

“Are Nocturnal Emissions (Wet Dreams) Sinful?”

I have question about nocturnal emissions or wet dreams. As a Christian seeking to to be released from sexual temptation, your writings have helped me center my thoughts on truth and gain victory over my temptations through the power of Christ’s blood. Despite these victories, and perhaps in spite of them, I am being plagued by nocturnal emissions.

Six months ago I gave my homosexuality over to Christ and am no longer living as a gay man. I have, however, struggled with the temptation to masturbate. It took me a while to recognize masturbation as sexually immoral. So I am no longer masturbating either.

At this point I began having frequent nocturnal emissions. It is somewhat embarrassing because it usually seems to be a problem that adolescents have; I am 22.

There have been some noticeable differences in how my nocturnal emission are occurring now than in the past. The biggest difference is that my dreams are often not sexual in content, where as in the past they usually were.

Scripture surprisingly seems to mention this more directly than masturbation, or at least in the Old Testament. It tells us that it is unclean, but compared to the verbiage used to describe homosexuality, it would seem it is not as bad. Is it wrong, though? Am I sinning, and if so, how do I keep from sinning when I am asleep? Do you think that they could be caused by spiritual attacks, or is it simply my body wanting to relieve tensions? I am truly concerned and very confused about this.

Thank you for a most open and encouraging email. You have made some tremendous strides forward in His grace that are humbling to read for one who has not struggled with the intensity you report.

To answer your major question, nocturnal emissions are universally understood to be a normal bodily response to accumulated semen. You never really stop producing semen and when you are not providing an outlet either through sexual intercourse or masturbation your body must expel the excess. I find it quite interesting that the content of your dreams associated with the emissions have changed as you have responded in obedience. What an incredible confirmation that God is honored by your choices. It should also be of interest to you that God has provided a moral release of these fluids apart from sexual activity. God has provided for abstinence and obedience!

Concerning the uncleanness issue, remember that a woman’s menstrual period was also considered a time of uncleanness in the Law of Moses. It is still normal and not sin, just unclean. Part of the reason for ceremonial uncleanness in the Old Testament was for simple hygienic reasons that early Israel would not fully understand so God gave laws for them to abide by.

In regard to their frequency, though I am not a medical doctor, I would expect for the frequency of emissions to diminish over time as your body adjusts to your abstinent choices. Our bodies are quite flexible and will adjust to most changes we institute. For instance, as you eat less, your stomach will eventually shrink a bit and it actually takes less to fill you up. As you begin to eat more, your stomach can begin to expand to accommodate the larger volume. So too with nocturnal emissions. I suspect that as your “demand” is reduced, production of semen will eventually slow down though never cease altogether.

Therefore I would not consider your emissions as sinful at all, just a natural bodily response to your current obedient choices. Be assured brother, you are not in sin! Not in the least! This is actual confirmation of correct choices. I rejoice with you and pray your unnecessary guilt will melt away.

Respectfully,

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Addendum by Sue Bohlin, August 2010

Recently I had the privilege of speaking to a group of young people at a conference about unwanted homosexuality. In a breakout session dealing with replacing the lies we believe with the truth from God's word and God's world, I was addressing the lie "I can't live without sex," replacing it with the truth that sex is not a basic requirement like food, water and sleep. I supported my argument with the verse from Psalm 139 that says we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," explaining how nocturnal emissions are God's design for expelling the buildup of seminal fluid.

One young man told us a fascinating story:

"I had never experienced a wet dream. I was reading one of the discussion threads on the Living Hope Youth Forum (www.livehope.org) about the '6 Week Challenge.' That's where people challenge each other to go six weeks without masturbating. [The original poster wrote, "The hope is that by abstaining for this period of time, we can break the cycle of continually running back to P & M (pornography and masturbation) as "medications" for our problems and struggles, and instead learn to run to Jesus and other healthy replacements.']

"I decided to take the six-week challenge. After I reached six weeks, I kept going. After no sexual activity for eight months, one night I had an incredibly intense dream. I was in the throne room of God. There was glory and beauty and light everywhere. Suddenly I realized God was showering me with such delight and favor. Somehow in the dream He was letting me know that He loves me, He delights in me and He's proud of me. I had this amazing sense of incredible joy that exploded inside me. Then I woke up, and I realized I'd had a wet dream."

One of the other students said, "Dude, are you kidding me? You're saying that your wet dream was connected to this spiritual dream that God was, like, *proud* of you?"

He replied, "Yeah, that's exactly what I'm saying."

I thought that was *most* interesting.