

Sex

It's a great and mysterious gift from God.

It's one of the most talked about topics in the world.

It pervades the thoughts of almost every person on this planet.

In Christianity the discussion of sex seems to swing from one end of the spectrum to the other, rarely landing in the middle.

Either sex is talked about constantly, often mixed with coarse or crude jokes, or the whole thing is put in the closet as taboo and only brought out for the infamous "birds and the bees" talks.

Human sexuality reflects the very inner life of God

It gives Him glory when we live in it as He created it.

Questions

- How far is too far?
- What does the Bible say about sex before marriage?
- Maybe it would be better just to have arranged marriages...or not.

Premarital Sex (www.rustyparts.com/sexethics)

Women and men are getting married later and later, the average age being around 25 years old. This means the average person is single for some time (average of 10 to 15 years, ouch!) as they go through life, and establish themselves in the world.

Maximum sexual relationship exists where mutual communication, understanding, affection, and trust have formed, and two people have committed themselves to each other in a permanent marital relationship.

- How does getting married later in life compared to Biblical times affect our view and practice of marriage?
- Is sex within marriage better on the whole than sex outside of marriage?
- What is meant today by the words adultery and sexual immorality?

The underlying theme throughout the Bible regarding marriage seems to be one of commitment, trust, and intimacy. Sex is one of the gifts God has given us to express those things in a way that our words often fail us.

Love is great, but a major part of love is the willingness to love the other for life, even when "emotions" of love will come and go. This is what makes marriage so important; it is a public commitment to another person before others.

In Paul's writing to the Corinthians he says, (another society that struggled quite a bit with sexual issues): "Run away from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body." (1 Cor. 6:18, NLT).

Reason suggests that the greatest intimacy will be gained if a person only shares themselves sexually with one person.

Delaying instant gratification has proven to have its own rewards giving the disciplined person greater satisfaction within boundaries - so sex can be more fulfilling when kept within the bonds of marriage.

Masturbation

It is one of the most debated-and least resolved-sexual subjects in the church probably since it first began.

The Bible deals in some depth with sexual immorality, perversions, and the like, but masturbation is never spelled out as belonging to any particular category.

Questions

- Since Scripture is silent about it, should masturbation be classified as a sin?
- And if not, are there ways in which masturbation may be used to the glory of God and the building of God's Kingdom?
- What are the boundaries which the Word of God sets forth for something like masturbation?
- In what contexts is the act acceptable, and when does it "cross the line" into a sinful activity?
- Does this act on and for oneself go against our body as a temple of the Holy Spirit?

The first "boundary" Scripture is found in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."

The second "boundary" Scripture is Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things."

In this Scripture, we have a boundary that deals with the mind and thought life. The two perspectives hold that to find "release" one must indulge in thoughts and fantasies that are impure or that you can actually focus on scripture and God to still find "release".

There should be no difference between sacred and secular thought. Each thought should be given over to the control of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5) and should be offered to God in a spirit of gratitude and joy.

"My Addiction"

--by an Anonymous Female, age 22

I never would have thought that so many other women struggle with the habitual temptations of masturbation and pornography.

I have struggled with masturbation since I was about 10 years old. I have kept it a secret from family and friends for 12 years now. I pretty much was brought up in a Christian family. I received Christ when I was 13 years old. It started when I was only 10 and I was living with my stepfather. He wasn't a Christian. He had a lot of pornographic material (movies and magazines). Of course, he didn't intend on any of the children to get a hold of it, but we did. Out of a child's natural curiosity especially about sex, we would sneak a few peeks of the pornographic movies before our parents would come home from work.

After viewing such sexual material, my mind and flesh remained curious of sex and the things I had seen on the movie or in a magazine. I guess you can say I imitated these sexual images. I don't even remember exactly how it started, I just remember it felt pleasing to the flesh. I would begin to do it often, especially when I was alone and watching pornographic movies.

As years went by and even after I got saved I still struggled with it. Then I struggled with the question of was it really a sin or not? But I knew that something was wrong if I felt guilty and dirty after I did it. I knew that God gave us our conscience for a reason to know the difference between right and wrong. I knew in my heart it was wrong and I had a serious, but embarrassing addiction that only God can cure.

