

sex

Sexual activity is only appropriate between members of the opposite sex in the context of a covenant married relationship.

● Good sex

* Genesis 1:28

What is God's command? _____

This command was given to innocent human beings before they sinned by eating from the tree (*Genesis 3:1-24*). God intended a pure sexual relationship between man and wife.

* Genesis 2:24 * Matthew 19:4-6 * 1 Corinthians 6:15-16

How is the union between a man and his wife described?

* 1 Corinthians 7:2-5

Why should a married couple have regular sexual intercourse?

As a husband or wife, to whom does your body belong?

yourself your spouse both of you



His left arm is under my head and his right arm embraces me (Song of Songs 2:6).

* Proverbs 5:15-19

How long should a man and his wife expect to enjoy an active, intimate, physical, loving and tender relationship?

Heartsearch

For those who are married:

How would you describe your sexual relationship with your spouse?

poor fair good very good

How is it changing? deteriorating steady improving

How do you think your spouse feels about your sexual relationship?

satisfied dissatisfied other _____

● The Song of Songs

This is a beautiful love song describing the tender relationship between man and woman. The story is difficult to follow but there are a number of scenes expressing the passions of love. There are vivid descriptions of the human body (4:1-7, 5:10-16, 6:4-10, 7:1-9), intense expressions of love and desire (2:1-17, 4:8-5:1, 6:1-3, 7:10-8:7) and the longing for a loved one far away (3:1-3, 5:2-8). There is a refrain echoing the power of love and a warning not to arouse it until the appropriate time (2:7, 3:5, 8:4). This is an excellent love song to read on your honeymoon!

● Sex before marriage?

* Exodus 22:16-17 * Deuteronomy 22:13-21, 28-29

What should a man do if he has sex with a woman?

What was the penalty for not being a virgin at marriage?

Note that a man was obliged to marry the woman because he had sex with her and destroyed her virginity, not because she was pregnant.

* Hebrews 13:4

How should the marriage bed be?

God's perfect way is for men and women to refrain from sexual relationships until they are married. This is not changed by the society we live in.

How would you describe your own interest in sex?

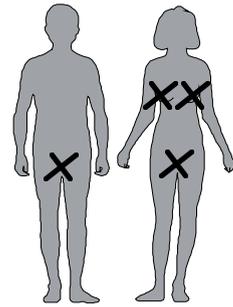
- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> not interested | <input type="checkbox"/> interested |
| <input type="checkbox"/> very interested | <input type="checkbox"/> obsessed |

● Bad sex - immorality

Sex is a wonderful gift from God but unfortunately it is often misused and has become a major source of sin for human beings. It is a vulnerable area of life for us all. This explains why there are so many warnings about bad sexual behaviour in the Bible.

Avoiding temptation

In cultures which accept sexual freedom and where there is ample opportunity for sexual activity outside of marriage, it can be difficult for Christians to stand firm. Here are some helpful guidelines to avoid temptation.



Do not touch!

- Avoid any undressing.
- Avoid lying down together - avoid beds.
- Do not press your bodies together.
- Leave your door slightly open if you are in a room on your own.
- Be extra careful when you are in a house alone.
- Set your limits at less passionate moments.
- Do not touch or caress sexually sensitive areas even through clothes.

Heartsearch

What sexual immorality is mentioned in these verses?

Lev 18:6-18 _____

Lev 18:19 _____

Lev 18:20, Ex 20:14, Deut 22:22 _____

Lev 18:22, Lev 20:13 _____

Lev 18:23, Lev 20:15-16 _____

Lev 19:29, Deut 23:17-18 _____

Deut 22:5 _____

Deut 22:23-29 _____

Prov 7:1-27 _____

Matt 5:27-28 _____

Rom 13:13, Gal 5:21, 1 Pet 4:3 _____

Eph 5:3-7 _____

Can you think of any other sexually immoral behaviour prevalent in today's society?

*** 1 Corinthians 6:18-20**

What do you sin against when you are sexually immoral? _____

What is your body? _____

To whom do you belong? _____

What was the price paid for you? _____

*** 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 * Revelation 21:8, 22:15**

What will happen to immoral people?

*** 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 * Revelation 2:20-23**

Which immoral people should Christians be wary of?

*** Colossians 3:5-6 * 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 * John 8:1-11**

The past - Have you indulged in immoral acts which you are ashamed of? Repent and receive God's forgiveness. He will forgive and cleanse (1 John 1:9).

