

# **“Is it a sin for a married couple to masturbate during sex?”**

**Is it a sin for a married couple to masturbate during sex? In many cases a woman can't get an orgasm without proper stimulation.**

If a married couple is making love, then nothing they do together is considered masturbation. It's all part of holy sex. (Masturbation is self-pleasure by oneself.)

You're right, most women can't have an orgasm without stimulation, which is how God planned it, I think. . . .the idea being that her husband would be the one to give her pleasure that way. The Song of Solomon even has a verse about the wife asking her husband to do exactly that: “Let his left hand be under my head, and his right hand embrace me.” (SoS 2:6).

Nothing a married couple does in the marriage bed is sin as long as it is mutually acceptable and it doesn't involve anyone else (for example, porn movies or fantasies that involve another person). I think God intends for us to experience far more freedom and enjoyment than a lot of people think! May I suggest you get an EXCELLENT book for married women called *Intimate Issues* by Linda Dillow and Lorraine Pintus. Absolutely the best book on the subject for women out there, I think. Please also see our article [What's God's Plan for Sex in Marriage?](#)

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

---

# Cool Stuff About Love and Sex

*Hey, kids. Want to read some cool stuff about love and sex that you might never hear from your folks? Hey, parents. Want to learn how to communicate with your kids about these important topics? Read on!*

*This article is also available in [Spanish](#).*



## Cool Stuff

Psst! Hey, kids! Want to hear some really cool stuff about love and sex that you might never hear from your parents? Listen up! (But . . . how about closing your ears for the next few seconds?)

Hey, parents! Want to learn how to talk to your kids about sex in a way they will understand and relate to? Keep listening.[{1}](#)

OK, kids. You can listen again.

“A fulfilling love life. How can I have one? How can I get the most out of sex?” University students worldwide ask these questions. As I’ve spoken on their campuses, I’ve tried to offer some practical principles because I believe both pleasure and emotional fulfillment are important facets of sex. These principles relate to teens, too. Teens of all ages.

Sex is often on our minds. According to two psychologists at the universities of Vermont and South Carolina, 95% of people think about sex at least once each day.[{2}](#) You might wonder, “You mean that 5% of the people *don’t*?”

Why does sex exist? One of the main purposes of sex is

pleasure. Consider what one wise man named Solomon wrote. Writing sometimes in “PG” (but not “R-rated”) terms, he said:

Drink water from your own cistern  
And fresh water from your own well.  
Should your springs be dispersed abroad,  
Streams of water in the streets?  
Let them be yours alone  
And not for strangers with you.  
Let your fountain be blessed,  
And rejoice in the wife of your youth.  
As a loving hind and a graceful doe,  
Let her breasts satisfy you at all times;  
Be exhilarated always with her love.{3}

Solomon’s ancient love sonnet, the “Song of Solomon,” is one of the best sex manuals ever written. It traces the beauty of a sexual relationship in marriage and is an openly frank description of marital sexual intimacy. You might want to read it yourself. (Would it surprise you to know that it’s in the Bible? You can dog-ear the good parts.)

Another purpose of sex is to develop oneness or unity. Fifteen hundred years before Christ, Moses, the great Israeli liberator, wrote, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”{4} When two people unite sexually, they “become one flesh.”

A third purpose for sex is procreation. That, of course, is how we all got here. You learn that in first year biology, right?

OK, so sex is for pleasure, unity, and procreation. But how can people get the most out of love and sex?

# How to Have a Most Fulfilling Love Life

One way not to have a fulfilling love life in marriage is to concentrate solely on sexual technique. There is certainly nothing wrong with learning sexual technique—especially the basics—but technique by itself is not the answer.

The qualities that contribute to a successful sex life are the same ones that contribute to a successful interpersonal relationship. Qualities like love, commitment, and communication.

Consider love. As popular speaker and author Josh McDowell points out, those romantic words, “I love you,” can be interpreted several different ways. One meaning is “I love you *if*—If you go out with me . . . if you are lighthearted . . . if you sleep with me.” Another meaning is “I love you *because*—because you are attractive . . . strong . . . intelligent.” Both types of love must be earned.

The best kind of love is unconditional. It says, “I love you, *period*. I love you even if someone better looking comes along, even if you change, even if you have zoo breath in the morning. I place your needs above my own.”

One young engaged couple had popularity, intelligence, good looks, and athletic success that seemed to portend a bright future. Then the young woman suffered a skiing accident that left her paralyzed for life. Her fiancé deserted her.

This true story—portrayed in the popular film, “The Other Side of the Mountain”—was certainly complex. But was his love for her “love, period”? Or was it love “if” or love “because”? Unconditional love (or “less-conditional”, because none of us is perfect) is an essential building block for a lasting relationship.

Unconditional love with caring and acceptance can help a sexual relationship in a marriage. Sex, viewed in this manner,

becomes not a self-centered performance but a significant expression of mutual love.

Commitment is also important for a strong relationship and fulfilling sex. Without mutual commitment, neither spouse will be able to have the maximum confidence that the relationship is secure.

Good communication is essential. If a problem arises, couples need to talk it out and forgive rather than stew in their juices. As one sociology professor expressed it, "Sexual foreplay involves the 'round-the-clock relationship.'" [\[5\]](#)

## Why Wait?

After I'd spoken in a human sexuality class at Arizona State University, one student said, "You're talking about sex within marriage. What about premarital sex?" He was right. I was saying that sexual intercourse is designed to work best in a happy marriage and recommending waiting until marriage before experiencing sex.

This view is, of course, very controversial. You may agree with me. Or you may think I am from another planet, and I respect your right to feel that way. Here's why I waited.

First is a moral reason. According to the perspective I represent, the biblical God clearly says to wait. [\[6\]](#) Some people think that God wants to make them miserable. Actually, He loves us and wants our best. There are practical reasons for waiting.

Premarital sex can detract from a strong relationship and a fulfilling love life. Too often, it's merely a self-gratifying experience. After an intimate sexual encounter, one partner might be saying, "I love you" while the other is thinking, "I love it."

Very often premarital sex lacks total, permanent commitment. This can create insecurity. For instance, while the couple is unmarried, the nagging thought can persist, "If he or she has slept with me, whom else have they slept with?" After they marry, one might think, "If they were willing to break a standard with me before we married, will they with someone else after we marry?" Doubt can chip away at their relationship.

Premarital sex can also inhibit communication. Each might wonder, "How do I compare with my lover's other partners? Does he or she tell them how I perform in bed?" Each may become less open; communication can deteriorate and so can the relationship. Premarital sex can lessen people's chances to experience maximum oneness and pleasure. I'm not claiming that premarital sex eliminates your chances for great sex in marriage. But I am saying that it can introduce factors that can be difficult to overcome.

A recently married young woman told me her perspective after a lecture at Sydney University in Australia. She said, "I really like what you said about waiting. My fiancé and I had to make the decision and we decided to wait." (Each had been sexually active in other previous relationships.) She continued: "With all the other tensions, decisions and stress of engagement, sex would have been just another worry. Waiting 'till our marriage before we had sex was the best decision we ever made."

Wise words. I waited because God said to, because there were many practical advantages, and because none of the arguments I heard for not waiting were strong enough.[\[7\]](#)

## **The Vital Dimension**

So far we've looked at "Why sex?", "How to have a most fulfilling love life," and "Why wait?". Consider now the vital dimension in any relationship.

Powerful emotional factors can make it difficult for teens to wait until marriage for sexual intercourse or to stop having sex. A longing to be close to someone or a yearning to express love can generate intense desires for physical intimacy. Many singles today want to wait but lack the inner strength or self esteem. They may fear losing love if they postpone sex.

Often sex brings emptiness rather than the wholeness people seek through it. As one TV producer told me, "Frankly, I think the sexual revolution has backfired in our faces. It's degrading to be treated like a piece of meat." The previous night her lover had justified his decision to sleep around by telling her, "There's plenty of me for everyone." What I suspect he meant was, "There's plenty of everyone for me." She felt betrayed and alone.

I explained to her and to her TV audience that sexuality also involves the spiritual. One wise spiritual teacher understood our loneliness and longings for love. He recognized human emotional needs for esteem, acceptance, and wholeness and offered a plan to meet them. His plan has helped people to become brand "new persons" inside.[{8}](#) He promised unconditional love to all who ask.[{9}](#) Once we know we're loved and accepted, we can have greater security to be vulnerable in relationships and new inner strength to make wise choices for safe living.[{10}](#)

This teacher said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."[{11}](#) Millions attest to the safety and security He can provide in relationships. His name, of course, is Jesus of Nazareth. Though I had been a skeptic, I placed my faith in Him personally my freshman year in college. Through a simple heart attitude, I said, "Jesus, I believe you died and rose again for me. I ask you to enter my life, forgive me, and give me the new life you promised." He forgave all my flaws—and there were (and are) many of those. He said His own death and resurrection—once I accepted His pardon—erased my guilt.[{12}](#) That was great news!

Marriage with Jesus involved can be like triangle with God at the apex and the two spouses at the bottom corners. As each partner grows closer to God, they also grow closer to each other. Life doesn't become perfect, but God's friendship can bring a vital dimension to any relationship.

## Parents and Kids

A nationwide survey of teens asked the question, "When it comes to your decisions about sex, who is most influential?" Forty-nine percent of teens responding said it was their parents. The next closest response was "Friends" (16 percent). Eleven percent said the media influenced their decisions about sex the most. Only 5 percent said it was their romantic partner.[{13}](#) Kids, lots of your peers think that it is important to consider how their parents feel about sex.

And teens feel that talking with their parents about sex can make important sexual decisions easier. In a subsequent national survey, teens overwhelmingly expressed that they could more easily postpone sexual activity and avoid getting pregnant if they could only talk about these matters more openly with their folks.[{14}](#)

But there's a problem. Too many parents are unaware how important what they think about sex is to their teens. Parents often think that their teenagers' friends are the strongest influence on their teen's decisions about sex. Yet teens don't consider their friends as being nearly as influential as parents think they are.[{15}](#)

And mom, you are really, really important!

A major report based on two University of Minnesota studies involving national data found that teens having close relationships with their mothers are more likely than teens lacking close relationships with their mothers to delay first intercourse. The report authors note, "previous studies have



shown that mothers tend to have a greater influence than fathers on teens' sexual decision-making."[16](#)

What can a parent do to help their teens develop positive, healthy sexual attitudes and behavior? Here are some ideas:

- Develop close, loving relationships with your kids from the time they are young.
- Model the types of behavior and attitudes you wish them to emulate.
- Listen to them and treat them with respect.
- Talk about sex, your own values, and why you hold them.
- Help your teen think through their life goals, including education, and how teenage sexual activity might affect their dreams.
- Discuss what types of media are appropriate for your son or daughter to consume.

Making sexual decisions can be hard for teens today. Parents and teens can help each other by becoming close friends and by communicating. It's not always easy, but the rewards can be significant.

## Notes

1. Parts of this article are adapted from Rusty Wright, ["Dynamic Sex: Unlocking the Secret to Love,"](#) Every Student's Choice, 1996 and Rusty Wright, ["Safe Sex?"](#), Cross & Crescent LXXXI:4, Winter 1994-95, pp. 19-21.
2. Kathleen Kelleher, "Entertaining Fantasies? Don't Worry, Everyone's Doing It," *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 1995, E1. She cites Harold Leitenberg of the University of Vermont and Kris Henning, "now at the University of South Carolina Medical School".
3. Proverbs 5:15-19 NASB.
4. Genesis 2:24 NASB.
5. Emily Dale, Ph.D., Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington,

Illinois, 1975.

6. 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3.

7. For a summary of arguments for premarital sex, with responses, see Wright, "Dynamic Sex: Unlocking the Secret to Love," op. cit.

8. 2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT.

9. John 3:16; 13:34-35; 17:20, 23, 26; 1 John 4:7-21, 5:14-15.

10. Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:16-24; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20.

11. John 8:32 NASB.

12. Luke 24:44-47; Colossians 2:12-14.

13. "Faithful Nation: What American Adults and Teens Think About Faith, Morals, Religion, and Teen Pregnancy," The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, September 2001, p. 5;

<http://www.teenpregnancy.org/resources/data/pdf/keeping.pdf>.

14. "With One Voice 2002: America's Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy," The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, December 2002, pp. 2, 26, 27;

[http://www.teenpregnancy.org/resources/data/pdf/WOV2002\\_fulltext.pdf](http://www.teenpregnancy.org/resources/data/pdf/WOV2002_fulltext.pdf).

15. Ibid., pp. 2, 22-23.

16. "Teens' Closeness With Their Mothers Linked to Delay in Initiation of Sexual Activity, Study Says," Kaiser Daily Reproductive Health Report, September 5, 2002,

[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily\\_reports/print\\_report.cfm?DR\\_ID=13275&dr\\_cat=2](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/print_report.cfm?DR_ID=13275&dr_cat=2). The words quoted are those of the Kaiser Report summary of what the University of Minnesota research authors communicated.

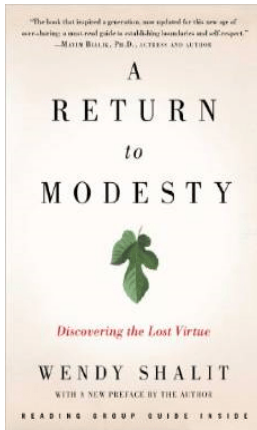
This article is adapted with permission from Rusty Wright, "Cool Stuff About Love and Sex," *The Plain Truth*, January/February 2004, pp. 17-19.

© 2004 Probe Ministries.

---

# A Return to Modesty

## The Loss of the Virtue of Modesty



This article is an examination of Wendy Shalit's book *A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue*. The book was written in 1999 and addressed to her "parents, and anyone who has ever been ashamed of anything." *A Return to Modesty* is an examination of public and personal attitudes toward the problems faced by young women at the end of the twentieth century, and the beginning of the twenty-first.

Shalit's starting point is the change from a healthy modesty toward sexual experience to a sheer embarrassment at the lack of experience. Her book is not a call to a prudish, Victorian sexuality, but a reminder of the value inherent in female modesty and the rewards for those who wait until marriage to become sexually active. Arguing against a culture which systematically attempts to rid us of our romantic hopes and natural embarrassments, Shalit offers young women an open invitation to cultivate one of the most feminine of all virtues, and to do so without shame or regret.

*A Return to Modesty* is divided into three parts: the first

concerns our present view of sexual modesty and the problems with this view. The second section surveys the intellectual battles which led to our present situation. And the third is a look at women who are saying “no” to contemporary values and returning to an earlier conception of modesty.

*The War on Embarrassment*, the title of the first chapter, looks at the early and middle '80s when sex education in grade schools was beginning to become more commonplace in the United States. Young girls ten and eleven years of age sat in mixed company as instructors discussed the particulars of intercourse, venereal disease, and birth control. The result, argues Shalit, is that subjects that had been discussed privately among the separate genders are brought into the open in such a way that all modesty is systematically removed. Preteen girls are taught to be ashamed if they are embarrassed, and embarrassed if they are ashamed. The ensuing confusion leads to a schizophrenic approach to sexuality which will follow the young girl through puberty and into young womanhood.

The impact of this early exposure to sexuality is discussed in the second chapter, *Postmodern Sexual Etiquette*. Here the modern dating scene is shown to be a direct revolt against the supposedly debilitating sexual disease of Puritanism and the Judeo-Christian ethic.<sup>[1]</sup> The traditional maturation cycle of courtship, love, and marriage has been replaced by a sequence of hook-ups, dumpings, and post-dumping checkups. The result, which we will discuss, has been that women are generally disrespected, trivialized, and abused in ways that should concern us all.

## **The Normalization of Pornography**

As we continue our examination of modesty, I would like to cover the statistical fallout from our behavior during the

last half of the century.

Stalking, rape, and harassment of women in the work place and at home all increased dramatically during the latter part of the twentieth century. But nothing is as alarming an indicator, says Shalit, as the “normalization of pornography.”[\[2\]](#) The contemporary debate is little more than a “ping-pong” game over censorship with feminists and conservatives crying “yes,” and the civil libertarians volleying back “no.” What is missing is the realization of how our views of pornography have shifted and a recognition of the impact that this has on the lives of ordinary men and women.[\[3\]](#)

One indicator of our growing acceptance of recreational pornography is the increase in strip clubs in the past decade, up over 100 percent from 1992. Strippers have become a kind of cultural wallpaper, and are present to such an extent that they are no longer shocking.[\[4\]](#) Women who object to their husbands and boyfriends looking at porn are accused of being prudish and full of hang-ups. The result has been a plethora of diseases and disorders as women attempt to look like the airbrushed super models seen in magazines and film.

A young woman named Jennifer Silver was concerned that her boyfriend was reading *Playboy* magazine, but she and her friends were reluctant to say anything which would make them seem prudish or un-cool. In a porn-friendly culture Miss Silver’s opinion was only valued if it was sympathetic to the norm. She said in an article to *Mademoiselle* magazine:

*The real reason I hated Playboy was that the models established a standard I could never attain without the help of implants, a personal trainer, soft lighting, a squad of makeup artists and hairdressers, and airbrushing. It’s a standard that equates sexuality with youth and beauty. I didn’t want my boyfriend buying into Playboy’s definition of sexuality.*[\[5\]](#)

Her boyfriend discontinued his reading in light of Miss Silver's observations, but many men, even Christian men, do not see the harm in this kind of indulgent and sinful behavior.

It is not enough to say we want to return to a more modest culture; we must actively strive to create such a culture. If women are ever going to be able to be modest, men will have to value that modesty, and one way to do so is by allowing women to be who they are and not place impossible demands on them.

## The Intellectual Landscape

In part two of her book Shalit takes aim at the intellectual battles which have led to the present crises in virtue. Under the guise of "being comfortable with our bodies," our universities, advertising companies, and even fellow Christians have urged women in the last half century to "let it all hang out." Indicative of this attitude is a quote from *Bazaar*, a leading women's magazine, in response to a cover which offended some readers:

*The barely revealed breast on our August cover wasn't meant to offend. It was meant to celebrate the beauty of the female form. Bazaar believes that women should feel comfortable with their bodies.*

The response to this reader's letter was in effect saying that, if one should choose to be modest, then it is a reflection of not being "comfortable with one's body." The result is that we've become so comfortable with the body that people feel free to dress immodestly from the beach to the grocery store.

Shalit continues her examination of the intellectual landscape of modesty with a glimmer of hope based on nation-wide surveys in some of the most prominent women's magazines. Her findings are that 49 percent of women wish they had slept with fewer

men, and the happiest women were those who had the fewest partners.{6} In addition to these observations, one could add that the same women's magazines that frequently advocate a more progressive and immodest lifestyle are also full of the confessions of women who have low self-esteem and feel that they are ugly and do not measure up to an increasingly critical society.

Following the statistical surveys, Shalit examines the idea of "male obligation." In an unusual turn she says that it is difficult to expect men to be honorable. Many women send messages that men are no longer expected to behave like gentlemen.{7} The short skirts, plunging necklines, and pouty lips so popular today are an invitation for men to stare at and perceive women as objects. The honor women want from men, argues Shalit, begins with the signals that women send. Those interested in a clear guide to a return to modesty, in their own lives or that of their friends and daughters, will find such a guide in Shalit's book *A Return to Modesty*.

## Modest Dress

In an effort to find a way back to a more modest approach to sexuality, Shalit turns to some themes common in most religions. First she makes the observation that there is almost unanimous agreement among religions that modesty is inextricably linked to holiness.{8} In the first of several examples, Shalit quotes Christ's admonition: "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and then see his shame."{9} After this she recalls the occasion when Moses covers his face, and is afraid to look upon God. Finally, she considers the account of Isaiah when he sees the fiery angels surrounding the throne of God, and four of the six angels' wings are not functional because they are used to cover their feet. The rationale, says Shalit, is that in the presence of the Holy One, they should cover themselves.

In the section titled *The Return to Modest Dress*, Shalit

documents the changing trends in women's dress. She discusses how women who have rebelled against the immodest dress characterized by spandex, push-up bras, and bikinis have found a new self-respect they never knew was available. In addition to this, these same women have found that they are attracting the kind of men they really desire as opposed to men who approach them for their outward beauty alone.

There is a difficulty for young women who choose to be a part of the counter-culture of modesty Shalit is advocating. We live in a time when the loss of one's virginity is considered a right of passage into maturity. Young women who choose to hold on to their virginity are often ostracized by other girls who wish to have partners in their loss. The result is that one must frequently choose between the loss of innocence, or the loss of fellowship with one's peers. This is a tragic choice to ask of a young, teenage girl who desperately wants to be accepted.

The problem is not confined to young women alone, but is played out among more adult women with the same dire consequences. Men no longer have to marry a woman to get them to sleep with them and the result has been a growing hostility toward the institution of marriage.<sup>{10}</sup> The power to say "no" that women once collectively possessed, has been surrendered to the point that it is very difficult to reclaim. Shalit's book shows the way out of a dark forest of our own making.

## How To Get There

"Loss of innocence is nothing new," writes Shalit, "but it is our assumption that there is now nothing to lose."<sup>{11}</sup> We frequently act as though previous generations have decided that young women need not value their innocence, and we are powerless to resist the pressures of society. However, we are told exactly the opposite throughout the Scriptures. We are told that we can, and must, resist the world. We are told that the individual can choose to behave differently than societal



norms. And, we are reminded that the failure to resist the temptations and standards set by secular society is sin.

The first thing we must do in order to return to a more modest society is to believe that it is possible, and to voice our desires for such a return actively. The second thing we must do is realize that cultures differ about what exactly is modest. Shalit cites examples of eighteenth century France where women would not bare their shoulders, Chinese women shy about their feet being exposed, and native women of Madagascar who would “rather die of shame than expose their arms.”[\[12\]](#)

Shalit proposes that we listen to the universal instinct within us which has been systematically suppressed. We know that we are naturally shy and sensitive to some things and should sometimes, but not always, cultivate our reservations rather than trying to overcome them. Quoting Francis Benton, Shalit writes:

*Specific rules about modesty change with the styles. Our Victorian ancestors, for instance, would judge us utterly depraved for wearing the modern bathing suit. Real modesty, however, is a constant and desirable quality. It is based not on fashion, but on appropriateness. A woman boarding a subway in shorts at the rush hour is immodest not because the shorts themselves are indecent, but because they are worn in the wrong place at the wrong time. A well-mannered and self-respecting woman avoids clothes or behavior that are inappropriate or conspicuous.*[\[13\]](#)

In order for society, and especially Christians within a secular and hostile society, to return to modesty we must be willing to look a little awkward in our actions and appearances. God has called us to be a strange and peculiar people for His purposes. One of the easiest and most influential ways to do this is through our outward appearances and actions. We should return to modesty before it really is

too late.

## Notes

1. Wendy Shalit, *A Return To Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue* (New York: The Free Press, 1999), 26.
2. Ibid., 49-54.
3. Ibid., 49.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., 52.
6. Ibid., 90.
7. Ibid., 104-105.
8. Ibid., 218.
9. Rev. 16:15.
10. Shalit, 227.
11. Ibid., 241.
12. Ibid., 232.
13. Ibid., 232.

©2000 Probe Ministries.

---

# Sexual Purity – A Biblical Worldview Perspective Remains Truth

*Dr. Bohlin uses a passage from Proverbs to provide us insight into the importance of sexual purity for our age. This important biblical worldview concept is still valid today even in this age where sexual promiscuity is trumpeted from the media.*

# Medical Reasons for Sexual Purity

As our society prepares to enter the 21st century, one trend and long-time staple of our culture looms ever larger on the horizon. The places to which one can escape in order to avoid sexual temptation continue to shrink. Children cannot be allowed to roam unsupervised through the neighborhood video stores because of the racks of videos with alluring covers of scantily clad exercisers and playmates of the year. The aisles of popular new releases contain images from R-rated movies that were only found in skin magazines thirty years ago. A trip to the grocery store can take you past the book aisle with suggestive covers on romance novels which contain graphic descriptions of sexual encounters. Billboards for beer, cars, and movies all use sex to sell. Radio stations readily play songs today that were banned from the airwaves decades ago. A trip to the mall takes you past stores with only sex to sell. Your home is invaded with sexually explicit images over even the free non-cable channels and your home computer. Unwelcome mail enters your home selling well-known sex magazines that continue to earn millions of dollars every year.

From the moment Adam and Eve were ashamed of their nakedness, sexual temptation has been in our midst. But except for brief periods in declining cultures, the temptations had to be sought after. There were places where one could be relatively safe from the sights and sounds which inflame lust and desire. Those days are over. Oh, sure, you can have blocks installed on your computer or phone and the local video store will allow you to put a screen on your children's rentals. But the fact that such systems are necessary and only voluntary should be enough to tell us of the pervasiveness of sex in our society. Sexual purity is a rare and often scorned virtue today. When a Hollywood couple makes it known that they are saving sex for marriage, people ask, "Why would you do that?"

While sex is clearly pervasive in our society, you don't have

to look very far to find plenty of reasons to avoid sexual relations outside of marriage. The biblical words for *fornication* or *sexual immorality* refer to all sexual activity outside of marriage, and the Scriptures clearly state that all such activity is forbidden (Lev. 18 & 20; Matt. 15:19; 1 Cor. 6:9-10,18; 1 Thess. 4:3). But a person may rationalize that while sexual activity outside of marriage is sin, "I can always be forgiven for my sin, and as long as I am not found out, who gets hurt?" Paul answers this resoundingly in Romans 6. "May it never be!" cries the apostle. By allowing sin to reign in our hearts we effectively say that Christ's death and resurrection has no power in our life.

If this is not powerful enough, consider the physical consequences of sexual immorality that exist today. In the 1960s there were only two STDs: syphilis and gonorrhea. Today there are over 25, and 1 in 5 Americans between the ages of 15 and 55 has a viral STD. That number is 1 in 4 if bacterial infections are included. There are 12 million new infections every year with 60 percent of these among teenagers.

Chlamydia and gonorrhea can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease which often results in sterility. Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) frequently produces genital warts which can develop into cancer. Rampant HPV infection is the primary reason that women are urged to have Pap smears on a yearly basis. If you are sexually active outside of marriage and "lucky," you may only contract herpes, but even this is an embarrassing, bothersome, incurable infection. But you may get AIDS, which will kill you. Since the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) can lie dormant for years before developing into deadly AIDS, your sex partner may not know that he or she is infected. The fact is, if you are sexually active outside of marriage, it is almost guaranteed that you will contract at least one STD.

But information is not enough. Why is sexual purity within marriage so important to God? And what do we do to avoid

falling into sexual sin with so much temptation swirling around our heads? We will now turn to explore some time tested advice from Scripture to see what we must do and why.

## **The Naturalistic Rejection of the Mystical Nature of Marriage**

In his book *Reason in the Balance*, Phillip Johnson brilliantly documents the vise grip of philosophical naturalism in science, law, and education in the United States. Our populace has been taught for so long that matter, energy, space, and time are all that exists that it has infected every form of cultural discourse, including our sexual behavior. Freedom of choice and personal fulfillment are praised as the ultimate virtues because, for the naturalist, sex is just a physical act that fulfills a basic need and instinct of every person. People should be free to pursue whatever sexual expression they choose to meet that basic physiological need. And this need is only created by our fundamental drive to reproduce and spread our genes into the next generation. In the naturalistic worldview, sex becomes simply a basic need and marriage just a relative cultural expression to satisfy that need for some, but not all people.

That is why so many people, including Christians, look at Scripture's clear statements condemning sex outside of marriage as antiquated and old-fashioned. "Oh," they say, "they applied to the people of that time, but not now. Not as we prepare to enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century!" But this raises some important questions. First, do the Scriptural injunctions against any sex outside of marriage really apply today? The answer, of course, is, "Yes, they do." We recognize readily what the Bible has to say about sex, and we see all about us the physical, emotional, and relational consequences of sexual immorality. Since God is sovereign, He established these consequences as warning signs not to transgress His principles. But second, just why is sexual fidelity so

important to God?

