

## **Sex and Ethics**

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### **Introduction**

We want to be crystal clear at the beginning of this lesson that all we hope to say regarding the sexual relationship between men and women and such attitudes and practices are to be taken in harmony with plain Bible teaching. We know that every human being has certain basic needs, desires and drives which God has given to each. Humans have the responsibility for meeting those needs, desires and drives in ways which are approved in God's word. The Bible furnishes us completely unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17), but we must avail ourselves of the great blessings of learning and submitting to the word of God (2 Timothy 2:15).

### **Sexuality must Be God Based**

Sexuality is a basic part of man's total physical, mental, social and spiritual make-up. The Bible contains much teaching on the subject of sexuality and marriage, therefore showing that God wants us to learn, accept and apply the Bible teaching regarding sexual matters. Since the Bible has teachings on this subject, then God intends for us to know about it. Sexuality is a gift from God, and that means that sex is good! God made it so (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18-25; 1 Timothy 2:13-14). God said that it was not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). It is thus clear that God intended for marriage to contribute to human well-being and happiness and the sexual relationship plays a part in that union.

It is clear that the physical union (in an approved marriage) of man and woman has the blessing of God. In our anything-goes society there seems to be different reactions to sex. There are some who engage in even illicit sex and have no guilt at all. At the other extreme there are some who are incapable of sexual expression, even in marriage, without guilt feelings. Some over-emphasize it, while others under-emphasize it. It seems clear that some people can hardly think of anything else, and on the other extreme others want to "wish it away."

### **Sex – Good or Evil?**

We are discussing the idea of sex in a marriage relationship between husband and wife, in approval of God's marriage laws. Some mistakenly hold that celibacy is a superior state than intimacy and sexual intercourse in a marriage relationship. That even in marriage, abstinence from sex is superior to engaging in sexual intimacy. Some feel that because a husband and wife are passionately attracted (physically) to one another that something must be wrong with their relationship. Such ideas are in error.

Sex within an approved marriage is not a "work of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21); it is an act of love with God's approval. A wholesome love life may very well involve a great deal of passionate intimacy. The apostle Paul said, "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you

not because of your incontinency” (1 Corinthians 7:5). Obviously Paul was making clear that the sexual relationship is not necessarily confined to those times when it is desired that the wife conceive a child. This, even though some have erroneously concluded that it is wrong (sinful) to really enjoy sexual intimacy, even in marriage, it is clear that there is no Biblical basis for such a conclusion. Joy and intense pleasure in the sexual relationship can intensify the love of husband and wife for each other. Sexual intimacy in marriage has to do with expressing the love – the deep and profound feeling – which each of the two has for the other. Each act says, in effect, “I am yours; you are mine – I love you deeply and devoutly as my own. We are one, and we become even more one in this act of love.” The physical relationship is thus a symbolic expression of other values besides itself. It expresses the desire of two persons to share their lives completely in a mutual commitment of love and trust in marriage.

Because of some childhood experiences and improper teaching there are those who find it difficult to feel both pure and sensual at one and the same time. They have been taught that such matters are “dirty,” “impure,” or “sinful.” If a person’s spouse should have such feelings, they should respect those feelings – not asking them to violate their conscience – while they seek to help them to see from plain Bible teaching (for example, Proverbs 5:15-19) that such a view is mistaken.

Thus, given the Biblical view, it is seen that the crowning act of intimacy cannot be treated as mere sensual indulgence. Rather, it is a union which affects the whole personality of each of the two parties involved. When following God’s laws, sexual intimacy is deemed good and wholesome, a union to make two one.

### **Sex and Marriage**

Sex and marriage go hand in hand! Sexual intimacy is not all there is to marriage, it is not even the most important aspect, but it is very important. Marriage without sex is an incomplete arrangement, for there is a crucial element lacking for the establishment and maintenance of oneness. The sexual relationship enhances marriage by giving it a meaning and value which it would not otherwise have. The sexual union provides each with an “added language,” a way of saying, “I love you,” which cannot be expressed in any other way. This “added language” can only be spoken by those who are married, and it is the means of expressing the deepest feelings and assurances of love and commitment of the whole life to another and this is done in a medium which is more flexible, more expressive and more profound than ordinary human speech.

It is therefore absurd to say that the greater and more spiritual a love is, the less it will require physical expression. This view involves the erroneous concept that the body is a vehicle of sin (but not of grace) and that the body itself is evil. But, since the sexual relationship is a gift of God, even the body itself is a sacred trust from God – a vehicle of grace as well as of sin, as Paul plainly taught in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. And, so, it is not a superior or spiritual love that denies physical intimate expression, it is rather a lack of love – an unwillingness to take seriously the physical needs of the partner, a rejection of the gift of God. It is for this very reason that Paul calls withholding a “fraud.” Each person in marriage has a right to the physical fulfillment of love which is found in physical intimacy and, so, sexual union is the enrichment of love – that is already present between two persons. The quality of the sexual union will depend upon the quality of the

love and the oneness it expresses and can cause the love which is already present to grow and grow.