The present - Are there attitudes, thinking or behaviour that you need to put right in your life at the moment?

The future - Are there long term changes which you wish to make in this area of life?



sex

extra thought and discussion

• **Clothing and nakedness**

After the creation of man and woman they were naked and not ashamed (Gen 2:25). In this state of innocence their thinking about sex would have been completely pure and untainted. After they sinned by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they became ashamed of their nakedness and covered themselves with leaves (Gen 3:7-11). Presumably many possibilities of lust and sexual immorality came into their minds and sex became a rude subject for human beings (Matt 15:19, Rom 1:24-25). God made clothes from animal skins (Gen 3:21) and the rest of the Bible assumes that men and women will wear clothes (Gen 9:20-23). Nakedness is a symbol of poverty, weakness, shame or immorality.

• **Clean and unclean**

Some Old Testament laws say that certain activities can make a person "unclean". This does not mean "sinful", but in such a state you were excluded from worship and sometimes from the community for a while. Some of these laws have a good medical basis. The laws regarding childbirth (Lev 12:1-8), menstruation and discharges (Lev 15:16-33) may seem rather odd, but remember that the Israelites of the time lived among pagan people whose religion involved fertility rites and immoral acts. The laws of the Israelites effectively separated sexual function from the worship of God. Apart from this principle which stands, there is no reason for a Christian to apply these laws (Acts 15:1-21).

• **Love or lust**

In good sex, intimacy and intercourse are ways of expressing love for the other person - they come first. In bad sex and lust, the emphasis is on getting the maximum pleasure for yourself.

• **Oral and anal sex etc**

There are no comments in the Bible about these and other sexual behaviour which may not be considered as straight sex. It is for Christians to assess motives and suitability of their sexual behaviour. It may be considered as unnatural (Rom 1:24).

• **Prostitution and adultery**

There is a lot in the Bible about prostitution and adultery because it is used as a picture of people turning away from the true God to worship other gods (Jer 3:1-3, Ezek 23:1-49, Hos 1:1-4:19, Rev 17:1-18).

• **Solitary sex and masturbation**

Masturbation is the manual stimulation of sex organs. Surveys show that solitary sex is

widespread among both men and women in the western world. People use clothes, mirrors, pornography and other props. It can become a habit which is very hard to break even after marriage.

Comments

- There is no direct teaching about this behaviour in the Bible. By Old Testament law a man could be made "unclean" (Lev 15:16-18) which suggests that the practice would be discouraged.
- Christians who indulge in solitary sex can feel guilty and undermined in their confidence and witness.
- Self-control is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:23). We should be suspicious of any uncontrollable habit.
- It can be a self-centred and lonely habit.
- Beware of fantasy, pornography and immoral thinking. Jesus said that this was also sinful (Matt 5:27-28). Be careful on the internet!

Action

- Many find it helpful to talk over their behaviour with a mature, sympathetic person. This takes the loneliness out of the problem.
- Know when you are most vulnerable and take steps to avoid situations of high temptation.
- Know the grace of God and his forgiveness.

• **Homosexuality**

Sexual relations between people of the same sex are forbidden by God (Lev 18:22). In the Old Testament there is the death penalty (Lev 20:13) and in the New Testament exclusion from the Kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10). The correct setting for sex is the covenant married relationship between a husband and wife. Homosexual behaviour is considered to be unnatural, lustful and perverted (Rom 1:26-27). It is a symptom of godlessness and false religion (Gen 19:4-5, Judg 19:22, 1 Kings 14:24, Rom 1:24-27, Jude 7).

• **Acceptance and forgiveness**

Temptation comes to people in different ways. Some people are attracted erotically to others of the same sex, children, animals etc. It is not a sin to be tempted but it becomes sin when we allow our thoughts and imaginations to become lust or if we actually engage in immoral sexual activity. Jesus had great compassion for people who were ensnared in sin but he never excused it - he came to set the captive free (Luke 7:36-50). As Christians we need be sympathetic and caring to people who are tempted in these areas and to help where possible. It is, however, not compatible to be a Christian and to continue in immorality (1 Cor 5:1-12).

• **Bible examples**

Rape - Gen 34:1-3, Judg 19:1-30, 2 Sam 13:1-20

Adultery and repentance - 2 Sam 11:1-12:23, Ps 51:1-19

Redemption of a prostitute - Josh 2:1-24, 6:22-25, Matt 1:5, Heb 11:31