

## WHAT DOES THE WORD SAY ABOUT SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE?

What was God's original intent for sex? Both marriage and sex were God's idea and His design. God designed marriage as a picture of His relationship with His bride, the church. In the Old Testament, God uses numerous examples of the relationship of His chosen people to Himself as either faithful or unfaithful. He is a jealous God and will not endure His people going after false gods. He considered this prostitution. God committed His faithfulness and love as a husband to His people with full provision for all their needs. In return He expected faithfulness. (See Jeremiah 3:11-15) It is the same in New Testament times and still today. Ephesians 5 speaks of how He loves and cares for His church and that husbands should love and care for their wives in the same way.

If the God of the universe designed marriage following the prototype of His relationship with us, then He is extremely serious about it. He had one plan in mind. When we act like His ways regarding sexuality don't really matter anymore, we need to check in with the teachings of His Word and realign ourselves. Many Christians follow the ways of the world, failing to see our immoral ways as prostitution in God's eyes. He is absolutely disgusted with this! He uses a picture of immoral acts of prostitution in the Old Testament to describe his disgust over Israel's turning after idolatry and the worship of other gods. (See Ezekiel 23, Jeremiah 3:1-10, 5:7-9, 28b-31)

If we read passages like this on as regular a basis as we are barraged with immoral temptations on a day-to-day basis, we would begin to fear God appropriately in this area. Then, if we focused on the protection and delight, we will have in following God's laws it would become much easier to do it. I love Psalm 119 because of all the declarations of sustainment in following God's laws (decrees, laws, commands, statutes, precepts, ways). It is divided into twenty-two sections of eight verses each as an acrostic of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. You only must wander into the second section to learn how stay on the path of purity – by living according to His Word! (Verse 9). Psalm 119 has enough to meditate on for a lifetime regarding benefits of living according to God's Word. There are also multiple responses to oppression by focusing on or delighting in the ways and promises of the Lord. *The wicked are waiting to destroy me, but I will ponder your statutes.* (Verse 95) We will behave according to where our focus is. If it is continually in God's Word, we will do things His way and reap the benefits.

God, our Creator, spoke through Paul multiple times in the New Testament regarding sex. We must pay special attention to anything in Scripture that is mentioned repeatedly. There were four laws from the Old Testament regarding things we should abstain from that Gentiles turning to God must uphold. One of the four was sexual immorality.<sup>1</sup> Sexual immorality is an act of the flesh.<sup>2</sup> The body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.<sup>3</sup> Paul feared he would be grieved over members of the Corinthian church who still had not repented of impurity, sexual sin, and debauchery.<sup>4</sup> This was after he dealt with them on the immorality issue in 1 Corinthians 5.

Paul told the church at Ephesus there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality or any kind of impurity...because these are improper for God's holy people.<sup>5</sup> He told the church at Colossae to put

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 15:20, 29, 21:25.

<sup>2</sup> Galatians 5:19.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:13.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:21.

<sup>5</sup> Ephesians 5:3.

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to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires.<sup>6</sup> He told the Thessalonians that it is God’s will that we should be sanctified, set apart from the world – meaning we should avoid sexual immorality. Each of us should learn to control our own bodies in a holy and honorable way, not in passionate lust like the pagans who don’t know God. He specifically told them that in this matter *no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister*. He guaranteed the Lord’s punishment for all those who commit such sins. This was not the first time he warned them about this either.

God did not call us to be impure but to live a holy life. In case there was any doubt where this message came from, Paul made it clear that anyone who rejects this instruction rejects, not Paul, but the very God who gives us His Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup>

The world’s messages about sex bombard us daily. It is marketed to young people relentlessly. We cannot expect to talk about chastity one time a year and expect it to be enough. We must teach about it frequently and provide effective accountability. Bring it up at every appropriate opportunity. No single people, whether they are young teens or in their 60’s should be encouraged to spend time alone together secluded from the view of others. We should not put anyone in a position that allows them to fall. It is not loving to expect our young people to maintain chastity and send them unsupervised on single dates for hours.

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<sup>6</sup> Colossians 3:5

<sup>7</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8