The first reason is because God's intentions for marriage were clearly stated right from the beginning. Genesis 2:18-25 makes it plain that God's design was one man and one woman for life. Jesus used this passage as the basis for His teaching on divorce in Matthew 19: "What God has joined together, let no man break apart." As Creator, God has every right to tell us what He wants.

Second, the Father has used the marriage union as an analogy for His relationship with Israel in the Old Testament and the church's relationship with Jesus in the New Testament. Isaiah 1:21, Jeremiah 2:20, 3:1-10, and especially Ezekiel 16:15-34 accuse Israel of playing the harlot, chasing after other gods and ignoring her rightful "husband." God's union with Israel was to be forever. He was faithful, but Israel was not. The Lord rained down His judgment on the unfaithfulness of Israel and Judah. In Ephesians 5 Paul tells husbands that they are to love their wives as Christ loves the church. Elsewhere, Jesus is spoken of as the bridegroom and the church as His bride, another relationship that is to be forever. Jesus will be faithful. Will the church? Our marital and sexual relationships are to mirror the Lord's special relationships with Israel in the Old Testament and the church in the New. God hates divorce and any sexual relationships outside of marriage, because He hates it when His faithfulness to us is spurned by our turning to other gods. This is true whether they be the pagan gods of old, which are still around, or the modern gods of self, money, power, and sex.

Well, we may know what is right, but knowing what is right is often not the same as doing what is right. Now, I want to look at a passage in Proverbs that instructs its readers concerning dangers, both obvious and subtle, of sexual temptation.

# A Young Man Lacking Sense Meets a Harlot

It is hard for some to imagine that the Bible contains explicit advice on how to avoid sexual temptation. But the entire chapter of Proverbs 7 is devoted to exactly that. In the first five verses, Solomon essentially pleads with his son to listen and guard his words carefully concerning the adulteress.

My son, keep my words,  
And treasure my commandments within you.

Keep my commandments and live,  
*(sounds like serious stuff!)*  
And my teaching as the apple of your eye.  
*(actually the "pupil" or "little man of your eye." This was meant therefore to be a precious truth to be closely guarded and kept.)*

Solomon goes on in verse 3:

Bind them on your fingers;  
Write them on the tablet of your heart.

Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"  
And call understanding your intimate friend.

That they may keep you from an adulteress,  
From the foreigner who flatters with her words.

In verses 6-9, King Solomon takes the role of an observer, telling his son what he sees unfolding before him.

For at the window of my house,  
I looked out through my lattice,

And I saw among the naive,  
I discerned among the youths,  
A young man lacking sense.

Passing through the street near her corner;  
And he takes the way to her house.

In the twilight, in the evening,  
In the middle of the night and in the darkness.

Solomon speaks of one who is young, inexperienced, and lacking judgment. His first clue was that he purposefully walks down her street and actually heads straight to her house in the middle of the night. As Charlie Brown would say, "Good grief!" The young man's intent is probably harmless. He is curious, perhaps hoping for a glimpse of the adulteress plying her wares to someone else on the street. Sin is probably not on his mind. He just wants to see what the real world is like. That kind of thinking is still heard today. "I just need to know what is out there so I can warn my family and others around me." In reality, our young fool was looking for titillation and was confident that he could withstand the temptation.

This is precisely why Solomon says he is lacking sense. The apostle Paul warns in 1 Corinthians 10:12, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." Overconfidence is our worst enemy in the face of temptation. I am reminded of two contrasting characters in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Boromir and Faramir. Boromir and Faramir were brothers. Boromir, the elder, was renowned for his exploits in war. He was his father's favorite and the principal heir. He was confident, however, that were he to wield the One Ring, the Ring of Power, he would not be corrupted by it and could use it to defeat the armies of the evil Sauron. However, his overconfidence and lust for power lead him to attempt to steal the ring from the designated Ring-bearer. His foolishness caused the Fellowship of the Ring to be split apart under attack and led eventually to his death. He thought he could stand, but he fell.

His brother Faramir, however, had a more realistic picture of



his sinful nature. When confronted later with the same opportunity to see and even hold the Ring, he refused. He knew the temptation would be strong and that the best way not to yield to the lust for power was to keep the temptation as far away as possible. Faramir, though perceived to be weaker than his brother, was, in a sense, actually the wiser and stronger of the two. He took heed and did not fall and later played a significant role in the final victory over the forces of evil.

What about you? Do you consider yourself strong enough to resist the temptations presented in movies, books, commercials, etc.? Do you walk into the movie theater blindly, lacking sense, uninformed as to why this movie is R-rated or even PG-13? Are you a headstrong Boromir, or a wise Faramir who knows his weakness in the face of temptation and avoids it whenever possible?

## **The Schemes of the Adulteress**

As we continue in our walk through Proverbs 7, Solomon now focuses his attention on the schemes of the seductress. Our young man lacking sense is walking down her street, right past her house. Solomon continues in verse 10:

And behold, a woman comes to meet him,  
Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart.

She is boisterous and rebellious;  
Her feet do not remain at home;

She is now in the streets, now in the squares,  
And lurks by every corner.

Wow! What a surprise! A woman comes to meet him! Can't you just hear Gomer Pyle exclaiming at the top of his lungs, "Surprise! Surprise! Surprise!" Surprise, indeed! This is only what was expected. Her boisterousness lends an air of fun and frivolity. Let's face it, if sin weren't so enjoyable we wouldn't fall prey to it so easily. Solomon next gives the

impression that she is everywhere to be found. As I pointed out earlier, that is even more true today. Even a widely proclaimed family movie like *Forrest Gump* surprised many with scenes that were unnecessary and sexually explicit. If you were surprised, you shouldn't have been. Check these things out beforehand. Don't act like a young man lacking sense and wander down the street of temptation unaware. Remember that Jesus extended the moral law from our actions to our thought life. If we simply lust after a woman, we have already committed adultery in our hearts (Matt. 5:27-28).

Solomon next turns to the woman's tactics:

So she seizes him and kisses him,  
*(Suddenness can put you off your guard unless you have predecided what you would do, whether it is a real seduction, a scene in a movie, TV program, or book. Will you close your eyes, leave, change channels, skip a few pages? What? Know beforehand!)*

And with a brazen face she says to him:

"I was due to offer peace offerings;

Today I have paid my vows.

*(I'm not such a bad person. See, I do a lot of the same things you do. You're not going to reject and judge me, are you?)*

Therefore I have come out to meet you,

To seek your presence earnestly, and I have found you."

Ah, the ultimate weapon with a man: female flattery. Men are suckers when they're told that they are needed. It was he, particularly, that she was waiting for. Not just anybody. If a man senses he is needed, he will be very reluctant to say no. Men usually hate to disappoint.

Solomon continues:

"I have spread my couch with coverings,  
With colored linens of Egypt.

I have sprinkled my bed  
With myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.

Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning;  
Let us delight ourselves with caresses."

As she continues her assault on the male ego by indicating all the trouble she has gone through just for him ("Don't hurt my feelings now," she says), she creates a sensual picture that is meant to arouse him and draw him in. Be realistic. This sounds inviting, even from the pages of Scripture. This should be a loud tornado siren in your ear to tell you: "There, but for the grace of God, go I!" The adulteress finishes her seduction with the assurance that no one need ever know, in verses 19 and 20. She says:

"For the man is not at home,  
He has gone on a long journey;

He has taken a bag of money with him,  
At the full moon he will come home."

This rationalization of "no one will know" is true not only of an affair, but also of what we allow into our minds through the privacy of our computer, videos rented when no one else is home, magazines stashed away in a secret place, or visits to parts of town where we certainly don't expect to find anyone we know. But it's a lie. These things cannot be hidden for a lifetime. Either you will slip up sooner or later, or you will poison your mind to such an extent that the outward temptation can no longer be resisted. Moses speaks to Israel in Numbers 32:23 warning them that if they do not obey the Lord, "their sin will find them out."

## **The Young Man Capitulates and Must Face the Consequences**

As we have seen, the young man in Proverbs 7 has walked right

into temptation's snare and has been totally mesmerized by the pleas and schemes of the adulteress. I have made many parallels to today as to how prevalent sexual temptation is. Now we will see the young man's demise and the consequences of his actions. Beginning in verse 21:

With her many persuasions she entices him;  
With her flattering lips she seduces him.

Suddenly he follows her,  
*(probably as if in a trance)*  
As an ox goes to the slaughter,  
*(silently and dumbly)*  
Or as a stag goes into a trap,

Until an arrow pierces through his liver,  
As a bird hastens to the snare,  
*(again blindly and without knowledge)*  
So he does not know that it will cost him his life.

He capitulates without a word, mesmerized by her seduction. The analogy to the ox, the deer, and the bird point out that each of them walk blindly, silently, and unknowingly to their death. So it is with the young man lacking sense. While he will not die in a physical sense, though he may if he contracts AIDS, he will die in the sense that his life will never be the same. Not only will the shame and guilt be difficult to overcome, but there will be severed relationships that may never be repaired. There may also be consequences that can never be removed and scars that may never be healed, such as a child out of wedlock or a broken marriage in which children are the real victims. But even if the sin is with pornography, remember your sins will find you out. You may keep up appearances for awhile but your ministry, your family, and your relationship with God will slowly rot from the inside out. Solomon closes with some final warnings and observations:

Now therefore, my sons, listen to me,

And pay attention to the words of my mouth.

Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways,  
(do not give your mind opportunity with impure material)  
Do not stray into her paths.

For many are the victims she has cast down,  
And numerous are all her slain.

Her house is the way to Sheol,  
Descending to the chambers of death.

Your best defense is to first realize that none are immune. Remember Boromir and Faramir from Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Boromir, the stronger, older brother, thought he could resist the power of the One Ring and use it to defeat the enemy. In the end, his lust for power drove him to irrationality and eventually to his death. Faramir, however, assessed his weakness correctly and refused to even look at the Ring when the opportunity arose, knowing its seductive power. He not only lived but was used mightily in the battles that followed. No one was capable of totally resisting the power of the Ring. Those who actually gazed upon the Ring, handled it and even used it, resisted only through an extreme exercise of will often aided by the intervention and counsel of others or circumstances (Frodo, Bilbo, and Samwise). Those who totally yielded to it were destroyed by it (Gollum).

Many have faltered before you and many will come after you. Your first mistake would be to think of yourself as above this kind of sin or immune to it. Don't kid yourself. It can ruin you physically! It can ruin you emotionally! It can ruin you spiritually!

Purity affirms who we are; we are made in the image of God. Purity affirms our relationship to Jesus Christ as His bride. Purity affirms women as a treasure God created for us as a companion and helpmate and not as an object for us to conquer.

Pray and ask forgiveness for any involvement in pornography, R- rated movies, and lustful thoughts. Commit to predecide what to do about those sudden temptations, commit to purity, commit to wives and husbands (or future wives and husbands) to be faithful in the power of the Holy Spirit. Martin Luther said that you cannot stop birds from flying over your head, but you can certainly stop them from making a nest in your hair. Some temptation is unavoidable, but as far as it depends on you, give it no opportunity to set up residence in your mind.

© 1999 Probe Ministries

---

## Dynamic Sex: Unlocking the Secret to Love

*Still searching for the secret of love? Missing the deep satisfaction you both want? To enjoy love and sex to the fullest, consider the total person – physical, psychological and spiritual.*



*This article is also available in [Spanish](#).*

“A fulfilling love life. How can I have one? How can I get the most out of sex?” University students worldwide ask these questions. Why? Because both pleasure and emotional fulfillment are important facets of sex.

Sex is often on our minds. According to two psychologists at the universities of Vermont and South Carolina, 95% of people think about sex at least once each day.<sup>[\[1\]](#)</sup> You might wonder, “You mean that 5% of the people don’t?”

One way not to have a dynamic sex life is to concentrate solely on technique. There is certainly nothing wrong with learning sexual technique—especially the basics—but technique by itself is not the answer.

A good relationship is important for good sex. Psychiatrist and bestselling author Anthony Pietropinto and coauthor Jacqueline Simenauer write, “When emotional issues involving anger or a need to control are encountered on the road to sexual fulfillment, the journey is interrupted until these conflicts are resolved.”[\[2\]](#)

Many sex therapists agree that great technique does not guarantee great sex. They emphasize that the qualities that contribute to a successful sex life are the same ones that contribute to a successful interpersonal relationship. Qualities like love, commitment and communication.

Consider love. As popular speaker and author Josh McDowell points out, those romantic words, “I love you,” can be interpreted several different ways. One meaning is “I love you if—if you go out with me...if you are lighthearted...if you stay committed to me...if you sleep with me.” This type of love is given on the basis of what the other person does. Another meaning is “I love you because—because you are attractive...strong...intelligent.” This type of love is given on the basis of what the other person is. Both types of love must be earned.

There is nothing wrong with wanting to be loved for what you are, but problems can arise with having “if” or “because of” love as the basis of a relationship. Jealousy can set in when someone who is more attractive or more intelligent appears and the partner’s attention shifts to the newcomer. People who know they are loved only for their strong points may be afraid to admit any weaknesses to their partners. This dishonesty can affect the relationship.

**THE BEST LOVE.** The best kind of love is unconditional. This love says, "I love you, period. I love you even if someone better looking comes along, even with your faults and even if you change. I place your needs above my own."

One young couple was engaged to be married. Their popularity, intelligence, good looks and athletic success made their future together seem bright. Then the young woman was in a skiing accident that left her paralyzed for life. Her fianc deserted her.

Portrayed in the popular film, "The Other Side of the Mountain," this true story was certainly complex. But was his love for her "love, period"? Or was it love "if" or love "because of"? Unconditional love (or "less-conditional," because none of us is perfect) is an essential building block for a lasting relationship.

You can probably see how unconditional love can help a sexual relationship in a marriage. In order for sex to be most fulfilling, it should be experienced in an atmosphere of caring and acceptance. Sex, viewed in this manner, becomes not a self-centered performance but a significant expression of mutual love.

**MUTUAL COMMITMENT.** Another quality necessary for a strong relationship and dynamic sex is commitment. If two people are completely committed to each other, their relationship is strengthened. Without mutual commitment, neither will be able to have the maximum confidence that the relationship is secure. The fear may exist that, should they encounter a trial, the other may not be there for support. This can erode their bond.

