

Thoughts

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[Biblical Sexuality](#) ([View in PDF](#))

"To hear many religious people talk, one would think God created the torso, head, legs, and arms, but the devil slapped on the genitals." — [Don Schrader](#)

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Foreword

Please note that this represents little more than my personal thoughts and decades-long struggle(s) with the topic of biblical sexuality in all its various forms and ways in which it impacts so many spheres of life.

I trust that what you read here will be found to be genuine, and ultimately, that what is shared points to truth, rather than personal opinion; because truth is what matters.

Coming to terms with it

"My father told me all about the birds and the bees; the liar—I went steady with a woodpecker till I was 21." — Bob Hope

The first question you might ask is, "Why on earth—especially as a single Christian man who [lived in sin viewing pornography](#) for so many years—are you publicly talking about this?" The answer is simple: sexuality is one of the most relevant issues of our time, and like a growing number of believers I know, am concerned not only about its challenging nuances, but the relentless attacks on biblical truth and the [church's silent refusal](#) to stand up and confront the lies and deceit surrounding it. We live in a world that has gone beyond forcing *the topic* of sexuality (in every imaginable setting) on us, to shoving *how we are supposed to think and act on it* down our throat. In the face of constant attack both from outside *and inside* the church, the battle for biblical sexuality can seem like a losing cause. But regardless of who, and how many reject the truth, it is **always** worth fighting for.

The topic of sexuality can never be deemed "irrelevant" to the follower of Christ. It has numerous significant implications. In addition, many believers are harboring sexual sin in their lives, resulting in its prevalence within the church itself. The Bible is clear that sexual relationships outside of one-man, one-woman marriage is sin. Why? Not just because God said it is sin, but because it has very real physical, emotional, and mental consequences that frequently and detrimentally affect more than even the people involved. So it is my prayer that what is shared here will first stir others to search the Bible for themselves for what God says about sexuality as He created and intended for it to be; and

secondly, to see our need for repentance where we have sinned, and to embolden and challenge us to stand firmly for the truth—contrary to the world around us.

One of the biggest challenges is trying to separate fact from opinion or tradition, while holding to—and applying—biblical truth and commands at all times. It's an extensive and difficult process, and finding objective sources of information about sexuality is equally challenging. Thankfully, the Internet has made it easier, but great care must be taken to discern what we read.

So what does biblical sexuality actually *look* like? We know it's acceptable, because obviously even Christians must have sex to have children. Yet there is a growing [slew of beliefs and messages](#) about sexuality that we have been bombarded with since we were old enough to grasp even the basics of it, and as a Christian, I continue to wrestle with the right perspective and understanding of the "details" and tough truths about it that Christians especially refuse to admit.

For those who grew up in a conservative environment, the subject of sexuality was likely never discussed or even mentioned, and if it was, it was probably considered something shameful and necessary only for the sake of having children. For those in a secular environment, it may have been openly discussed and shared, and [engaged in](#), but the experiences may well have resulted in emotional, mental, and [physical](#) scars ([additional link](#)).

In His Word, God is not [bashful about sexuality](#); after all, He created it. Shouldn't our response be the same? As Dr. Howard Hendricks said: *"We should not be ashamed to discuss, that which God was not ashamed to create."* Some theologians tell us that the [Song of Solomon](#) was only written to portray the relationship of Christ and His church. If so, why did God choose to use what is arguably very [sensual imagery](#) to do that if sexuality is something to be shunned or is simply inappropriate? God makes no apology for His Word, and yet we seem to treat this part of Scripture (and select others) as though it were NC-17 material. Childhood context/understanding aside, [sexuality is relevant](#) to everyone—married or single. To some extent, we all think about and deal with it on at least a personal level.