### **Sex Education Begins at Home**

The Bible is all-sufficient to teach in regard to the matter of sex (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It must be emphasized that sex education must begin in the home, with the child being taught by his/her parents what God's Word says on the subject. Paul instructed parents to "nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). This means that parents are responsible for the total training of the child's body, mind and soul. The sexual relationship must be made to appear as the beautiful gift which God intended it to be. Parents must teach their children, not only the total physical elements of sex education, but also the emotional and spiritual elements as well.

Parents not only have the obligation of teaching their children about the physical aspects of sex but also the emotional and moral ethics involved. Children should be taught, both by word and example, to be kind and loving in all relationships of life. They should be taught that, after marriage, this loving kindness and patience must manifest itself in the sexual relationship.

Parents must teach their children that sexual intercourse can be engaged in with God's approval ONLY in marriage. Both partners in the marriage must be eligible for God to accept it as a married relationship (Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:1-4; 1 Corinthians 7:39). Parents must teach their children that all sexual intercourse outside of marriage (fornication) is sin! They must also be taught that all who engage in such and who die without repenting will be lost (Revelation 21:8; Galatians 5:19-21).

We must teach our children that sexual relationship is a gift from God. The physical union (in an approved marriage) of man and woman has the blessing of God. Our children need to be taught that the sexual relationship is a gift that must be kept until marriage. It is a beautiful gift from God with pure white wrapping paper and a beautiful ribbon and bow. You keep that gift intact and you take it into marriage with you. Only there can that gift be opened with God's approval and enjoyed the way God meant for it to be enjoyed. We need to tell our children what happens when they take that gift and open it outside of marriage. When they rip off that bow and ribbon and tear that wrapping paper without God's approval. We need to tell them how lives are ruined, and how the joy and happiness of a beautiful marriage relationship can be tarnished and spotted. They need to be taught that the gift comes from God, and that while it is theirs to control, God expects His Will to be followed. And that Will stresses sexual intercourse in marriage only!

Our children need to know that, not only does the Bible forbid sexual intercourse outside of marriage, but also even the unchaste handling (fondling) of males and females who are not married. The apostle Paul listed such handling among the "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21). Such familiarity must be limited to those who are married to each other. Paul says that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The Bible warns against fornication (1 Corinthians 6:9). Paul also says to "flee fornication" (1 Corinthians 6:18). The man in the church at Corinth who was guilty of fornication with his father's wife was the proper object of disfellowship upon the part of the church there (1 Corinthians 5). And so it is clear that God limits sexual

liberties and actual sexual intercourse to those who are scripturally married to each other. Mothers teach your daughters, and fathers teach your sons.

### **Sex Education and the Church**

Just as parents (in the home) must not shirk their responsibility in teaching their children regarding sex education, just so the church (the local congregation) has a responsibility. There are spiritual matters in regard to the subject of sexual relations and the local congregation should teach what the Bible says on that subject. Competent, knowledgeable teachers in Bible classes and faithful gospel preachers from the pulpit should not ignore their responsibilities to teach the truth on these issues. These avenues can help young people make decisions regarding sexual relations which are based on truth and love rather than ignorance, fear, lust and guilt. It is tragic for the home or the congregation to leave the youth in ignorance concerning the spiritual aspects of sex. If our youth do not learn the truth concerning this matter they will “mis-learn” about it from restroom walls, salacious literature, street corners and back alleys. These wrong sources can have a devastating effect on our young people if they have not been taught properly by the home and the local congregation.

God has given man crucial instructions regarding the matter of sexual relations. God has made human beings either male or female and has put the sexual drive in both. He has also given the information as to how that drive is to be fulfilled. Sexual relations, therefore, must be considered in light of God’s laws for man, and it is the responsibility of the local congregation to provide the needed information on the subject. All that is taught on the subject should be taught in the light of Bible teaching. We must avoid the mistake of thinking (1) that the sexual relationship is all so complicated and hopeless that there is no need for striving to learn anything at all, and (2) that everything is so simple that one can take a thirty minute course and be prepared for life. This vital relationship is, in a sense, simple enough for any and all (who are eligible in God’s sight to be married, Matthew 19:9) to derive pleasure and happiness from it. Yet, on the other hand, it is sufficiently complicated that one can spend a life time learning about it.

### **Conclusion**

It is the hardest thing we will ever talk to our kids about. It is difficult in a class of teenage boys or girls to deal with adequately. But it must be done for the sake of our children. They deserve to learn the truth as presented in God’s word, and we have the responsibility to teach the following generations. Since God thought it serious enough to give instruction in His Word, we must take it seriously enough to teach those instructions to our youth. Their future happiness could depend upon it.