Total, permanent commitment is important in sex, too. It brings security to each partner. It frees them from feeling they have to strive to keep from losing the other and releases them to enjoy one another. It can be an important result of



and expression of unconditional love. Commitment helps to breed satisfaction.

**COMMUNICATION.** A third quality essential for a strong relationship and dynamic sex is communication. Even if partners have mutual love and commitment, they need to communicate this to each other by what they say and do. If a problem arises, they need to talk it out and forgive rather than give each other the silent treatment and stew in their juices. As one sociology professor expressed it, "Sexual foreplay involves the 'round-the-clock relationship." Communication affects your total life; your total life affects sex. Couples need to communicate about their hopes, dreams, fears and hurts as well as the daily details of life in order for the relationship to flourish.

Sex is a form of communication. You can bet that if partners are harboring resentment or not communicating appropriately, it shows in their sex life. Psychologists, sex researchers and textbook authors Albert Richard Allgeier and Elizabeth Rice Allgeier note that "a substantial number of sexual problems could be resolved if people felt free to communicate with their sexual partners...about their sexual feelings...."[\[3\]](#)

So, how can you have a dynamic sex life? By developing the same qualities that contribute to a strong relationship: unconditional love, total and permanent commitment and clear, meaningful communication. These qualities combine to help produce a maximum oneness and bring the greatest pleasure.

To this point we've been saying that sex is designed to work best within a happy marriage. "But," you ask, "what about premarital sex?" This is, of course, a very controversial topic. While wanting to convey respect for those who differ, it's best that couples wait until marriage before having sexual relations. Why? Consider three reasons.

**WHY WAIT?** First, there is a practical reason for waiting.

Premarital sex can detract from a strong relationship and a dynamic sex life. All too often, premarital sex ends up a self-seeking, self-gratifying experience. After intercourse, one partner might be saying "I love you" while the other is thinking "I love it."

Very often premarital sex occurs in the absence of total and permanent commitment. This can bring insecurity into the relationship. Both short-and long-range problems can result, especially with the breakdown in trust. For instance, while the couple is unmarried, there can always be the nagging thought, "If s/he's done it with me, whom else have they slept with?" After they marry, one might think, "If that person was willing to break a standard with me before we married, how do I know they won't now that we are married?" Doubt and suspicion can chip away at their relationship.

**POOR COMMUNICATION, POOR SEX.** Premarital sex can also inhibit communication. Each might wonder, "How do I compare with my lover's other partners? Does s/he tell them how I perform in bed?" Or perhaps they think, "Should I be totally honest and vulnerable and share my heart with this person when I don't know if they'll be around tomorrow? Can I entrust all of me to them if I don't have all of them for me? There will be part of me emotionally that I'll hold back." Each becomes less open; communication dwindles. And poor communication makes for poor sex. Bad feelings result, communication deteriorates and so does the relationship. In short, premarital sex can put people at a disadvantage because it can lessen their chances to experience maximum oneness and pleasure.

One young woman at Arizona State University expressed it like this: "I understand what you're saying about unity or oneness. I've had several premarital sexual experiences with different men. After each one, I've felt like I've left a part of myself with that person emotionally. What you're saying is that it makes sense for a person to save themselves so they can give themselves completely to their spouse."

There is a second reason for waiting: None of the arguments for premarital sex are strong enough. Of course, it's always easy to rationalize in the heat of passion and say it's right. But that is why it is important to decide beforehand—to think with your brain instead of your glands. Consider several common arguments.[{4}](#)

*The Statistical Argument:* “Everyone else is doing it.” Oh, no, they're not! Some studies have shown high statistics, but never one that says 100%. Besides, even if “everyone else” were doing it, that is a lousy reason for doing anything. Suppose 90% of your friends developed ulcers. Would you try to emulate them? Should you? This is not to equate sex with sickness. The point is that just because “everyone else is doing it” doesn't make it advisable or right. You need a better reason.

*The Biological Argument:* “Sex is a biological need, like the drive for food, air and water. When I have the impulse, it needs to be satisfied.” You can't live without food, air or water. Believe it or not, you can live without sex. (It's been documented.)

*The Contraceptive Argument:* “Modern contraceptives have removed the fear of pregnancy.” Don't kid yourself. There's always a chance of pregnancy. No contraceptive is 100% foolproof. Even many marital pregnancies are unintended. A lot of married couples have had “little surprises.”

Even with all the modern contraceptives, there are one million teenage pregnancies in the U.S. each year.[{5}](#) And if one chooses abortion as a “solution,” there can still be emotional scarring and, for many people, a guilt burden. Incidentally an estimated 55 million people in the U.S.—about one in five—have a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Each year there are twelve million new STD infections in the U.S.[{6}](#)—an average of over 20 new cases every minute.

HIV, the deadly virus that causes AIDS, has focused world attention on sexual risks. About 6,000 people around the globe become infected with HIV daily.[{7}](#) In the U.S., AIDS is the leading killer of people ages 25 to 44, according to the Centers for Disease Control.[{8}](#) So-called “safe sex” is not really safe at all. Condoms can slip, break and leak.[{9}](#) Johns Hopkins University reports research on HIV transmission from infected men to uninfected women in Brazil. The study took pains to exclude women at high risk of contracting HIV from sources other than their own infected sex partners. Of women who said their partners always used condoms during vaginal intercourse, 23% became HIV-positive.[{10}](#)

*The Hedonistic Argument:* “But it feels so good when I do it—and afterward, too!” The question is, “How long after?” What feels good for a few seconds may leave you feeling miserable for years. Self-fulfillment is hard to come by without self-respect. Also, don’t forget the other person. Sometimes one partner’s pleasure is another partner’s misery. How would you like being used as nothing more than someone else’s pleasure machine?

Basketball superstar Magic Johnson shocked much of the world when he announced he was HIV-positive. Now married and an advocate for premarital abstinence, Johnson recalls that his former sexploits—a parade of one-night stands—left him empty: “I was the loneliest guy on the face of the earth....I didn’t have anybody to share with who loved me for me. For Earvin (his given name, i.e., his real self), not for Magic (the sports legend).”[{11}](#)

*The Experiential Argument:* “Practice makes perfect and I do want to please my partner when I do marry.” As previously mentioned, communication and commitment—not just technique—are keys to dynamic sex. Why not learn with your own spouse—together—instead of on someone else’s wife or sister or husband or brother? Remember, too, that good sexual adjustment takes time, love and understanding.

*The Compatibility Argument:* “We need to experiment to see if we’re sexually compatible, especially since marriage is such a big step.” Some express it like this: “You try on a pair of shoes before you buy them!” The “try-before-you-buy” idea breaks down because the human plumbing system is very flexible and almost always works. Again, premarital sex can erode trust and communication. It’s wiser to test your compatibility as persons. Even happily married couples often need several years to adjust sexually to each other.

Besides, sex can cloud the issue. Sex is not the key to love. Love is the key to sex. Couples who approach marriage thinking that “We’re in love so it’s OK to have sex” or “We’ll use sex to determine if we’re in love” may be sorely disappointed. They may discover that what they thought was love is only charged-up sex sensations. Waiting until marriage does not guarantee that you’ll be emotionally compatible, but it does help create a less confusing environment in which to find out before you take the step of a marriage commitment.

*The Marital Argument:* “If we’re really in love and plan to get married, why all the fuss over the license and date?” Plans don’t always end up in reality. (Chances are you know someone—perhaps yourself—who suffered a broken engagement.) The public declaration at a wedding can be an important evidence of commitment. Why? It takes a certain level of conviction to be able to state a commitment publicly. Affirming marriage vows in public helps give each partner greater assurance that each really means it. It can also act as a deterrent to future departure. The desire not to be publicly perceived as a promise-breaker can help dissuade partners from seeking supposed “greener grass.” Of course a wedding is no guarantee one won’t leave in the future, but it can be a preventive.

Third, there is a moral reason for waiting. According to biblical perspective, God clearly says to wait.[\[12\]](#) You might be thinking, “See, I told you God didn’t want me to have any

fun.” Many people think this initially, then they realize that the reason God, as a loving parent, gives negative commands is for our own good. He wants us to experience something better!

Waiting until marriage can help you both have the confidence, security, trust and self-respect that a solid relationship needs. “I really like what you said about waiting,” said a recently married young woman after a lecture at Sydney University in Australia. “My fianc and I had to make the decision and we decided to wait.” (Each had been sexually active in other previous relationships.) “With all the other tensions and stress of engagement, sex would have been just another worry. Waiting till our marriage before we had sex was the best decision we ever made.”

**THE GREATEST AID.** One final concept that is perhaps the greatest aid to fulfilling sex concerns relating as a total person. Human lives have three dimensions: Physical, mental and spiritual. If communication on any of these levels in a marriage is missing, the relationship is incomplete.

Some are surprised to learn that sex and spirituality can mix well. A highly-acclaimed University of Chicago study of sex in America found that among women, conservative Protestants were those most likely to report they always had an orgasm during intercourse. While that finding does not prove causation, the high correlation between spiritual commitment and sexual pleasure prompted the researchers to note that the image of Christians as sexually repressed may be a myth.[\[13\]](#)

Certainly biblical writers support a healthy view of sexuality. For example the Hebrew Song of Solomon, a beautiful and passionate love story, has been called one of the best sex manuals ever written.

Consider this perspective: Relating on a spiritual level centers around the most unique person of history, Jesus of Nazareth. Evidence backs up His claim to be God[\[14\]](#) and as God

what He offers can affect everyone in a personal way, including the area of sex.

One first century follower of Jesus described the quality of love He offers: "Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...."[{15}](#) What man or woman would not want to love or be loved like that?

**THE POWER SOURCE.** During His time on earth, Christ explained that everyone is born physically alive but spiritually dead. In order to properly relate on a spiritual level, He said, one must be spiritually reborn.[{16}](#) He later rose physically from the dead to make this new life possible. Jesus offers a life that has power. Power for living, power to love others less conditionally, power for self-control in one's sex life. Even after having experimented with premarital sex, one can find in God the strength to stop, to resist future temptation and to wait for one's life partner.

Jesus also offers forgiveness from every wrong—no matter what—that we've ever done because He died on the cross in our place, bearing the punishment we deserved. Anyone can be completely forgiven if he or she will come to Christ. God can cleanse a person's mind of all past guilt. He can restore the freedom of mutual love and trust in a relationship.

All you need to do to begin this spiritual journey is simply to believe that Christ died for you, ask for and accept the forgiveness He offers, and invite the living Christ into your life. It's saying in faith, "Jesus Christ, I need You. Thanks for dying for me. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior. Give me the fulfilling life You promised."

Christ's entry into your life will enable you to begin living

with an added spiritual dimension and to have eternal life.[\[17\]](#) As you grow in your new relationship with Him, you'll find your attitudes and actions changing and becoming more fulfilling. Life certainly won't become perfect. There will still be struggles and discouragements, but you'll have a new Friend to help you through. The maturing Christian experiences the most challenging and rewarding life possible.

Two marriage partners having growing relationships with God will grow closer to each other: spirit to spirit, mind to mind, body to body. Their love, commitment and communication will become increasingly dynamic, and so will their sex.

## Notes

1. Kathleen Kelleher, "Entertaining Fantasies? Don't Worry, Everyone's Doing It," Los Angeles Times, August 15, 1995, E13. She cites Harold Leitenberg of the University of Vermont and Kris Henning, "now at the University of South Carolina Medical School."
2. Anthony Pietropinto, M.D. and Jacqueline Simenauer, *Not Tonight, Dear*, New York: Doubleday, 1990, p. 79.
3. Albert Richard Allgeier, Ph.D. and Elizabeth Rice Allgeier, Ph.D., *Sexual Interactions*, Fourth Edition, Lexington (MA): D.C. Heath and Company, 1995, p.236.
4. Most categories and names for these arguments are taken from Jon Buell, "Why Wait Till Marriage?" (lecture outline) and Jim Williams, "The Case for Premarital Chastity" (cassette tape), both produced by Probe Ministries International, Dallas, TX.
5. Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, "The Failure of Sex Education," *The Atlantic Monthly* 274:4, October 1994, p. 73.
6. Sandy Rover, "United We Stand: The U.S. Isn't Alone in Its Ignorance About Sexually Transmitted Diseases," *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1995, E3. Rover cites as source Peggy



Clarke, president of the American Social Health Association.

7. "Speaking Of: World Health," *Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 1995, H2; citing "The World Health Report, 1995 – Bridging the Gaps."

8. Bettijane Levine, "The Changing Face of AIDS," *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 1995, E1.8

9. For documentation on condom risks, see the references in Rusty Wright, "Safe Sex?", *Connecticut Medicine* 59:5, May 1995, pp. 295-298; reprinted from Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity's *Cross and Crescent* 81:4, Winter 1994-95, pp. 19-21.

10. Mark D.C. Guimaraes, et al., "HIV Infection among Female Partners of Seropositive Men in Brazil," *American Journal of Epidemiology* 142:5, 1995, pp. 538-547.

11. Bruce Newman, "The Business of Being Magic Johnson," *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, September 10, 1995, p. 35.

12. I Corinthians 6:18, I Thessalonians 4:3.

13. Robert T. Michael, et al., *Sex in America: A Definitive Survey*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1994, pp. 127-130.

14. Josh McDowell and Bill Wilson (ed.), *A Ready Defense*, San Bernardino (CA): Here's Life Publishers, 1990, pp. 187-267.

15. I Corinthians 13:4-8, New American Standard Bible.

16. John 3:1-16.

17. I John 5:11-13.

© 1996 Rusty Wright. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

---

# The Teen Sexual Revolution – Abstinence Programs Are The Only Biblical Response

*Kerby Anderson considers the real problems created by the new American attitude extolling the virtues of teen sexual activity. He examines the effectiveness of various programs designed to stem the tide of teen sexual activity. He concludes the only reasonable approach is teaching the reasons for and benefits of abstinence prior to marriage.*

One of the low points in television history occurred September 25, 1991. The program was “Doogie Howser, M.D.” This half-hour TV show, aimed at preteen and teenage kids, focused on the trials and tribulations of an 18-year-old child prodigy who graduated from medical school and was in the midst of medical practice. Most programs dealt with the problems of being a kid in an adult’s profession. But on September 25 the “problem” Doogie Howser confronted was the fact that he was still a virgin.