Designed by God

"As Christians, we say that sex is a wonderful gift from God, yet we are strangely silent on the topic and uncomfortable in the rare instances when it is discussed." — Paul David Tripp



God designed Eve as the perfect complement for Adam, and blessed her with numerous beautiful, admirable differences designed to be an ongoing, [magnetic pull](#) drawing him to her (and not just physically, but in every way). Although it's only logical to assume that Adam and Eve were sexually endowed and prepared for it, Genesis seems to insinuate that sexuality didn't occur until *after* they sinned, implying that Adam and Eve never made love until after they were banished from the Garden of Eden (no mention or even hint of a sexual relationship between them). This is the first recorded act of sexuality in the Bible:

[Genesis 4:1](#) (NASB) *"Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, 'I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord.'"*

Though He punished the world through a curse because of their sin, God never downplays the beauty of His creation even after sin entered the world, nor does (or would) He ever condemn sexuality in

and of itself—just the misuse of it. However, there seems to be a very deeply entrenched belief and view that both sexuality and our bodies are something inherently dirty and sinful. Yet God never intended nakedness to be shameful, and legal requirements aside, we should neither flaunt nor be ashamed of how God has made us:

[Genesis 2:25](#) (NASB) *"And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."*

The only guilt and shame we should ever feel is that of disobedience against God. The right perspective is the one that God has *of* us, and wants *for* us. It was only when sin entered the world that nakedness became seen as shameful, and not by God—by Adam and Eve:

[Genesis 3:6-7](#) (NASB) *"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings."*

God was neither embarrassed by their nakedness, nor did He condemn it. Their nakedness was not the instigator of their shame—their sin was. God did, however, condemn and punish their disobedience which, as a consequence, made them *aware* of their nakedness ([Genesis 3:14-19](#)) and subsequent shame. Granted, because of sin we need to dress modestly, but again, our bodies are not something to be ashamed of. It's interesting to note that God never condemned their nakedness after they sinned, but He did make clothing for them—the only hint or assumption that public nakedness was no longer acceptable.

The author of [biblicalsexuality.com](#) makes an [excellent point](#) in that Adam and Eve were naked when God declared all that He had made "very good" ([Genesis 1:31](#)). He goes on to say that:

"...remember, that to believe God created man in a shameful and lacking state which needed to be obscured and covered, or to believe man fell into that lowly state by disobedience is quite different."

That one sin cost us our freedom to enjoy unbridled nakedness as God originally intended, and how we feel about our bodies can affect not only how we feel about ourselves as a person, but will also affect our relationship with a spouse. By using the physical body as an example, Paul illustrated the need for unity in the spiritual body of believers in the following passage—the bottom line being that no part of our body (whether physical or spiritual) should be looked down on or treated as dirty or contemptible:

[1 Corinthians 12:22-25](#) (NASB) *"On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another."*

The process of learning

"Instead of asking how to protect their innocence, we should be asking how to protect the sacredness of sex in their lives." — [Jessica Harris](#)

Why is it that there are no "cute" made-up words for ears or mouths, but plenty for male and female genitalia? It should come as no surprise that even for the world at large, let alone the Christian community, sexuality is an incredibly complex thing. A quick glance at any magazine addressing sexual matters reveals a lot of confusion and frustration from both men and women searching for honest answers and solutions to their questions. In this regard, sexuality is undoubtedly one of Christianity's biggest (if not **the** biggest) '[black hole\(s\)](#).' So where *do* we get our information from?

Whether we like it or not, the tough truth is that children [will learn about sexuality from somewhere](#), and at increasingly younger ages: either the world, or God's Word. Who will tell them the truth, and who is trying the hardest to reach them? Knowing the topic of sexuality has intentionally been broached by the world for all the wrong reasons, it's time we reversed that trend and redirected the conversation with infusion of the truth. As a local pastor likes to say: *"Doing nothing is not an option."*

"...children seem to have a natural sense that being naked is just a fun, freeing, exhilarating experience. They don't learn shame or embarrassment until adults teach it to them! Sure they lack the hormones of more physically mature individuals, but they also have not yet been indoctrinated with society's programmed responses and expectations."

Growing up, children naturally have some [questions](#) about their own anatomy and sexuality, as well as that of the [opposite sex](#). When boys become aware of how girls are different, they respond with fascination and face a lifetime of unquenchable desire and temptation. But when girls become aware of how boys are different, they respond with either "eww!", laughter, or (at best), indifference. As boys get older, that curiosity rapidly grows into awe and desire—and in many ways even envy, as women have a beauty and sensuality that men will never have. As men, that fascination, awe, and desire are never lost, and the need to process and learn how to direct those feelings and emotions responsibly (contrary to the world around them) is critical to respecting women and honoring God. So the [response of parents](#) to these questions from their children can either be helpful or detrimental to one's view of sexuality—especially considering that once we reach a certain age, our inquisitiveness is no longer welcome. If this happens, the learning process may suffer, resulting in potential confusion, fear, or misunderstandings that can affect relationships and intimacy.

Seeing as it's reserved for marriage, most of us have obviously never had the opportunity to investigate the anatomy of the opposite sex up close, and even in marriage, where spouses are supposed to know and be comfortable with each other's bodies doesn't guarantee that knowledge or understanding. Entering into marriage without sexual experience is not an issue (in fact, it's a biblical command); but entering without intellectual knowledge and a [willingness to learn](#) will prove to be. Many men and women enter into marriage unable to identify the various anatomical parts of the opposite sex—and even more surprisingly—many cannot identify their own, either. Not a good starting point for a sexually fulfilling marriage. Sadly, it's assumed that by the time they are married, men and women somehow already know and understand their own sexuality and that of their spouse, and if not, a quick "brush-up" during marriage counseling will "fill in the gaps." However, the growing number of books for Christian married couples dealing with sexuality seem to indicate otherwise.

Likewise, I believe many people enter into marriage with negative views of sex, body image, and little to no concept of what embracing biblical sexuality entails. It is somehow magically expected

that something will suddenly activate us, but it doesn't happen for many. I believe this is due mostly to the teaching we had about sex (i.e. though we were correctly told we are not to have sex and to stay pure, we weren't told *why* nor did we hear any acknowledgement of sensuality and sexual passion being a blessing in marriage). Many Christians are taught (and/or feel) that it is ungodly to be sexually passionate—even in marriage! For women, it's intimidating, vulnerable, and not "ladylike" and for some men, it fosters a fear of being overbearing and insensitive. For those who engaged in sex before marriage, the consequences of their sin can easily make trust, unconditional love, and commitment even more difficult to grasp and live out.

If we're really honest, few of us are willing to admit to being ignorant on a particular matter—especially when it comes to sex—and yet how and where are we supposed to know this? Where do men really learn about the female body or women about men's bodies? Who teaches us? The truth is that no-one does; aside perhaps from some questionable sex education classes in school (which some never had, and which many are now [aggressively forcing homosexuality](#) and other immorality) or line drawings in text books which do not necessarily give an accurate glimpse of reality. Others of us have gathered misinformation from friends, fellow students, movies, or the Internet. No-one teaches us the tough facts about our bodies and how to pleasure them when we are younger, because we aren't supposed to have sex or even talk or think about it. Yet one day, we are supposed to somehow magically identify all of the different body parts, what they are called, their nuances, where they are located, what they do or don't do, and how to use them in the context of marriage—and the truth is, the minutia involved is far more complex than it appears, with very real consequences and repercussions on body image, self-esteem, and ultimately, intimacy of the marital relationship itself.

Resolving this problem, I believe, is crucial—learning as much as we reasonably should in preparation for marriage—without compromise. There is a great deal to learn and absorb, and the effort put forward can prevent a lot of confusion and potential problems later on. Granted, great care must be taken to ensure our sources are truthful, educational, and objective, but we spend a lot of time learning most everything else while our objective knowledge of the truths of sexuality is often neglected and overlooked. As an example, even medical science knows little about the female body and sexual response. Though rather old, on the August 22, 2003 broadcast of ABC's *20/20*, an expert from an OB/GYN organization stated that we are essentially in the dark ages when it comes to female sexuality—in terms of what we know compared to other areas of medicine. She claimed on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most), our knowledge is about a 2; little more is known today. God gave women a unique and incredible sexuality, but it still remains shrouded in confusion and mystery.

How much is too much?



"If you do not learn how to communicate about sex in a healthy, honest way before marriage, you will not suddenly develop that ability after marriage."

— [Jessica Harris](#)

Many Christians hold the view that young people (teens and college-age) should never read or immerse themselves in Christian material (whether books or blogs) about marriage and sexuality until they are engaged to be married. Respectfully, I couldn't disagree more. Why? Not only is it relevant to who we are as sexual beings created by God, but because the sobering truth is that the world has literally forced a myriad of issues surrounding sexuality on us, and [far earlier](#) than ever (and yes, it's getting worse by the day). The majority of young people have already been exposed to far, far more graphic sexual things than are ever

mentioned in any Christian blog or book about sexuality. Sadly, I speak from [experience](#) on that. Clearly, I'm not saying it's good—just facing a sobering reality. In addition, truth is under [aggressive attack](#) around the world, but increasingly so in Canada, Europe, and the U.S. It's not a matter of *if* but only *when* truth in any form (printed books, online content, in-person speech/perceived beliefs)—but especially Scripture—is deemed "hate speech" and biblically-based churches are shut down.

There are two very different kinds of discussion about sex: one solely for the purposes of sexual arousal, and one for the purpose of communicating, instilling, and defending truth. Might there be some overlap? Absolutely—we simply cannot guarantee that discussion of sex for the purpose of truth won't arouse someone. But as believers, we have two choices: we can try to keep running from what the world is virtually shoving down our throat (which has never worked), or we can boldly confront it with biblical truth backed up by medical and statistical facts.

Young (and older) people are going to think about, and be fascinated by, sex and anatomy. On some level, we are all dealing with the sex drives God created us with that simply don't go away. I would rather see young people getting answers from balanced Christian books or blogs on sexual intimacy such as the [Christian Marriage Bloggers Association](#), even if they are initially doing it for the wrong reasons. Why? Because it's the **only** place they are going to hear the truth. If they're reading it just to get aroused, that's an issue that I believe God will begin to deal with them about. But frankly (as someone whom God rescued from an addiction to pornography), if arousal was my intent, I wouldn't waste my time reading Christian books or blogs. Within a few simple clicks, I could get far more arousing material for free from literally hundreds of thousands of different websites. But by God's grace, I don't want that—ever again. I want the *truth* about sexuality and what God created it for. Not a series of lies. One of the most powerful tools God used in freeing me from pornography was when I began reading the truth about sexual intimacy from Christian blogs, forums (though I wasn't supposed to be there), and websites. As followers of Christ, we cannot stand for and defend the truth about biblical sexuality if we don't know what we believe about it *and why*. Yet ironically, finding those honest, biblical answers within the church is virtually impossible.

It's important to note that "married couples only" [Christian forums \(and their rules\)](#) dealing with sexuality are flawed for two key reasons:

1. They rely on faulty assumptions; you simply [cannot guarantee](#) that the "couples" creating accounts in your forum are who they claim (or allude) to being. You cannot guarantee their age, nor whether they are even married—let alone human (even search engine and spammer bots easily create forum accounts now).
2. Closed environments that allow private messages (PMs) between members are impossible to monitor, because they lack front-line accountability. Only *after* damage is done—and hopefully reported—can they be 'cleaned up'. But by then, it's too late.

In open blogs, everything is on display for all to see. Comments still need to be monitored and approved, but because ages and marital/relational status of those commenting is irrelevant, there is now greater accountability and the focus is on what's being said. There's nothing going on in the background you don't know about, because there *is no background*. Open blogs operate under the simple premise of "if you can't say it so everyone can read it" then it shouldn't be said. The focus remains on truth, and instances of "TMI" naturally disappear.

Yes, there are some subjects that should be left to marital books (such as sexual positions) but the stark reality is that even that type of information is "old hat" to most young people. They need to hear what they *don't know*—that truth trumps lies and deceit, and that God can—and does—redeem

repentant hearts grieving from sexual sin. Speaking for myself, I **need** those daily reminders of why I'm waiting for sexual intimacy, and what God designed it to be.

So the tough question remains:

"How much should be communicated about sexuality and intimacy, and when?"

I believe the answer is:

"As much biblically sound and medically accurate truth as they need to properly understand, defend, and communicate the truth about sexuality for their age and environment."

If they have further sincere questions, then they need honest, objective answers. Ignoring them isn't the right response. Truth is what's important—truth for the purpose of understanding and appreciating the inherent value of God's design and intent for men and women.

What's so beautiful about it?

"Sex isn't everything, but it sure beats whatever is in second place."

Though so often abused and misused, sexuality was [created and intended](#) to be very beautiful and pleasurable; not merely a means for procreation (read the [Song of Solomon](#) if you have any doubts). It constitutes powerful attributes and benefits, such as:

1. Giving and receiving the greatest pleasure possible
2. Deep physical, mental, and emotional intimacy and bonding
3. Great freedom and enjoyment of being, seeing, and experiencing nakedness and vulnerability
4. Release of sexual tension, bringing relaxation and sleep, and reducing stress
5. Involves all five senses: seeing, touching, hearing, tasting, and smelling

Why is it so important?

Scripture makes it clear that sexual intimacy plays a [critical role](#) in marriage. Marriage counselors are witness to the fact that sex is one of the top two things that married couples fight about (the other being finances). It is certainly enough of a concern that Paul addresses it in one of his letters:

[1 Corinthians 7:5](#) (NASB) *"Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."*

It's interesting to note that the reference to "lack of self-control" does not appear to be a negative one—especially considering he uses the word "depriving." Its importance is echoed in the Old Testament:

[Deuteronomy 24:5](#) (NASB) *"When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army nor be charged with any duty; he shall be free at home one year and shall give happiness to his wife whom he has taken."*

I venture to say that aside from medical or psychological issues, the depth of a married couple's sexual intimacy is an excellent indicator of their love for each other. In keeping with Scripture on this, a friend of mine (Chelsea) once shared that:

"I believe the importance of sex, in marriage, on a scale from 1 to 10 is a 10. Why? Three reasons:

- 1. It is the ultimate unification of man and wife; you cannot get closer to another human than by doing this.*
- 2. It is the ultimate expression of love; it develops a closeness and a bond that should not be broken.*
- 3. It's **fun** (so I've heard)—or at least should be.*

...I honestly believe that a couple's sex life can say a lot about their marriage. You cannot be constantly fighting with your spouse, and making love every night. You cannot avoid communication, and make love every night. You cannot be completely selfish, and make love every night. It just doesn't work."

It's also critical enough of an issue for the single person that Paul states the following:

[1 Corinthians 7:9](#) (NASB) *"But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."*

...now, if only getting married were simple and easy. Furthermore, is it right to marry with the sole motivation of sexual release? For the single person, this is a very real issue; though no-one in the church seems willing to admit that God created men and women with passion and desire that can only effectively be met in marriage. [Jessica Harris](#) and [Jennifer Vaughn](#) [discuss](#) this:

[Jessica] "Marriage will not, does not, and cannot cure sexual sin."

[Jennifer] "But it's the only biblically-supported solution and method of prevention. And it's being ignored as such. Paul says that those who can't control their sexual desires should marry (1 Corinthians 7:2, 9 and 36). I find it rather odd that the Christian community as a whole doesn't promote this. In fact, most outright oppose it. Instead, everyone (not just you) casts a solution in terms of self-control and surrendering to God. Well, Paul gave this advice outright assuming that we can't control ourselves."

