as “material (such as books or pictures) which depict erotic behavior intended to stimulate sexual arousal.”

Pornographic involvement is a sexual sin because it produces lustful thoughts which war against the soul (1 Pet. 2: 11). It is a deceitful sin because it arouses sexual desire without providing godly sexual fulfillment. **It is a potentially devastating sin because it is addictive and inevitably leads to further depths of sexual experimentation and perversion.** It pollutes our thought life with sensual fantasies and desires which often overwhelm a person with temptation and specific acts of sexual sin. **Pornographic lust has been proven to be a major contributing factor in other forms of sexual perversion such as rape, incest, prostitution, and child molesting.**

The Bible reveals the seriousness of sexually lusting with the eye when it places it on the same level as outright adultery (Matt. 5:28).

IV. HOMOSEXUALITY

Homosexuality is defined as “sexual activity between members of the same sex.”

Throughout human history, homosexuality has experienced recurrent periods of popularity. Homosexuality has reached epidemic proportions in contemporary Western society. The so-called “gay movement” has been very vocal in its attempts to legalize homosexual acts between consenting adults and has exerted strong influence upon the public consciousness to condone homosexuality as a normal sexual alternative.

But in spite of successfully legitimizing homosexuality and establishing it as an acceptable sexual life-style, the Bible remains unwavering in its denunciation of homosexuality which is a violation of God’s ordained pattern for sexual fulfillment.

The Bible challenges the sin of homosexuality as follows:

- ***“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination”*** (Lev. 18:22).
- *“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God! Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites”* (I Cor. 6:9)
- *“For this reason God gave them over and abandoned them to vile affections and degrading passions. For their women exchanged their natural function for an unnatural and abnormal one; men also turned from natural relations with women and were set ablaze with lust for one another, men committing shameful acts with men”* (Rom. 1:26, 27, Amp.).
- ***“These laws are made to identify as sinners all who are immoral and impure: homosexuals . . . and all others who do things that contradict the . . . good news of our God”*** (I Tim. 1:10, 11, L.N.T.).

V. MASTURBATION

A measure of confusion and conflicting opinion exists between Christian counselors condemning the subject of masturbation. A few view it as an acceptable means of releasing sexual tension and averting sexual abuse, while others strongly denounce it as a sexual sin. But one thing is clear: the scriptures are silent about this issue. Therefore, **we must be careful not to exaggerate the problem by placing masturbation on the same level of such sexual offenses as fornication, adultery, or homosexuality.**

However, there are factors each Christian should consider:

- 1.) Masturbation is a poor sexual substitute for marital fulfillment.
- 2.) Masturbation produces harmful results such as intense guilt, self-condemnation, fear, and anxiety, which can undermine our emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being.
- 3.) **The inescapable fact remains that masturbation involves sexual fantasies and lustful thoughts which are condemned by the scriptures** (Col. 3:5). These factors should strongly challenge us to seek God's help in achieving a higher standard of holiness which overcomes the sexual temptation and need for masturbation.

WHY HAS GOD PLACED RESTRICTIONS UPON SEX?

God has placed restrictions upon the sexual activities we have touched upon because they represent a perversion of God's perfect plan for mankind. **He has also imposed guidelines upon human sexuality because of the devastating consequences of sexual sin.**

Though sexual gratification outside the boundaries established by God may be intensely pleasurable, the scriptures state that the "*pleasures of sin*" are only for a season (Heb. 11:25). **Sexual permissiveness and perversion leads to inevitable disappointment.** Though the detrimental impact of sexual sin may not show up immediately, it will invariably exact a heavy toll upon our emotional, mental, spiritual, social, and physical well-being.

However, even if individuals manage to minimize the negative impact by justifying their sin or hardening their hearts against the effects of guilt, they cannot escape the inevitable consequences of violating God's sexual standards. The Bible makes this clear when it declares: "*Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience*" (Eph. 5:6).

THE RESULT OF REJECTING GOD'S SEXUAL STANDARDS

Sexual sins can produce many harmful results:

1. **MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL** - **The consequences of sexual sin often lead to emotional trauma and turmoil.** The results of rejecting God's Word often produces self-condemnation, guilt, anxiety, insecurity, and fear. Sexual sins often create deep emotional wounds which scar a person for life. The sexual hurts, offenses, and transgressions of the past can haunt a person for years. The so-called "sexual freedom" outside the scriptural boundaries established by God does not really produce liberty at all. People end up becoming emotionally and mentally enslaved to dehumanizing passions which progressively distort the God-given plan for genuine sexual fulfillment and pleasure
2. **SPIRITUAL** - **Sexual sins have a devastating impact upon our spiritual well-being.** They are a common factor in the spiritual shipwreck of many. This is why the Bible so strongly warns us about the destructive consequences of unrepentant sexual sins. (I Cor. 6:9, 10).