Advance publicity drove the audience numbers to unanticipated levels. Millions of parents, teenagers, and pajama-clad kids sat down in front of their televisions to watch Doogie Howser and his girlfriend Wanda deal with his “problem.” Twenty minutes into the program, they completed the act. Television ratings went through the roof. Parents and advertisers should have as well.

What is wrong with this picture? Each day approximately 7700 teenagers relinquish their virginity. In the process, many will become pregnant and many more will contract a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Already 1 in 4 Americans have an STD, and this percentage is increasing each year. Weren’t the producers of “Doogie Howser, M.D.” aware that teenage

pregnancy and STDs are exploding in the population? Didn't they stop and think of the consequences of portraying virginity as a "problem" to be rectified? Why weren't parents and advertisers concerned about the message this program was sending?

Perhaps the answer is the trite, age-old refrain "everybody's doing it." Every television network and nearly every TV program deals with sensuality. Sooner or later the values of every other program were bound to show up on a TV program aimed at preteens and teenagers. In many ways the media is merely reflecting a culture that was transformed by a sexual revolution of values. Sexually liberal elites have hijacked our culture by seizing control of two major arenas. The first is the entertainment media (television, movies, rock music, MTV). The second is the area of sex education (sex education classes and school-based clinics). These two forces have transformed the social landscape of America and made promiscuity a virtue and virginity a "problem" to be solved.

## **The Teenage Sexuality Crisis**

We face a teenage sexuality crisis in America. Consider these alarming statistics of children having children. A New York Times article reported: "Some studies indicate three-fourths of all girls have had sex during their teenage years and 15 percent have had four or more partners." A Lou Harris poll commissioned by Planned Parenthood discovered that 46 percent of 16-year-olds and 57 percent of 17-year-olds have had sexual intercourse.

Former Secretary of Education William Bennett in speaking to the National School Board Association warned that "The statistics by which we measure how our children how our boys and girls are treating one another sexually are little short of staggering." He found that more than one-half of America's young people have had sexual intercourse by the time they are seventeen. He also found that more than one million teenage

girls in the U.S. become pregnant each year. Of those who give birth, nearly half are not yet eighteen.

“These numbers,” William Bennett concluded, “are an irrefutable indictment of sex education’s effectiveness in reducing teenage sexual activity and pregnancies.” Moreover, these numbers are not skewed by impoverished, inner city youths from broken homes. One New York polling firm posed questions to 1300 students in 16 high schools in suburban areas in order to get a reading of “mainstream” adolescent attitudes. They discovered:

- *57% lost virginity in high school*
- *79% lost virginity by the end of college*
- *16.9 average age for sex*
- *33% of high school students had sex once a month to once a week*
- *52% of college students had sex once a month to once a week.*

Kids are trying sex at an earlier age than ever before. More than a third of 15-year-old boys have had sexual intercourse as have 27 percent of the 15-year-old girls. Among sexually active teenage girls, 61 percent have had multiple partners. The reasons for such early sexual experimentation are many.

Biology is one reason. Teenagers are maturing faster sexually due to better health and nutrition. Since the turn of the century, for example, the onset of menstruation in girls has dropped three months each decade. Consequently, urges that used to arise in the mid-teens now explode in the early teens. Meanwhile the typical age of first marriage has risen more than four years since the 1950s.

A sex-saturated society is another reason. Sex is used to sell everything from cars to toothpaste. Sexual innuendos clutter

most every TV program and movie. And explicit nudity and sensuality that used to be reserved for R-rated movies has found its way into the home through broadcast and cable television. Media researchers calculate that teenagers see approximately five hours of TV a day. This means that they see each year nearly 14,000 sexual encounters on television alone.

Lack of parental supervision and direction is a third reason. Working parents and reductions in after-school programs have left teenagers with less supervision and a looser after-school life. In the inner city, the scarcity of jobs and parents coupled with a cynical view of the future invites teenage promiscuity and its inevitable consequences. Adolescent boys in the suburbs trying to prove their masculinity, herd into groups like the infamous score-keeping Spur Posse gang in California.

Even when teenagers want to sit out the sexual revolution, they often get little help from parents who may be too embarrassed or intimidated to talk to their children. Parents, in fact, often lag behind their kids in sexual information. At one sex-education workshop held by Girls Inc. (formerly Girls Club of America), nearly half of the mothers had never seen a condom. Other mothers did not want to talk about sex because they were molested as children and were fearful of talking about sex with their daughters.

Teenagers are also getting mixed messages. In any given week, they are likely to hear contradictory messages. "No sex until you're married." "No sex unless you're older." "No sex unless you're protected." "No sex unless you're in love." No wonder adolescents are confused.

## **The Report Card on Sex Education**

For more than thirty years proponents of comprehensive sex education have told us that giving sexual information to young children and adolescents will reduce the number of unplanned

pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. In that effort nearly \$3 billion has been spent on federal Title X family planning services, yet teenage pregnancies and abortions rise.

Perhaps one of the most devastating popular critiques of comprehensive sex education came from Barbara Dafoe Whitehead. The journalist who said that Dan Quayle was right also was willing to say that sex education was wrong. Her article in the October 1994 issue of *Atlantic Monthly* entitled "The Failure of Sex Education" demonstrated that sex education neither reduced pregnancy nor slowed the spread of STDs.

Comprehensive sex education is mandated in at least 17 states, so Whitehead chose one state and focused her analysis on the sex education experiment in New Jersey. Like other curricula the New Jersey sex education program rests on certain questionable assumptions.

The first tenet is that children are "sexual from birth." Sex educators reject the classic notion of a latency period until approximately age twelve. They argue that you are "being sexual when you throw your arms around your grandpa and give him a hug."

Second, sex educators hold that children are sexually miseducated. Parents, in their view, have simply not done their job, so we need "professionals" to do it right. Parents try to protect their children, fail to affirm their sexuality, and even discuss sexuality in a context of moralizing. The media, they say, is also guilty of providing sexual misinformation.

Third, if miseducation is the problem, then sex education in the schools is the solution. Parents are failing miserably at the task, so "it is time to turn the job over to the schools. Schools occupy a safe middle ground between Mom and MTV."

*Learning About Family Life* is the curriculum used in New Jersey. While it discusses such things as sexual desire, AIDS,

divorce, condoms, and masturbation, it nearly ignores such issues as abstinence, marriage, self-control, and virginity. One technique promoted to prevent pregnancy and STDs is noncoital sex, or what some sex educators call outercourse. Yet there is good evidence to suggest that teaching teenagers to explore their sexuality through noncoital techniques will lead to coitus. Ultimately, outercourse will lead to intercourse.

Whitehead concludes that comprehensive sex education has been a failure. For example, the percent of teenage births to unwed mothers was 67 percent in 1980 and rose to 84 percent in 1991. In the place of this failed curriculum, Whitehead describes a better program. She found that "sex education works best when it combines clear messages about behavior with strong moral and logistical support for the behavior sought." One example she cites is the *Postponing Sexual Involvement* program at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, which offers more than a "Just Say No" message. It reinforces the message by having adolescents practice the desired behavior and enlists the aid of older teenagers to teach younger teenagers how to resist sexual advances. Whitehead also found that "religiously observant teens" are less likely to experiment sexually, thus providing an opportunity for church-related programs to stem the tide of teenage pregnancy. The results of Whitehead's research are clear: abstinence is still the best form of sex education.

## **Is "Safe Sex" Really Safe?**

At the 1987 World Congress of Sexologists, Theresa Crenshaw asked the audience, "If you had the available partner of your dreams and knew that person carried HIV, how many of you would have sex depending on a condom for your protection?" When they were asked for a show of hands, none of the 800 members of the audience indicated that they would trust the condoms. If condoms do not eliminate the fear of HIV-infection for

sexologists and sex educators, why do we encourage the children of America to play STD Russian Roulette?

Are condoms a safe and effective way to reduce pregnancy and STDs? To listen to sex educators you would think so. Every day sex education classes throughout this country promote condoms as a means of safe sex or at least safer sex. But the research on condoms provides no such guarantee.

For example, Texas researcher Susan Weller writing in the 1993 issue of *Social Science Medicine*, evaluated all research published prior to July 1990 on condom effectiveness. She reported that condoms are only 87 percent effective in preventing pregnancy and 69 percent effective in reducing the risk of HIV infection. This translates into a 31 failure rate in preventing AIDS transmission. And according to a study in the 1992 *Family Planning Perspectives*, 15 percent of married couples who use condoms for birth control end up with an unplanned pregnancy within the first year.

So why has condom distribution become the centerpiece of the U.S. AIDS policy and the most frequently promoted aspect of comprehensive sex education? For many years, the answer to that question was an a priori commitment to condoms and a safe sex message over an abstinence message. But in recent years, sex educators and public health officials have been pointing to one study which appeared to vindicate the condom policy.

The study was presented at the Ninth International Conference on AIDS held in Berlin on June 9, 1993. The study involved 304 couples with one partner who was HIV positive. Of the 123 couples who used condoms with each act of sexual intercourse, not a single negative HIV partner became positive. So proponents of condom distribution thought they had scientific vindication for their views.

Unfortunately that is not the whole story. Condoms do appear to be effective in stopping the spread of AIDS when used



“correctly and consistently.” Most individuals, however, do not use them “correctly and consistently.” What happens to them? Well, it turns out that part of the study received much less attention. Of 122 couples who could not be taught to use condoms properly, 12 became HIV positive in both partners. Undoubtably over time, even more partners would contract AIDS.

How well does this study apply to the general population? I would argue the couples in the study group were quite dissimilar from the general population. For example, they knew the HIV status of their spouse and therefore had a vested interest in protecting themselves. They were responsible partners and in a committed monogamous relationship. In essence, their actions and attitudes differ dramatically from teenagers and single adults who do not know the HIV status of their partners, are often reckless, and have multiple sexual partners.

Contrary to popular belief, condoms are not as reliable as public health pronouncements might lead you to think. Abstinence is still the only safe sex.

## **Only Abstinence-Only Programs Really Work**

Less than a decade ago, an abstinence-only program was rare in the public schools. Today directive abstinence programs can be found in many school districts while battles are fought in other school districts for their inclusion or removal. While proponents of abstinence programs run for school board or influence existing school board members, groups like Planned Parenthood bring lawsuits against districts that use abstinence-based curricula arguing that they are inaccurate or incomplete. At least a dozen abstinence-based curricula are on the market, with the largest being *Sex Respect* (Bradley, Illinois) and *Teen-Aid* (Spokane, Washington).

The emergence of abstinence-only programs as an alternative to comprehensive sex education programs was due to both

popularity and politics. Parents concerned about the ineffectiveness of the safe sex message eagerly embraced the message of abstinence. And political funding helped spread the message and legitimize its educational value. The Adolescent Family Life Act enacted in 1981 by the Reagan Administration created Title XX and set aside \$2 million a year for the development and implementation of abstinence-based programs. Although the Clinton Administration later cut funding for abstinence programs, the earlier funding in the 1980s helped groups like Sex Respect and Teen-Aid launch abstinence programs in the schools.

Parents and children have embraced the abstinence message in significant numbers. One national poll by the University of Chicago found that 68 percent of adults surveyed said premarital sex among teenagers is "always wrong." A 1994 poll for USA Weekend asked more than 1200 teens and adults what they thought of "several high profile athletes [who] are saying in public that they have abstained from sex before marriage and are telling teens to do the same." Seventy-two percent of the teens and 78 percent of the adults said they agree with the pro-abstinence message.

Their enthusiasm for abstinence-only education is well founded. Even though the abstinence message has been criticized by some as naive or inadequate, there are good reasons to promote abstinence in schools and society.

1. Teenagers want to learn about abstinence. Contrary to the often repeated teenage claim, not "everyone's doing it." A 1992 study by the Centers for Disease Control found that 43 percent of teenagers (age 14 to 17) had engaged in sexual intercourse at least once. Put another way, the latest surveys suggest that a majority of teenagers are not doing it.

2. Abstinence prevents pregnancy. Proponents of abstinence-only programs argue that it will significantly lower the teenage pregnancy rate and cited lots of anecdotes and

statistics to make their case. For example, the San Marcos Junior High in San Marcos, California, adopted an abstinence-only program developed by Teen- Aid. The curriculum dropped the school's pregnancy rate from 147 to 20 within a two-year period. An abstinence-only program for girls in Washington, D.C., has seen only one of 400 girls become pregnant.

3. Abstinence prevents sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). After more than three decades, the sexual revolution has taken lots of prisoners. Before 1960 there were only two STDs that doctors were concerned about: syphilis and gonorrhea. Today, there are more than 20 significant STDs ranging from the relatively harmless to the fatal. Twelve million Americans are newly infected each year, and 63 percent of these new infections are in people less than 25 years old. Eighty percent of those infected with an STD have absolutely no symptoms.

The conclusion is simple: abstinence is the only truly safe sex.

©1995 Probe Ministries.

---

## Safe Sex?

Starlight dances off the sparkling water as the waves gently lap the shore. A cool breeze brushes across your face as you stroll hand in hand along the moonlit beach.

The party was getting crowded and the two of you decided to take a walk on the deserted waterfront. You've only known each other a short while but things seem so right. You laugh together and sense a longing to know this person in a deeper

way.

You pause and tenderly gaze into each other's eyes, blood rushing throughout your body as your heart beats faster. Soon you are in each other's arms kissing softly at first, then fervently. You tug at each other's clothes and both kneel to the sand. The condom comes on. You join in passionate lovemaking, then relax, hearing only the gentle waves and each other's breathing, grateful that you are comfortable in mutual care and that all is safe.

Or is it?

Was the condom you used enough to keep you safe? Aside from the emotional and psychological implications of your romantic encounter, realize that the condom is not a 100% guarantee of safety against AIDS for the same reason the condom is not a 100% guarantee of safety against pregnancy. There's always the possibility of human or mechanical error. Condoms can slip and break. They also can leak. Even the experts aren't certain condoms can guarantee against sexual transmission of the HIV virus.

