

“Where does the Bible Talk About Unmarried Sex?”

I am a single Christian and I do believe in abstaining from sex until marriage. But I have a friend who is also a Christian and is having sex outside of marriage with her boyfriend (both are single).

I have always believed that the Bible teaches that you shouldn't have sex outside of marriage, but when I went to look for scriptures that teach this, I couldn't find any. I found plenty about not sleeping with relatives and animals and such, but nothing about unmarried sex.

Can you tell me where the Bible teaches that you shouldn't have sex outside of marriage?

Kerby Anderson answered:

I typed in the word “premarital sex” on the Probe web site (www.probe.org) and got back 16 matches. I might encourage you to look at my article on [“Teen Sexual Revolution”](#) along with the article by Ray Bohlin on [“Sexual Purity”](#) and the article by Jerry Solomon and Jimmy Williams on [“Why Wait Until Marriage.”](#)

Perhaps the reason you are having difficulty finding verses on premarital sex is due to the fact that the Bible uses words or phrases like fornication, sexual immorality, or youthful lusts. If you put these terms in a search engine, you will find numerous verses in the Bible dealing with premarital sex.

Thanks for writing, and stay pure.

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

Dr. Ray Bohlin answered:

The term fornication, or in more modern translations, sexual immorality, simply refers to all sexual activity outside of marriage. Below is the first paragraph under “fornication” in the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 1975, Vol. 2, p. 601:

“Four different NT meanings are obvious. 1. In 1 Corinthians 7:2 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Paul is warning unmarried people about the temptation to fornication. In both cases fornication refers to voluntary sexual intercourse of an unmarried person with anyone of the opposite sex. The meaning is specific and restricted. In four other passages fornication is used in a list of sins which includes “adultery” (Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:21; 1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19). Since adultery involves a married person, the meaning of fornication in these passages is specific and restricted, involving unchastity of unmarried people.”

Later the same entry relates,

“Jesus related fornication to adultery when he said “Everyone who looks at a woman lustfully (i.e. with a thought of sexual intercourse) has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:28). R. C. H. Lenski interprets the “everyone” to include both men and women and both married and unmarried. Thus Jesus was saying that sexual intercourse of unmarried people (fornication) is as

evil as extra-marital sexual intercourse (adultery).”

The entry closes with this statement:

“Those who state that the NT makes no reference to permarital sex relations and gives no advice on the personal and social problems involved are overlooking the NT use and meaning of the word fornication, esp. in such passages as 1 Corinthians 7:2 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3.”

Please also note that Paul closes his discussion of sexual immorality in 1 Cor. 7 with verses 8 and 9. “But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I (verse 8). But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn (verse 9).” I’d say he felt rather strongly about it.

While the Scripture is very clear concerning the immorality and sin of pre-marital sex, these verses also need to be shared with humility and gentleness with the end of restoring a brother and sister in Christ, not driving them away. The truth of God’s word convicts on its own. A spirit of judgment can often be counterproductive.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries