

Promoting Sexual Purity Through Abstinence Only Education and Programs Such as True Love Waits

*Refuting sexual promiscuity: adultery, fornication,
heterosexual oral sex, pornography, incest and bestiality,
pedophilia, and homosexuality*

Introduction

Sex has become one of the biggest driving forces in today's society. In January 2006, *Save America Ministries* released, "Sexual Seduction of the Union: A Sexual Portrait of American Life," a study on sexual beliefs and activities in America. The results are staggering: "40% of 9th graders have had sexual intercourse... 50% of high schoolers admit having engaged in intercourse... 50% of teens have engaged in oral sex." Furthermore, "52% of American women have sex before 18, but 75% have sex before marriage... 2/3 of teens are sexually active by the end of high school, despite 89% having attended sex education classes... 60-70% of "Christian" men admit seeking out pornography..."¹ The list goes on, and it only gets worse. We live in a society that has turned its back on God and sought sex in place of Him, mistaking sex, lust, and infatuation for love. Hollywood flaunts a false image of romance with physical attraction at its core. Movies tell us that physical attraction and sex lead to love, but this image of love could not be further from the truth.

Moreover, divorce rates, as well as unhappy and unfaithful marriages, are rising. In 2003, there were approximately 1.2 million new divorces.² Also, children are discovering Internet pornography, and in a world where anonymity is easily obtained, sexual addiction is the plague of the 21st century. According to *Save America*

¹ "Sexual Seduction of the Union." *Save America Ministries*.

<http://www.saveus.org/docs/factsheets/sexual%20seduction.pdf> (Accessed July 23, 2007).

² *Ibid.*

Ministries, “Since 1991, the number of new hard-core video titles released each year has increased 500%,” and *Playboy* website averages 5 million views a day. In fact, pornography has become the third largest business on the Internet.³ It is a twelve billion dollar industry, surpassing the revenues of every major professional sport combined.⁴

With these things in mind, it is important to know that God created sex, meaning it is inherently good. We have distorted and corrupted sex for our selfish desires. God has always intended for sex to stay within the boundaries of marriage. It is a special gift, a wholly unique blessing that one can only fully appreciate through God-ordained marriage. We abuse this gift on a daily basis, engaging in pre-marital sex, which God has forbidden, being unfaithful to our spouses, and indulging in various forms of pornography. God has a better plan than this. His plan is pure and holy. He spells it out for us throughout the Bible, and He promises eternal joy and fulfillment.

What the Bible Says About Sex...

Ephesians 5:3-4 best summarizes God’s vision for our sexual lifestyles: “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or course joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.” Some might say His standards are strict, and they are. But God knows what’s best for His children, and He expects obedience. Sexual immorality is very personal to God, because it is so closely linked with our identities in Him. To sin sexually is to sin against God as well as against oneself. 1st Corinthians 6:13 states, “The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.” Therefore, it is against our body’s nature to act impurely.

The act of sexual intercourse, two people becoming one flesh, is sacred. It resembles our union with Christ. If we truly believe God is the ultimate matchmaker who pairs us with our

³ Ibid.

⁴ Peter S. Grasso Jr., *In God We Betrayed* (Xulon Press, 2006), 82.

spouses, then to have sex with anyone else is clearly apart from His will. 1st Corinthians 6:15-20 explains how our bodies are members of Christ. By uniting our bodies with those of a “prostitute,” we sin not only against God, but our spouse (present or future), the individual with whom we are involved, and ourselves. Our bodies are temples for the Lord:

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own. (1st Corinthians 6:18-19)

The Damages of Fornication and Sexual Promiscuity

If God made sex pleasurable, why would He withhold it from us? In *Love, Sex, and Lasting Relationships*, Chip Ingram sheds some light on the topic: “[God] wants you to have a relationship with another person where you look deeply into one another’s eyes and you can trust one another... There’s emotional oneness and there’s spiritual oneness.”⁵ Since this is God’s plan for sex, it is the only way to truly experience sex. As a result, fornication and sexual promiscuity are complete wastes. They can only lead to brokenness. Our sexual liberties are self-destructive. By engaging in sexual relationships with multiple partners, we spread ourselves thin. We give ourselves away recklessly. But God has a plan for true oneness between individuals that reflects our relationship with Him and the Church.⁶ And look at Adam and Eve. Genesis 4:1 describes their first sexual encounter: “Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain” (ESV). Here, sex is likened to knowing someone intimately the way God knows each of His children. This is a sacred and holy act. When we “keep the marriage bed holy, and

⁵ Chip Ingram, *Love, Sex, and Lasting Relationships* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 132.

⁶ Michael R. Cosby, *Sex in the Bible* (Englewood Cliffs: Steeple Books, 1984), 11.