Theresa Crenshaw, M.D., has been a member of the President's Commission on HIV. She is past president of the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Therapists<sup>[1]</sup> and once asked this question to 500 marriage and family therapists in Chicago: "How many of you recommend condoms for AIDS protection?"

A majority of the hands went up. Then she asked how many in the room would have sex with an AIDS infected partner using a condom. Not one hand went up.

These were marriage and family therapists, the "experts" who advise others. Dr. Crenshaw admonished them that, "It is irresponsible to give students, clients, patients advice that you would not live by yourself because they may die by it."<sup>[2]</sup> What does this tell you about the confidence experts have in

condoms to protect persons against AIDS?

Not too long ago herpes caught the public's attention. Now, of course, the focus is on AIDS. As with herpes, it is very difficult to be absolutely certain that your partner in premarital sex does not have AIDS and there is no known cure. But, of course, there's a big difference between herpes and AIDS: herpes will make you sick; AIDS will kill you.

## Assessing the Risk

After I had made these remarks at a university in California, one young man asked me to explain what I meant when I said that condoms aren't safe. Consider this:

Condoms have an 85% (annual) success rate in protecting against pregnancy. That's 15% a failure rate.[\[3\]](#) But remember, a women can get pregnant only about six days per month.[\[4\]](#) HIV can infect a person 31 days per month.

Latex rubber, from which latex gloves and condoms are made, has tiny, naturally occurring voids or capillaries measuring on the order of one micron in diameter. Pores or holes five microns in diameter have been detected in cross sections of latex gloves.[\[5\]](#) ( A micron is one thousandth of a millimeter.) Latex condoms will generally block the human sperm, which is much larger than the HIV virus. (A human sperm is about 60 microns long and three to five microns in diameter at the head.[\[6\]](#) But the HIV virus is only 0.1 micron in diameter.[\[7\]](#) A five- micron hole is 50 times larger than the HIV virus. A one-micron hole is 10 times larger. The virus can easily fit through. It's kind of like running a football play with no defense on the field to stop you or shooting a soccer ball into an open goal. The hole is huge!

In other words, many of the tiny pores in the latex condom are large enough to pass the HIV virus (that causes AIDS) in its fluid medium.

One study focused on married couples in which one partner was HIV positive. When couples used condoms for protection, after one and one-half years, 17% of the healthy partners had become infected.[{8}](#) That's about one in six, the same odds as Russian roulette.

One U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) study tested condoms in the laboratory for leakage of HIV-sized particles. Almost 33% leaked.[{9}](#) One in three.

One analysis of 11 studies on condom effectiveness found that condoms had a 31% estimated failure rate in protecting against HIV transmission. In other words, as the report stated, "These results indicate that exposed condom users will be about a third as likely to become infected as exposed individuals practicing "unprotected" sex.... The public at large may not understand the difference between "condoms may reduce risk of" and "condoms will prevent" HIV transmission. It is a disservice to encourage the belief that condoms will prevent sexual transmission of HIV. Condoms will not eliminate risk of sexual transmission and, in fact, may only lower risk somewhat."[{10}](#) Burlington County, New Jersey, banned condom distribution at its own county AIDS counseling center. Officials feared the legal liabilities if people contracted AIDS or died after using the condoms the county distributed. They were afraid the county would be held legally responsible for the deaths. [{11}](#)

## Over Easy Please

Latex condoms are sensitive to heat, cold, light, and pressure. The FDA recommends they be stored in "a cool, dry place, out of direct sunlight, perhaps in a drawer or closet."[{12}](#) Yet they are often shipped in metal truck trailers without climate control. In winter the trailers are like freezers. In summer they're like ovens. Some have reached 185F (85C) inside. A worker once fried eggs in a skillet next to the condoms, using the heat that had accumulated inside the

trailer.[{13}](#) Are you thinking of entrusting your life to this little piece of rubber?

Is the condom safe? Is it safer? Safer than what?

Look at it this way: If you decide to drive the wrong way down a divided highway, is it safer if you use a seat belt?[{14}](#) You wouldn't call the process "safe." To call it "safer" completely misses the point. It's still a very risky and a very foolish thing to do.

Remember that a national study found that condoms have a 15% failure rate with pregnancy. Perhaps you have flown in airplanes. Suppose only 15 crashes occurred for every 100 plane flights. Would you say airline travel was safe? Safer?[{15}](#) Would you still fly?

AIDS expert Dr. Redfield of the Walter Reed Hospital put it like this at an AIDS briefing in Washington, DC: If my teenage son realizes it's foolish to drink a fifth of bourbon before he drives to the party, do I tell him to go ahead and drink a six pack of beer first, instead? [{16}](#) According to Dr. Redfield, when you're considering AIDS, "Condoms aren't safe; they're dangerous."[{17}](#)

## The Test

You might say, "We've both been tested for AIDS. Neither of us has it."

The time span between HIV infection and detection of HIV antibodies has been found to be anywhere from three to six months, sometimes longer. [{18}](#) In rare cases it can even take years for signs of the virus to appear.[{19}](#) Dr. Redfield says that after he was exposed to HIV in his work, he waited 14 months before having sex with his wife.[{20}](#) Suppose you meet someone who says, "I had an HIV test a year ago; it was negative. I haven't had sex for a year. I just had another test; it was negative. I'm safe." You see the test results in

writing. Is it safe to sleep with that person?

We all know how hormones can influence honesty. It comes down to this: Are they telling the truth about not being sexually active in the interim? Is there even a chance that person might twist the truth even slightly in order to get into bed with you? Even with the tests, it all boils down to trust. That's why I say, "It's very difficult to be absolutely certain that your partner in premarital sex does not have AIDS."

"Condom sense" is very, very risky. Common sense says, "If you want to be safe, wait."

## **The Total You**

There are many other benefits to waiting (or to stopping until marriage, if you're a sexually active single). By "waiting," I mean reserving sex for marriage.

Sex involves your total personalitybody, mind, and spirit. Besides being physically risky, premarital sex can hurt you emotionally and relationally. While you are single, sex can breed insecurity ("Am I the only one they've slept with? Have there been, or will there be, others?"). It can generate performance fears that can dampen sexual response. (If you fear even slightly that your acceptance by your partner hinges on your sexual performance, that fear can hamper your performance.) It can cloud the issue, confusing you into mistaking sexually charged sensations for genuine love.

After you marry, you might wonder, "If they slept with me before we married, how do I know that they won't sleep with someone else now that we are married?" (Marital faithfulness in the age of AIDS is, of course, important both emotionally and physically.) When disagreements crop up with your mate, will you be tempted to ask yourself, "Did we just marry on a wave of passion?" Don't forget flashbacks, those mental images



of previous sexual encounters that have a nasty way of creeping back into your mind during arousal. Who wants to be thinking of previous sex partners while making love with their spouse? Worse, who wants their spouse to be thinking of previous sex partners?

Waiting until marriage can help you both have the confidence, security, trust, and self respect that a solid, intimate relationship needs. "I really like what you said about waiting," said a recently married young woman after a lecture at Sydney University in Australia. "My fianc and I had to make the decision and we decided to wait." (Each had been sexually active in other previous relationships.) "With all the other tensions, decisions, and stress of engagement, sex would have been just another worry. Waiting 'till our marriage before we had sex was the best decision we ever made."[\[21\]](#)

## **Why Is It Hard to Wait?**

Apart from the obvious physical power of one's sex drive, there are other equally powerful emotional factors that can make it difficult to wait. A longing to be close to someone or a yearning to express love can generate intense desires for physical intimacy. Many singles today want to wait but lack the inner strength or self-esteem They want to be loved as we all do and may fear losing love if they postpone sex. They are frustrated when unable to control their sexual drives or when relationships prove unfulfilling.

Often sex brings an emptiness rather than the wholeness people seek through it. As one TV producer told me, "Frankly, I think the sexual revolution has backfired in our faces. It's degrading to be treated like a piece of meat." The previous night her lover had justified his decision to sleep around by telling her, "There's plenty of me for everyone." What I suspect he meant was, "There's plenty of everyone for me." She felt betrayed and alone.

I explained to her and to her TV audience that sexuality also involves the spiritual. One wise spiritual teacher understood our loneliness and longings for love. He recognized human emotional needs for esteem, acceptance, and wholeness and offered a plan to meet them. His plan has helped people to become whole “new creatures,”[{22}](#) that is, “brand new person(s) inside.”[{23}](#) He taught that we can be accepted just as we are, even with our faults.[{24}](#) We can enjoy the self-esteem that comes from knowing who we are and that our lives can count for something significant.[{25}](#) He promised unconditional love to all who ask.[{26}](#) Once we know we’re loved and accepted, we can have greater security to be vulnerable in relationships and new inner strength to make wise choices for safe living.[{27}](#) This teacher said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”[{28}](#) “My peace I give to you,” He explained. “Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”[{29}](#) Millions attest to the safety and security He can provide in relationships. His name, of course, is Jesus of Nazareth. I placed my faith in Him personally my freshman year at Duke, Two Lambda Chi influenced me in that direction. Though I was skeptical at first, it “has made all the difference,” as Robert Frost would say.

Sex and spirituality are, of course, quite controversial topics. I realize that our International Fraternity contains a wide spectrum of beliefs on these issues. I offer these perspectives not to preach but to stimulate healthy thinking.

Diversity was one of the things that attracted me to our chapter at Duke. Politically, philosophically, and spiritually we ran the gamut. There were liberals, conservatives, Christians, Jews, atheists, and agnostics. We tried to respect one another and learn from each other even when we differed on issues like these. That is the spirit in which I offer these remarks; may I encourage you to consider them in the same way.

To summarize, the only truly safe sex is the lovemaking that

occurs in a faithful monogamous relationship where both partners are HIV negative. Condoms may reduce the risk of HIV transmission somewhat, but they can't guarantee prevention. Please, don't entrust your life to something as risky as a condom.

## Notes

1. Richard W. Smith, "Parent's HIV Prevention Information Package:' n.d., p. 48. (Smith is "a public health professional with more than 20 years of experience in the epidemiology of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS prevention and control." He resides in Trenton, NJ.)
2. Theresa Crenshaw, M.D., "The Psychology of AIDS Prevention: Implementing Effective Strategies, "Transcript: National Conference on HIV, Washington, DC, November 1987, p. 4.1
3. Elise F. Jones and Jacqueline Darroch Forrest, "Contraceptive Failure Rates Based on the 1988 NSFG (National Survey of Family I Growth):' *Family Planning Perspectives* 24:1 (January/February 1992), pp. 12, 18. (Jones is senior research associate and Forrest is vice president for research for Planned Parenthood's Alan Guttmacher Institute.) See also R. Gordon, *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* (1989), 15, pp. 5-30; in David G. Collart is affiliated with the Emory University Department of Biology. His doctorate is from the University of Florida in biochemistry and molecular biology.)
4. Richard W. Smith, "Is the Condom Really Safe Sex?", n.d., p. I; see also Collart, loc. cit.
5. C.M. Roland, "Barrier Performance of Latex Rubber," *Rubber World: The Technical Service Magazine for Rubber Industry*, 208:3, June 1993, pp. 1 518; and personal conversation, September 24, 1993. (Roland, who holds a Ph.D., is editor of *Rubber Chemistry and Technology* and also head of the Polymer Properties Section, Navel Research Laboratory, Washington, DC.)
6. William R. Hensyl, ed., *Stedman's Medical Dictionary*, 25th Ed. (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1990), p. 1445; Macdonald

- Critchley, ed., *Butterworth's Medical Dictionary*, 2nd Ed. (Boston: Butterworth & Co., 1978), p. 1577; Marcia F. Goldsmith, "Sex in the Age of AIDS Calls for Common Sense and 'Condom Sense,'" *JAMA* (Journal of the American Medical Association) 257:17, May 1, 1987, p. 2262.
7. James Kettering, Ph.D., "Efficacy of Thermoplastic Elastometers and Latex Condoms as Viral Barriers," *Contraception*, vol. 47, June 1993, pp. 563-564; and personal conversation, September 20, 1993. (Kettering is with the Department of Microbiology, Loma Linda University School of Medicine, Loma Linda, CA.)
8. Margaret A. Fischl, et al, "Heterosexual Transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV): Relationship of Sexual Practices to Seroconversion," III International Conference on AIDS, June 15, 1987, Abstracts Volume, p. 178; in "In Defense of a Little Virginity, Focus on the Family," *USA Today*, April 14, 1992, 11A.
9. Ronald F. Carey, Ph.D., et al, "Effectiveness of Latex Condoms as a Barrier to Human Immunodeficiency Virus-sized Particles Under conditions of Simulated Use," *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* 19:4 (July-August 1992), pp. 230-234. (Carey works for the US Food and Drug Administration.)
10. Susan C. Weller, "A Meta-Analysis of Condom Effectiveness in Reducing Sexually Transmitted HIV," *Soc Sci Med* 36:12 (1993), pp. 1635-1644, emphasis hers. (Weller is with the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health, University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston. TX. *Soc Sci Med* is published in Great Britain.)
11. Douglas A. Campbell, "Burlco Stops Distribution of Condoms," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 11, 1991. IB, 4B.
12. Condoms and Sexually Transmitted Diseases .... Especially AIDS," *HHS Publication FDA* (90-4239), in Smith, op. cit., P. 2.
13. William B. Vesey, "Condom Failure," *HLI Reports* (the newsletter of Human Life International, Gaithersburg, MD) 9:7 (July 1991); see also Collart, op. cit., p. 3.
14. "Condoms Fail," *Staying Current* (the newsletter of AIDS

Information Ministries), iv: III (May-June 1992), p. 4.

15. George V. Corwell, "When simple solutions yield deadly results," *Trenton Times* (NJ), February 5, 1993. (Corwell is associate director for education, New Jersey Catholic Conference, Trenton, NJ.)

16. Robert Redfield, Jr., M.D., "Why Wait? Capital Briefing; AIDS: What You're Not Hearing Could Kill Your Youth," oral presentation), Washington, DC, May 8, 1992. (Dr. Redfield is chief of the Department of Retroviral Research at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.)

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid. Redfield says that some people with hypogammaglobulinemia do not make antibodies, hence it takes years for them to show signs of HIV infection. (Current HIV tests detect not the virus itself, but rather the antibodies that the human body manufactures to attempt to fight the virus.)