I am now 22-years-old and married with 2 beautiful girls. Over and over again I tell myself that I am going to stop. I try to repent and pray again that God will remove this sin from me, but I still fall. If I think of or see any kind of pornographic material whether it be women or men, I feel tempted and fall into

temptation.

I thought that I would have the strength to stop once I was married and had children, but I haven't. Sometimes it's really frustrating because at times it hinders me from enjoying intimacy with my husband. I guess because I have been indulging in self gratification for so long. I haven't told him it, but maybe someday I will. But for now I share it in confidence to know that I'm not the only person.

Resources:

[Hopeandnewlife.org](http://hopeandnewlife.org)

<http://www.rustyparts.com/sexethics/>

<http://www.pureintimacy.org/>

Sexuality
& Theology
(pureintimacy.org)

Even the search for intimacy in the wrong places, in the wrong ways, is intimately about seeking what God made us for.

Sex (as God created it)
ushers us into something grand and glorious,
it is remarkably sacred
ultimately about seeking that which God made us for
Therefore, we need to understand its nature and participate in it as it was meant to be.

We must understand that God's interest in human sexuality is so much more than merely making sure people behave themselves.

God, and those who follow Him, (should) take sex very seriously, and the Christian picture of sexuality is much more serious, vibrant, and well?sexy?than any other view held in the larger culture. As a result, it's far more fulfilling.

The Message, Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of the Bible, states it this way: There is more to sex than mere skin to skin. Sex is as much spiritual mystery as physical fact. As written in Scripture, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE." ? We must not pursue the kind of sex that avoids commitment and intimacy, leaving us more lonely than ever - the kind of sex that can never "become one." There is a sense in which sexual sins are different from all others. In sexual sin we violate the sacredness of our own bodies, these bodies that were made for God-given and God-modeled love, for "becoming one" with another. (1 Corinthians 6:16-18)

Sex Addiction (pureintimacy.org)

Sex addiction is never really about sex,
but about a hungry heart that craves intimacy.

While sex addiction affects both genders,
the challenges faced by female addicts are greater.

Factors = an attachment or intimacy disorder.

- The need to medicate emotional pain
- Escape an unsatisfactory situation
- Impulsive or even compulsive quest to satisfy unmet emotional needs

Sex addicts are prone to multiple addictions

Without treatment and a safe recovery path, an exploited female may inadvertently use her sexuality either to punish men or herself.

An exploited female may seek to protect herself psychologically with various defenses and manipulations - both sexual and non-sexual.

Five Criteria for Assessment

One important note: if an individual doesn't line up precisely with these criteria or if he or she only finds one or two that apply, this should not be taken as an absence of a problem.

Fantasy - a method of survival that allows mental escape from pressures, it diverts a person's mind from reality

Medicating Emotions - the temporary relief of stress and the creation of happier or euphoric feelings

False Sense of Control - addiction becomes one of the first and only behaviors that they turn to relieve the stress and regain control

Self-Nurturing - the addict can decide the timing of the action, the amount of substance or behavior, the mix of substance or behavior, and the amount of stress that is allowed to build before indulging

Self-Destructive - Addictions produce strong experiences of guilt, embarrassment, violation of personal values, and broken promises to self and others. Feelings of shame serve to trigger the cycle of addictive behavior

Recovery - She must learn to harmonize her body, mind, and spirit in a way that affirms God's design. Like the male addict, the female must get beneath the behavior in order to heal distorted thoughts, damaged emotions, and a wounded spirit.

Focus on the Family counseling department at [phone removed] x7700 between 9:00 and 4:30 p.m. MST.

Sex is an instinct
that produces an institution;
and it is positive and not negative,
noble and not base,
creative and not destructive,
because it produces this institution.

That institution is the family;
a small state or commonwealth which has hundreds of aspects,
when it is once started,
that are not sexual at all.

It includes worship, justice,
festivity, decoration,
instruction, comradeship, repose.

Sex is the gate of that house;
and romantic and imaginative people
naturally like looking through a gateway.
But the house is very much larger than the gate.

There are indeed a certain number of people
who like to hang about the gate and never get any further.³ - Chesterton