3. **PHYSICALLY** – Not only do sexual sins affect us mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, but the often have a destructive effect upon our physical well-being as well.

“Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body”

(I Cor. 6: 18).

The medical statistics substantiate this statement. The sexual revolution of the 60’s and 70’s has resulted in an unprecedented epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases such as Chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and genital herpes, as well as cervical cancer, pelvic inflammatory disease (PIO), female sterility, illegitimate pregnancies, and abortions. Between 10 and 20 million Americans presently have genital herpes. The spread of homosexuality has also resulted in the outbreak of A.I.D.S., A.R.C. Syndrome, and certain strains of cancer. **History has consistently demonstrated a direct proportional link between sexual promiscuity and the physically related consequences.**

THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

Christians should not only have a healthy sexual perspective concerning the pleasures and fulfillment intended by God within the marriage covenant, but they must also recognize the devastating consequences of sexual sin. We must recognize that sex is a powerful tool which Satan often uses to undermine our spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. Satan knows that many are very vulnerable in this area of their life and will use sexual allurements as a weapon to attack us. For this reason, we should take heed to the following cautions and safeguards:

1. **"FLEE FORNICATION"** (I Cor. 6:18, K.J.V.). *"But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is a fornicator"* (I Cor. 5:11). **We must strive to avoid any situation, location, or individual which may have a detrimental influence upon us or may expose us to undue temptations and the danger of sexual compromise.**

We should flee fornication with the same prompt conviction and determination as Joseph who fled the sexual advances of Potipher's wife (Gen. 39).

2. **"So kill the evil desire lurking in your members - those animal impulses and all that is earthly in you that is employed in sin: sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites"** (Col. 3:5, Amp.). We must *"make no provision for the flesh"* (Rom. 13:14) by yielding to the carnal impulses of the *"old man"* instead of to God. If we walk in the Spirit, we won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5: 16).
3. **"For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual, immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust"** (I Thess. 4:3-5). Instead of gratifying the carnal inclinations of the *"old man"*, we should dedicate our lives to the pursuit of holiness, the advancement of God's kingdom, and the glorification of Christ in word and deed.

THE VIRTUE OF VIRGINITY

Virginity has lost much of its honor and sacredness in today's society. "Saving one's self" sexually for your husband or wife is frowned upon by many as being unrealistic, foolish, and old-fashioned. Yet **virginity is a virtue which is honorable before God.**

God is not only interested in the purity of our soul and spirit, but He is also concerned with the chastity and purity of our bodies. We must recognize that our bodies belong to the Lord and should be used to glorify Him (I Cor. 6:15-20). The Bible reminds us that, "*the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord. . . therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's*" (I Cor. 6: 13, 20). **Keeping ourselves sexually undefiled before marriage is an act of glorifying God with our bodies.** Furthermore, the Lord considers a born-again Christian to be a virgin in spite of his or her past sexual involvements and sin. This is because, "*if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*" (II Cor. 5: 17).

CONCLUSION

We have carefully examined the subject of sex in the light of the scriptures. Though it is a delicate and often controversial area, it is not a topic which God ignores or treats lightly. **Sex is a subject which all Christians have a responsibility to be informed about.**

We have seen that sex was intended to be a beautiful and immensely gratifying dimension in the human experience when fulfilled within the context of God's ordained structure for sexual expression. When men and women violate God's established guidelines, abuse the sexual role, or pervert the sexual act, they will experience the inevitable destructive consequences which affect our mental, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual well-being.

For further counsel concerning this sensitive subject, we recommend that you contact your pastor or church counseling staff. **For a brief overview of the main points in this booklet, please re-read the boldly printed words on each page.**



CAMPUS LOCATIONS

PORTLAND CAMPUS

9200 NE Fremont St
Portland, Oregon 97220

TIGARD CAMPUS

12244 SW Garden Pl
Tigard, Oregon 97223

MILL PLAIN CAMPUS

14311 SE Mill Plain Boulevard
Vancouver, Washington 98684

EUGENE CAMPUS

89780 N Game Farm Road
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