20. Ibid.

21. Space limits extensive development here of the practical, psychological, and emotional advantages of waiting. These have been more adequately discussed in Rusty Wright and Linda Raney Wright, *How to Unlock the Secrets of Love, Sex, and Marriage*, Barbour Books, 1981; Rusty Wright, "Dynamic Sex: Beyond Technique and Experience," Campus Crusade for Christ, 1977.

22. 2 Corinthians 5:17, New American Standard Bible.

23. 2 Corinthians, 5:17, Living Bible.

24. Luke 15:10-32.

25. John 1:12; II Corinthians 5:20.

26. John 3:16; 13:34-35; 17:20, 23, 26; I John 4:7-21.

27. Acts I :8; Ephesians 5: 18; Galatians 5: 16-24; I Corinthians 6:18-20.

28. John 8:32.

29. John 14:27, NIV.

Reprinted with permission of *Cross and Crescent* of Lambda Chi Alpha International Fraternity, of which the author is a

member. He offers special thanks to Richard Smith, John Harris, and Josh McDowell for valuable research provided for this project.

This article appeared in *Connecticut Medicine* 59:5, May 1995.

©1994 Rusty Wright. All rights reserved. Printed by permission.

---

## Safe Sex and the Facts – A Christian Perspective

*Dr. Ray Bohlin provides a look at the many problems surrounding the idea of safe sex from a Christian, biblical worldview perspective as well as a scientific perspective. He provides a sound argument for supporting the Christian view of sex being reserved for the marriage relationship.*



*This article is also available in [Spanish](#).*

At age 16 John had sex with Andrea. Just one time. He enjoyed the experience but felt guilty and decided the risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and pregnancy were just too great. He did not have sex again until nine years later when he married Cindy, who was a virgin. Three months after their wedding Cindy began having painful symptoms. Unknowingly John, who had never had any symptoms of disease, had brought two STDs into his marriage. But John and Cindy were lucky; they both responded to treatment and are healthy today. Many others, however, are not so fortunate. Today STDs are at unprecedented and epidemic proportions. Thirty years of the sexual revolution is paying an ugly dividend, and those most at risk are teenagers. This is true partially because

teenagers are more sexually active than ever before, but also because teenage girls are more susceptible to STDs than males or adult females.

While a few STDs can be transmitted apart from sex acts, all are transmissible by the exchange of bodily fluids during intimate sexual contact. I want to discuss the severity of the problem as well as what must be done if we are to save a majority of the next generation from the shame, infertility, and sometimes death, that may result from STDs.

If you are not aware of some of the following statistics, then prepare to fasten your seat belt because what I have to report is not pretty. The information I am about to share is from data gathered by the Medical Institute for Sexual Health in Austin, Texas.(1) All of these statistics are readily available from reputable medical and scientific journals.

Today, there are approximately 25 STDs. A few can be fatal. Some are relatively harmless, but all are humiliating. Many women are living in fear of what their future may hold as a result of STD infection. It is estimated that 1 in 5 Americans between the ages of 15 and 55 are currently infected with one or more viral STDs, and 12 million Americans are newly infected each year. That's nearly 5% of the entire population of the U.S.! Of these new infections, 63% involve people less than 25 years old.

This epidemic is a recent phenomenon. Some young people have parents who may have had multiple sexual part-ners with relative impunity and conclude that they too are safe from disease. However, most of these diseases were not around 20 to 30 years ago. Prior to 1960, there were only two prevalent sexually transmitted diseases: syphilis and gonorrhea. Both were easily treatable with antibiotics.

In the sixties and seventies this relatively stable situation began to change. For example, in 1976, chlamydia first

appeared in increasing numbers in the U.S. Chlamydia, particularly dangerous to women, is now the most common bacterial STD in the country. In 1981, human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV), the virus which causes AIDS, was identified. By early 1993, between 1 and 2 million Americans were infected with HIV or AIDS, over 12 million were infected worldwide, and over 160,000 had died in the U.S. alone. Then herpes was added to the mix. This STD now infects 30 million people.

In 1985, human papilloma virus (HPV) began a dramatic increase. This virus can result in venereal warts and will often lead to deadly cancers.

By 1990, penicillin-resistant strains of gonorrhea were present in all fifty states, and by 1992 syphilis was at a 40-year high. As of 1993, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which is almost always caused by gonorrhea or chlamydia, was affecting 1 million new women each year. This includes 16,000 to 20,000 teenagers. This infection can result in pelvic pain and infertility and is the leading cause of hospitalization for women between the ages of 15 and 55, apart from pregnancy.

Pelvic inflammatory disease can result in scarred fallopian tubes which block passage of a fertilized egg. The fertilized egg, therefore, cannot pass on to the uterus, and the growing embryo will cause the tube to rupture. From 1960 to 1990 there was a 400% increase in tubal pregnancies, most of which were caused by STDs. Making matters even worse is the fact that 80% of those infected with an STD don't know it and will unwittingly infect their next sexual partner.

## **The Medical Facts of STDs**

Syphilis is a terrible infection. In its first stage, the infected individual may be lulled into thinking there is little wrong since the small sore will disappear in 2 to 8 weeks. The second and third stages are progressively worse and can eventually lead to brain, heart, and blood vessel damage



if not diagnosed and treated. The saddest part is that syphilis is 100% curable with penicillin, yet there is now more syphilis than in the late 1940s, and it is spreading rapidly.

Chlamydia, a disease which only became common in the mid-1980s, infects 20 to 40% of some sexually active groups including teenagers. In men, chlamydia can cause infertile sperm, a condition reversible with antibiotics. In women, however, the infection is devastating. An acute chlamydia infection in women will result in pain, fever, and damage to female organs. A silent infection can damage a woman's fallopian tubes without her ever knowing it. A single episode of chlamydia PID can result in a 25% chance of infertility. With a second infection, the chance of infertility rises to 50%. This is double the risk of gonorrhea.

Treatment with antibiotics is not always successful. One study reported that 18% showed a recurrence of infection within 3 weeks. As many as 14% of teenagers do not respond to treatment, and ultimately require a hysterectomy. It is an overwhelming burden for an 18- or 19-year-old girl to have to face the fact that she will never be able to bear a single child.

The human papilloma virus (HPV) is an extremely common STD. One study reported that at the University of California, Berkeley, 46% of the sexually active coeds were infected with HPV. Another study reported that 38% of the sexually active females between the ages of 13 and 21 were infected.

HPV is the major cause of venereal warts which are extremely difficult to treat and may require expensive procedures such as laser surgery. HPV can result in pre-cancer or cancer of the genitalia. By causing cancer of the cervix, this virus is presently killing more women in this country than AIDS, or over 4,600 women in 1991. HPV can also result in painful intercourse for years after infection even though other

visible signs of disease have disappeared.

And of course there is the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The first few cases of AIDS were only discovered in 1981; now, in the U.S. alone, there are between 1 and 2 million infected with this disease. As far as we know, all of these people will die in the next ten to fifteen years. As of early 1993, approximately 160,000 had already died.

In 1991 a non-random study at the University of Texas at Austin showed that 1 in 100 students who had blood drawn for any reason at the university health center was HIV infected.

While the progress of the disease is slow for many people, all who have it will be infected for the rest of their lives. There is no cure, and many researchers are beginning to despair of ever coming up with a cure or even a vaccine (as was eventually done with polio). In 1992, 1 in 75 men was infected with HIV and 1 in 700 women. But the number of women with AIDS is growing. In the early years of the epidemic less than 2% of the AIDS cases were women. Now the percentage is 12%.

## **Teenagers Face Greater Risks from STDs**

One of the statistics I have mentioned is that teenagers are particularly susceptible to STDs. This fact is alarming since more teens are sexually active today than ever before. An entire generation is at risk, and the saddest part about it is that most of them are unaware of the dangers they face. Teenagers must be given the correct information to help them realize that saving themselves sexually until marriage is the only sure way to stay healthy.

The medical reasons for teens' high susceptibility to STDs relates specifically to females. The cervix of a teen-age girl has a lining (ectropion) which produces mucus that is a great

growth medium for viruses and bacteria. As a girl reaches her 20s or has a baby, this lining is replaced with a tougher, more resistant lining. Also during the first two years of menstruation, 50% of the periods occur without ovulation. This will produce a more liquid mucus which also grows bacteria and viruses very well. A 15-year-old girl has a 1-in-8 chance of developing pelvic inflammatory disease simply by having sex, whereas a 24-year-old woman has only a 1-in-80 chance in the same situation.

Teenagers do not always respond to antibiotic treatment for pelvic inflammatory disease, and occasionally such teenage girls require a hysterectomy. Infertility is an increasing problem in our society. It is estimated that one-fourth to one-third of all female infertility in marriage is a result of STDs.

Teenagers are also more susceptible to human papilloma virus, HPV. Rates of HPV infection in teenagers can be as high as 40%, whereas in the adult population, the rate is less than 15%. Teenagers are also more likely to develop precancerous growths as a result of HPV infection than adults. These precancerous growths in teenagers are also more likely to develop into invasive cancer than in adults.

Apart from the increased risk from STDs in teens, teen-age pregnancy is also at unprecedented levels. In 1985 there were over 1 million teen-age pregnancies; 400,000 of these ended in abortion. Abortion is not a healthy procedure for anyone to undergo, but this is especially true for a teenager. Not getting pregnant to begin with is far better. Oral contraceptives are not as effective with teenagers, mainly because teens are more apt to forget to take the pill. Over a one-year period, as many as 9 to 18% of teenage girls using oral contraceptives become pregnant.

Finally, when teenagers start having sex earlier in life, they are much more likely to have multiple sexual partners, a

behavior that puts them at greater risk for STD. When teenagers become sexually active before they are 18 years of age, 75% of them will have more than 2 partners and 45% of them will have 4 or more partners. If sexual activity begins after the 19th birthday, only 20% will have 2 or more partners and only 1% will have 4 or more partners. (These statistics were reported by the Centers for Disease Control after interviewing people in their 20s.)

## **Is Safe Sex Really the Answer?**

I must now take a hard look at the message of safe sex which is being taught to teens at school and through the media.

Some people believe that if teens can be taught how to use contraception and condoms effectively, rates of pregnancy and STD infection will be reduced dramatically. But common sense and statistics tell us otherwise. At Rutgers University, the rates of infection of students with STD varied little with the form of contraception used. For example, 35 to 44% of the sexually active students were infected with one or more STDs whether they used no contraceptive, oral contraceptive, the diaphragm, or condoms. It is significant to note that condoms, the hero of the safe sex message, provided virtually no protection from STDs.

Will condoms prevent HIV infection, the virus that causes AIDS? While it is better than nothing, the bottom line is that condoms cannot be trusted. A study from Florida looked at couples in which one partner was HIV positive and the other was negative. They used condoms as protection during intercourse. After 18 months, 17% of the previously uninfected partners were HIV positive. That is a one-in-six chance, the same as in Russian roulette.

Condoms do not even provide 100% protection for the purpose for which they were designed: prevention of pregnancy. One study from the School of Medicine Family Planning Clinic at

the University of Pennsylvania reported that 25% of patients using condoms as birth control conceived over a one-year period. Other studies indicate that the rate of accidental pregnancy from condom-protected intercourse is around 15% with married couples and 36% for unmarried couples.

Condoms are inherently untrustworthy. The FDA allows as many as one in 250 to be defective. Condoms are often stored and shipped at unsafe temperatures which weakens the integrity of the latex rubber causing breaks and ruptures. Condoms will break 8% of the time and slip off 7% of the time. There are just so many pitfalls in condom use that you just can't expect immature teenagers to use them properly. And even if they do, they are still at risk.

Studies are beginning to show that school-based sex education that includes condom use as the central message, does not work. A study in a major pediatric journal concluded that the available evidence indicates that there is little or no effect from school-based sex- education on sexual activity, contraception, or teenage pregnancy.(2) This study evaluated programs that emphasized condoms. In addition, programs that emphasize condoms tend to give a false sense of security to sexually active students and make those students who are not having sex feel abnormal.

The list of damages from unmarried adolescent sexual activity is long indeed. Apart from the threat to physical health and fertility, there is damage to family relationships, self-confidence and emotional health, spiritual health, and future economic opportunities due to unplanned pregnancy. Condom-based sex- education does not work.

## **Saving Sex for Marriage is the Common Sense Solution.**

The epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases is running rampant in this country and around the world. Diseases such as

chlamydia, human papilloma virus, herpes, hepatitis B, trichomonas, pelvic inflammatory disease, and AIDS have joined syphilis and gonorrhea in just the last 30 years. There is no question that the fruits of the sexual revolution have been devastating. I have also shown how our teen-agers are at a greater risk for sexually transmitted diseases than are adults and that sex-education based on condom use is ineffective and misleading. There is only one message that offers health, hope, and joy to today's teenagers. We need to teach single people to save intercourse for marriage.

Sex is a wonderful gift, but if uncontrolled, it has a great capacity for evil as well as good. Our bodies were not made to have multiple sex partners. Almost all risk of STD and out-of-wedlock pregnancy can be avoided by saving intercourse for marriage. And it can be done.

Statistics show clearly that in schools that teach a sex education program that emphasizes saving intercourse for marriage, the teen pregnancy rate drops dramatically in as little as one year. In San Marcos, California, a high school used a federally funded program ("Teen Aid") which emphasizes saving intercourse until marriage. Before using the program there were 147 pregnancies out of 600 girls. Within two years, the number of pregnancies plummeted to 20 out of 600 girls.(3) As of 1992, San Marcos was still using this program and was still satisfied with it. In Jessup Georgia, upon instituting the "Sex Respect" program, the number of pregnancies out of 340 female students dropped from 17 to 13 to 11 to 3 in successive years.

Delaying intercourse until teens are older is not a naive proposal. Over 50% of the females and 40% of the males between 15 and 19 have not had intercourse. They are living proof that teens can control their sexual desires. Of those who had at least one sexual experience, 20% had sex in the past but were not currently sexually active. Therefore, a minority of students are sexually active.