[celebrate] sexuality with the approval of God,” we don’t have to worry about “guilt” or “baggage,” and we’ll experience sex the way God intended: the best way.⁷ Promiscuity cheapens sex and leaves us unfulfilled. It’s like the coin slots at a Las Vegas Casino: we keep feeding them money, but in the end, we lose more than we gain and leave unhappy. God has forbidden fornication and sexual promiscuity for good reason.

Abstinence is the Key

Nowadays, there is little talk about abstinence. More and more, kids are being encouraged to practice safe sex rather than no sex. In other words, it’s okay to have sex as long as we don’t end up with an unwanted baby. But this way of thinking is wrong. God asks that we abstain from pre-marital sex, and we should ask the same of our children. If we allow compromise when it comes to sex, compromise will dominate other areas of our lives, and God does not endorse compromise. Rather, He is *uncompromising*. His word is law. In their book, *Every Man’s Battle*, Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker write, “God is your father and expects obedience. Having given you the Holy Spirit as your power source, He believes His command should be enough for you, just as you believe your command should be enough for your kids.”⁸ After all, our Father knows what is best for us.

Recently, America’s youth have been hearing the message of abstinence through programs like *True Love Waits* and *Keep It Simple Say No* (KISSN). Thousands of teenagers have made commitments to abstinence, and the programs continue to grow in popularity and scope, but there is still a lot of work to be done, as the United States has one of the highest levels of teen pregnancy in the industrialized world.⁹

⁷ Ingram, *Love, Sex, and Lasting Relationships*, 132.

⁸ Stephen Arterburn, Fred Stoeker, and Mike Yorkey, *Every Man’s Battle* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2000), 57.

⁹“True Love Waits: Overview.” True Love Waits: A Lifeway Ministry. http://www.lifeway.com/tlw/downloads/pdf_tlw_overview.pdf (Accessed July 24, 2007).

Adultery

As incredible as it may sound, the sin of adultery was punishable by death during Old Testament times. Individuals found guilty of adultery were publicly stoned – a painful and gruesome death. Adultery strikes at the core of God-ordained relationships. When a husband is unfaithful to his wife, he is also unfaithful to God, for the marriage bed reflects God’s relationship with His children. Ironically, we are unfaithful to God daily, but marriage is unique and sacred, so adultery is specifically prohibited. Deuteronomy, which lists the Ten Commandments, clearly states in chapter 5, verse 18, “You shall not commit adultery.” Later, in the Book of Matthew, Jesus proclaims, “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (5:28). In other words, adultery is not merely a matter of physical sin; the problem originates in our hearts. Jesus even suggests that if “your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out” so that you won’t sin” (Matthew 5:29).

Lust, Pornography, & Addiction

It all begins within us, as Mark 7:21-23 states, “For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man *unclean*.” Indeed, we are greedy and lustful creatures, self-centered in our thoughts and actions, always seeking to please ourselves instead of others. Lust, our intense sexual desire, is the fuel to the flame of pornography. Pornography comes from the Greek word, *pornea*, referring to “any sexual indulgence outside the permanent relationship of marriage.”¹⁰ It is self-seeking behavior. Based on this definition, pornography could take several forms: internet websites, sensual or erotic magazines, billboards, newspaper ads, or even innocent joggers, if that satisfies someone’s fleeting,

¹⁰ Ingram, *Love, Sex, and Lasting Relationships*, 118.

lustful longing. Pornography threatens our sexual purity. It severely alters the condition of our hearts and affects our family and friends. If our life's mission is to seek God with all our heart and to walk with Christ so that we might become more like Him, then indulging in pornography is clearly a barrier. We cannot be *selfless* and also be wrapped up in pornography, because it is inherently *selfish*.

And allowing even a hint of pornography into our lifestyles is like playing with matches. Addiction is likely to follow, because our flesh is weak and always wants more of what it shouldn't have. To be addicted is to be a slave to something. However, God has made it perfectly clear that we are slaves to nothing. Jesus came to end our enslavement; therefore, we have freedom in Christ. Addiction is also a form of idolatry. The Bible warns us against idols: "For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do – living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry" (1st Peter 4:3). Before we know it, we are caught up in a world of lust, where we think only of ourselves. Our priorities are askew; we are spending less time with our friends, our families, and God, and we are living in sin, which is entirely against God's perfect nature, not to mention our own, since we are born again Christians, created anew in Christ.

Distortions of Sex

Oral Sex:

Many Christians disagree on this topic, but we believe oral sex is an unnatural perversion of sex, even between heterosexual married couples. While the Bible does not directly mention oral sex, it should be categorized under sexual immorality, because the mouth was clearly not designed for this purpose. God has given us mouths through which to eat, communicate, and praise His name. Therefore, to defile our mouths is insulting to our Father. It is a part of our temple (body), and we should respect it. In addition, oral sex and subservience come hand in hand. Sex is supposed to be a mutual experience, but oral sex is demeaning. Even if both partners have consented, the practice creates a negative, unbalanced sense of power in the relationship.