Condom-based sex-education programs basically teach teen-agers that they cannot control their sexual desires, and that they must use condoms to protect themselves. It is not a big leap from people being unable to control their sexual desires to being unable to control their hate, greed, anger, and prejudice. This is not the right message for our teenagers!

Teenagers are willing to discipline themselves for things they want and desire and are convinced are beneficial. Girls get up early for drill team practice. Boys train in the off-season with weights to get stronger for athletic competition. Our teens can be disciplined in their sexual lives if they have the right information to make logical choices.

Saving sex for marriage is the common sense solution. In fact, it is the only solution. We don't hesitate to tell our kids not to use drugs or marijuana, and most do not. We tell our kids it's unhealthy to smoke, and most do not.

It is normal and healthy not to have sex until marriage. STDs are so common that it is not an exaggeration to say that most people who regularly have sex outside of marriage will contract a sexually transmitted disease. Our sexuality should blossom within the confines of a mutually faithful monogamous relationship. We need to reeducate our kids not just in what is healthy, but in what is right.

## **Notes**

1. Medical Institute for Sexual Health, P.O. Box 4919, Austin, TX 78765.
2. I.W. Stout, et al., *Pediatrics*, 1989, 83:376-79.
3. Joe S. McIlhaney, Jr., *Safe Sex* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1991), p. 86.

---

# The Epidemic of Sexually Transmitted Diseases – A Christian Solution

Written by Dr. Ray Bohlin

*Dr. Bohlin looks at data describing the huge increase in STDs in American, considers the causes of this increase, and proposes a Christian solution firmly rooted in a biblical worldview.*

## An STD Epidemic

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (or STDs) are at unprecedented and epidemic proportions. Thirty years of the sexual revolution is paying an ugly dividend. While a few STDs can be transmitted apart from sex acts, all are transmissible by the exchange of bodily fluids during intimate sexual contact. I want to discuss the severity of the problem as well as what must be done if we are to save a majority of the next generation from the shame, infertility, and sometimes death, that may result from STDs.

The information I am about to share is from data gathered by the Medical Institute for Sexual Health out of Austin, Texas.(1) All of these statistics are readily available from reputable medical and scientific journals.

Today, there are approximately 25 STDs. A few can be fatal. Many women are living in fear of what their future may hold as a result of STD infection. It is estimated that 1 in 5 Americans between the ages of 15 and 55 are currently infected with one or more STDs, and 12 million Americans are newly



infected each year. That's nearly 5% of the entire population of the U.S. Of these new infections, 63% are in people less than 25 years old.

This epidemic is a recent phenomenon. Some young people have parents who may have had multiple sexual partners with relative impunity. They may conclude that they too are safe from disease. However, most of these diseases were not around 20 to 30 years ago. Prior to 1960, there were only two significant sexually transmitted diseases: syphilis and gonorrhea. Both were easily treatable with antibiotics. In the sixties and seventies this relatively stable situation began to change. For example, in 1976, chlamydia first appeared in increasing numbers in the United States. Chlamydia, particularly dangerous to women, is now the most common STD in the country. Then in 1981, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus which causes AIDS, was identified. By early 1993, between 1 and 2 million Americans were infected with AIDS, over 12 million were infected worldwide, and over 160,000 had died in the U.S. alone. Over 10% of the total U.S. population, 30 million people, are infected with herpes.

In 1985, human papilloma virus (HPV), began to increase. This virus will result in venereal warts and will often lead to deadly cancers. In 1990, penicillin resistant-strains of gonorrhea were present in all fifty states.

By 1992 syphilis was at a 40-year high. As of 1993, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which is almost always caused by gonorrhea or chlamydia, was affecting 1 million new women each year. This includes 16,000 to 20,000 teenagers. This complication causes pelvic pain and infertility and is the leading cause of hospitalization for women, apart from pregnancy, during the childbearing years.

Pelvic inflammatory disease can result in scarred fallopian tubes which block the passage of a fertilized egg. The fertilized egg, therefore, cannot pass on to the uterus and

the growing embryo will cause the tube to rupture. By 1990, there was a 400% increase in tubal pregnancies, most of which were caused by STDs. Even worse is the fact that 80% of those infected with an STD don't know it and will unwittingly infect their next sexual partner.

## **The Medical Facts of STDs**

Syphilis is a terrible infection. In its first stage, the infected individual may be lulled into thinking there is little wrong since the small sore will disappear in 2 to 8 weeks. The second and third stages are progressively worse and can eventually lead to brain, heart, and blood vessel damage if not diagnosed and treated. The saddest part is that syphilis is 100% curable with penicillin, yet there is now more syphilis than since the late 1940s, and it is spreading rapidly.

Chlamydia, a disease which only became common in the mid-1970s, infects 20 to 40% of some sexually active groups including teenagers. In men, chlamydia is usually less serious; with females, however, the infection can be devastating. An acute chlamydia infection in women will result in pain, fever, and damage to female organs. A silent infection can damage a woman's fallopian tubes without her ever knowing it. A single chlamydia infection can result in a 25% chance of infertility. With a second infection, the chance of infertility rises to 50%. This is double the risk of gonorrhea.

The human papilloma virus, or HPV, is an extremely common STD. One study reported that at the University of California, Berkeley, 46% of the sexually active coeds were infected with HPV. Another study reported that 38% of the sexually active females between the ages of 13 and 21 were infected. HPV is the major cause of venereal warts; it can be an extremely difficult problem to treat and may require expensive procedures such as laser surgery.

The human papilloma virus can result in precancer or cancer of the genitalia. By causing cancer of the cervix, this virus is killing more women in this country than AIDS, or over 4,600 women in 1991. HPV can also result in painful intercourse for years after infection even though other visible signs of disease have disappeared.

And of course there is the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The first few cases of AIDS were only discovered in 1981; now, in the U.S. alone, there are between 1 and 2 million infected with this disease. As far as we know, all of these people will die in the next ten years. As of early 1993, 160,000 had already died.

A 1991 study at the University of Texas at Austin showed that 1 in 100 students who had blood drawn for any reason at the university health center was HIV infected. While the progress of the disease is slow for many people, all who have the virus will be infected for the rest of their life. There is no cure, and many researchers are beginning to despair of ever coming up with a cure or even a vaccine (as was eventually done with polio). In 1992, 1 in 75 men was infected with HIV and 1 in 700 women. But the number of women with AIDS is growing. In the early years of the epidemic less than 2% of the AIDS cases were women. Now the percentage is 12%.

## **Teenagers Face a Greater Risk from STDs**

Teenagers are particularly susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases or STDs. This fact is alarming since more teens are sexually active today than ever before. An entire generation is at risk and the saddest part about it is that most of them are unaware of the dangers they face. Our teenagers must be given the correct information to help them realize that saving themselves sexually until marriage is the only way to stay healthy.

The medical reasons for teens' high susceptibility to STDs

specifically relates to females. The cervix of a teenage girl has a lining which produces mucus that is a great growth medium for viruses and bacteria. As a girl reaches her 20s or has a baby, this lining is replaced with a tougher, more resistant lining. Also during the first two years of menstruation, 50% of the periods occur without ovulation. This will produce a more liquid mucus which also grows bacteria and viruses very well. A 15-year-old girl has a 1-in-8 chance of developing pelvic inflammatory disease simply by having sex, whereas a 24-year-old woman has only a 1-in-80 chance in that situation.

Teenagers do not always respond to antibiotic treatment for pelvic inflammatory disease, and occasionally such teenage girls require a hysterectomy. Teenage infertility is also an increasing problem. In 1965, only 3.6% of the married couples between ages 20 and 24 were infertile; by 1982, that figure had nearly tripled to 10.6%. The infertility rate is surely higher than that now with the alarming spread of chlamydia.

Teenagers are also more susceptible to human papilloma virus, HPV. Rates of HPV infection in teenagers can be as high as 40%, whereas in the adult population, the rate is less than 15%. Teenagers are also more likely than adults to develop precancerous growths as a result of HPV infection, and they are more likely to develop pelvic inflammatory disease.

Apart from the increased risk from STDs in teens, teenage pregnancy is also at unprecedented levels, over 1 million pregnancies, and 400,000 abortions in 1985. Abortion is not a healthy procedure for anyone to undergo, especially a teenager. It is far better to have not gotten pregnant. Oral contraceptives are not as effective with teenagers, mainly because teens are more apt to forget to take the pill. Over a one-year period, as many as 9 to 18% of teenage girls using oral contraceptives become pregnant.

Our teenagers are at great risk. In a society that has

abandoned God's design for healthy meaningful sexual expression within marriage, our children need to be told the truth about the dangers of STDs.

## **Is "Safe Sex" Really the Answer?**

I must now take a hard look at the message of "safe sex" which is being taught to teens at school and through the media across the country.

Some people believe that if teens can be taught how to use contraception and condoms effectively, that rates of pregnancy and STD infection will be reduced dramatically. But the statistics and common sense tell us otherwise. At Rutgers University, the rates of infection of students with STD varied little with the form of contraception used. For example, 35 to 44% of the sexually active students were infected with one or more STDs whether they used no contraceptive, oral contraceptive, the diaphragm, or condoms. It is significant to note that condoms, the hero of the "safe sex" message, provided virtually no protection from STDs.

Will condoms prevent HIV infection, the virus that causes AIDS? While it is better than nothing, the bottom line is that condoms cannot be trusted. A study from Florida looked at couples where one individual was HIV positive and the other was negative. They used condoms as protection during intercourse. Obviously these couples would be highly motivated to use the condoms properly, yet after 18 months, 17% of the previously uninfected partners were now HIV positive. That is a one-in-six chance, the same as in Russian roulette. Not good odds!

Condoms do not even provide 100% protection for the purpose for which they were designed: prevention of pregnancy. One study from the School of Medicine Family Planning Clinic at the University of Pennsylvania reported that 25% of patients using condoms as birth control conceived over a one-year

period. Other studies indicate that the rate of accidental pregnancy from condom-protected intercourse is around 15% with married couples and 36% for unmarried couples.

Condoms are inherently untrustworthy. The FDA allows one in 250 to be defective. Condoms are often stored and shipped at unsafe temperatures which weakens the integrity of the latex rubber causing breaks and ruptures. Condoms will break 8% of the time and slip off 7% of the time. There are just so many pitfalls in condom use that you just can't expect immature teenagers to use them properly. And even if they do, they are still at risk.

Studies are beginning to show that school-based sex education that includes condom use as the central message does not work. A study in a major pediatric journal concluded that "the available evidence indicates that there is little or no effect from school-based sex-education on sexual activity, contraception, or teenage pregnancy." (2) This study evaluated programs that emphasized condoms. Over \$3 billion dollars has been spent on sex- education programs emphasizing condoms with little or no effect! In addition, programs that emphasize condoms tend to give a false sense of security to sexually active students and make those students who are not having sex feel abnormal. Hardly the desired result!

The list of damages from unmarried adolescent sexual activity is long indeed. Apart from the threat to physical health and fertility, there is damage to family relationships, self-confidence and emotional health, spiritual health, and future economic opportunities due to unplanned pregnancy. Condom-based sex-education does not work.

## **Saving Sex for Marriage is the Common Sense Solution.**

I have been discussing the epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases that is running rampant in this country and around

the world. Diseases such as chlamydia, human papilloma virus, herpes, hepatitis B, trichomonas, pelvic inflammatory disease, and AIDS have joined syphilis and gonorrhea in just the last 30 years. There is no question that the fruits of the sexual revolution, or sexual convulsion as one author put it, have been devastating. I have also shown how our teenagers are at a greater risk for sexually transmitted diseases than are adults and that sex-education based on condom use is ineffective and misleading. There is only one message that offers health, hope, and joy to today's teenagers. We need to teach single people to save intercourse for marriage.

Sex is a wonderful gift, but if uncontrolled, it has a great capacity for evil as well as good. Our bodies were not made to have multiple sex partners. Almost all risk of STD and out of wedlock pregnancy can be avoided by saving intercourse for marriage. And it can be done.

Statistics show clearly that in schools that teach a sex education program that emphasizes saving intercourse for marriage, the teen pregnancy rate drops dramatically in as little as one year. In San Marcos, California, a high school used a federally funded program ("Teen Aid") which emphasizes saving intercourse until marriage. Before using the program there were 147 pregnancies out of 600 girls. Within two years, the number of pregnancies plummeted to 20 out of 600 girls.(3) In Jessup, Georgia, upon instituting the "Sex Respect" program, the number of pregnancies out of 340 female students dropped from 17 to 13 to 11 to 3 in successive years.

Delaying intercourse until teens are older is not a naive proposal. Over 50% of the females and 40% of the males ages 15 to 19 have not had intercourse. While not a majority, they are living proof that teens can control their sexual desires. Current condom-based sex-education programs basically teach teenagers that they cannot control their sexual desires, and that they must use condoms to protect themselves. It is not a big leap from teenagers being unable to control their sexual

desires to being unable to control their hate, greed, anger, and prejudice. This is not the right message for our teenagers! Teenagers are willing to discipline themselves for things they want and desire and are convinced are beneficial. Girls get up early for drill team practice. Boys train in the off-season with weights to get stronger for athletic competition. Our teens can also be disciplined in their sexual lives if they have the right information to make logical choices. Saving sex for marriage is the common sense solution. In fact, it is the only solution. We don't hesitate to tell our kids not to use drugs, and most don't. We tell our kids it's unhealthy to smoke, and most do not. We tell our kids not to use marijuana, and most do not.

It is normal and healthy not to have sex until marriage. Sexually transmitted diseases are so common that it is not an exaggeration to say that most people who regularly have sex outside of marriage will contract a sexually transmitted disease. Not only is saving sex for marriage the only real hope for sexual health, it is God's design. God has said that our sexuality is to blossom within the confines of a mutually faithful monogamous relationship. What we are seeing today is the natural consequence of disobedience. We need to reeducate our kids not just in what is best, but in what is right.

## **Notes**

1. Medical Institute for Sexual Health, P.O. Box 4919, Austin, TX 78765.
2. I.W. Stout, et al., *Pediatrics*, 1989, 83:376-79.
3. Joe S. McIlhaney, Jr., *Safe Sex* (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Baker Book House, 1991), p. 86.