Incest, Bestiality, & Pedophilia:

While these practices might sound absurd, perhaps even ancient, they still occur around the world. They are terrible distortions of God's good plan for sexual intimacy. Deuteronomy 27:21 states, "Cursed is the man who has sexual relations with any animal," and verse 22 states, "Cursed is the man who sleeps with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother." God created sex for man and woman and for marriage. And sexual relations within one's family are also prohibited; they will not lead to marriage, and God has clearly forbidden it.

Pedophilia, too, is wrong in the eyes of God. Sex was designed for loving adults united in marriage. Children are physically unready for sex, and pedophilia can only produce a parasitic relationship. It is entirely self-seeking and harmful to the child involved, both physically and emotionally. In many cases, children who have been sexually abused or molested end up with recurring problems like homosexuality.

Homosexuality:

Spreading acceptance of homosexuality is one of the biggest threats facing our nation today. Thousands of homosexual advocates are pushing for same-sex marriage in the United States. Some states have already given in. People say, "What's the big deal? If they love each other, why can't they get married too?" Nowadays, Christians are seen as the bad guys. Ultimately, though, homosexuality is against human nature, and God does not approve of it. As Dr. D. James Kennedy remarks in, What's Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage?, "The plumbing doesn't work. We weren't designed this way."¹¹ The Apostle, Paul, also addresses the many sins of mankind, including homosexuality. He, too, calls it unnatural (Romans 1:26-27). Believe it or not, but in the western world, "less than 2 percent of the male population, and less than 1 percent of the female, are

¹¹ D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe, *What's Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage?* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 55.

exclusively homosexual in inclination and practice,”¹² meaning it is a rare practice. Also take into consideration that homosexuals have a much shorter life span than heterosexuals: “[Both] men and women who choose the homosexual lifestyle lose, on average, thirty to thirty-five years of life, nearly half a lifetime.”¹³ After all, Galatians 6:7 states, “A man reaps what he sows.” By engaging in homosexual behavior, the body opens itself to an onslaught of infectious diseases.

Homosexuality is a psychological disorder; it is not predetermined or natural as many people, scientists included, propose. God would not purposely make an individual homosexual, because it is against His nature. Rather, homosexuality is caused by a variety of factors that occur at an early age. For example, 75% of homosexuals “were sexually molested as children.”¹⁴ Perhaps even more convincing is that hundreds of people have turned from their homosexual practices. Organizations like *Set Free Ministries* based in Richmond, VA, and *Exodus International* are helping countless individuals find their true identities in Christ. So amazing is the redemptive, healing power of God that He can bring individuals out of the darkness of the world and into a true relationship with Him. On June 29, 2007, *cbn.com* published an article on Charlene Cothran, editor-in-chief of *Venus Magazine*, a national gay and lesbian publication, citing that the outspoken homosexual advocate of thirty years has found God and given up her sinful lifestyle. She said, “I have a joy and a peace that I wouldn't trade for anything.”¹⁵ Since then, she has been working hard to change the direction of her magazine. Now its main focus is to call people out of homosexuality. As one might imagine, reception from the gay community has been harsh, but many people have confided in her, admitting that they, too, want out.

While homosexuality is wrong, we should love homosexuals. Kennedy writes, “For two thousand years it has been the Christian position that we are to love the sinner but hate the

¹² John Stott, *Same-Sex Partnerships?* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1998), 11.

¹³ Kennedy and Newcombe, *What's Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage?*, 88.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁵ Charlene Israel. “A Lesbian’s Deliverance.” *Christian World News*. <http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/188122.aspx> (Accessed July 23, 2007).

sin,”¹⁶ and he couldn’t be more correct. God calls us to love and to help everyone. It is not our place to judge others; that power rests with our Father alone. However, this does not mean we are to shrug our shoulders at peoples’ sin and do nothing. To hate sin is righteous. God loathes sin, and as image-bearers, we should hate sin, too, because it is everything that God is not. But it is crucial to remember that as Christians, we must not allow our hate for the sin of homosexuality to transfer to those who practice homosexuality.

Conclusion

When we become Christians, we are born again as new creations with the Holy Spirit living within us. This is why we must avoid sexual immorality; it is not conducive to our new lives of righteousness. Immoral practices like adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and pornography should be discarded with our previous lives. God has such a better plan for us than we often realize or care to admit – lives of joy and fulfillment. Isn’t it time we started living His way?

¹⁶ Kennedy and Newcombe, *What’s Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage?*, 81.