Yes, there are problem marriages, and those need to be dealt with. There, the issues might be communication with a spouse, misconceptions about women's sexuality, etc. But those don't stem from struggling with desires without a legitimate sexual outlet.

You (age 25) and I (age 30) as lifelong singles don't have husbands to meet our God-given needs. If we can surrender our passions and focus on God (1 Corinthians 7:35), then there's no problem. But if we can't control our desires, we need to marry. It's easy to say that it must not be in God's plan (1 Corinthians 7:8 and 20) because husbands haven't fallen into our laps, but note that throughout 1 Corinthians 7, Paul is talking about men and women actively deciding whether or not to marry or stay married. It's a personal choice and a deliberate action.

Again, it's not wrong for us to marry (1 Corinthians 7:25 and 28), but we're told it's better to marry than to be tempted back to our prior activities (1 Corinthians 7:9)."

Waiting for intimacy

"The beauty of sex is something we take on faith until we experience it, and that faith and hope makes the waiting worth it." — [Jessica Harris](#)



Love, desire, passion, sensuality, nakedness, union, yearning, fullness, fulfillment, pleasure. These aren't web search keywords for a sleazy movie. Nor are they necessarily the hallmarks of a blissful wedding night. They are the mixture of dreams and twilight zone for men and women anxiously waiting on God; their passion and sexuality in suspended animation in the waiting room of hope. Watching as each day passes, they hope that somehow soon they will be able to experience the fullness of sexual union and expression. Sure, they could engage in "one-night stands" or "friends with benefits" (read: fornication) like so many already have—and do—but they've seen and heard the only-too-familiar pain and devastation that results from sexual sin:

[1 Corinthians 6:18](#) (NASB) *"Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body."*

Passion: on hold, or denied. Sound familiar? Singles, widows, [refused husbands](#) and [wives](#), and those living in the midst of medical tragedies and challenges are people struggling with being caught between the ugliness of sexual immorality and the incapacitation of God-given passion.

I strongly disagree with Christians who repudiate the God-given, deep-seated need that people have for [intimacy](#). I'm **not** referring solely to sex here, as without genuine love and commitment, there will never be intimacy, and sex means nothing. I'm referring to the deep need to be touched, and feel loved, wanted, and desired by someone of the opposite sex. Nowhere in Scripture does God indicate that the need for intimacy from another human being could, or would, be met by Him. It is a specific need designed by God to be met in a specific way by a member of the opposite sex. Although Scripture never says *why*, it is very clear about this:

[Genesis 2:18](#) (NASB) *"Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.""*

[Proverbs 18:22](#) (NASB): *"He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord."*

[Genesis 2:24](#) (NASB) *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."*

If you were to remove the pat answers within the church (in regards to those for whom intimacy remains unfulfilled) and ask how it feels to yearn for physical, emotional, and sexual fulfillment, you'd encounter a number of facts:

1. It **does** exist, because in addition to spiritual beings, we were also created with physical, emotional, and sexual attributes, needs, and desires.
2. Until fulfilled, it will remain—in some form—a real need and void.
3. The physical and sexual yearning—not temptation—for intimacy without fulfillment is extremely frustrating; again, going back to 1 Corinthians 7:9.
4. It is neglected, and at best, glossed over by the church.

5. A little encouragement to the effect of "it's frustrating, but you're doing the right thing—hang in there!" would go a long way.

How dare I challenge Scripture? No, no heresy here. I'm not insinuating or advocating sexual sin, but rather simple [acknowledgement of the struggle](#). Just an honest look at the tough facts that few people seem willing to admit or address. Reality is such that life without any form of intimacy becomes survival. I venture to say that even the apostle Paul likely wrestled with this issue, knowing he had the same struggles as any man:

[Romans 7:18-19](#) (NASB) *"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want."*

What's missing without it? Companionship, touch, openness, vulnerability protected by full acceptance and love, completion, pleasure, and fulfillment—to name but a few.

I venture to say that there is a danger to the fact that (at least in the U.S.A.) men and women are marrying later in life. So instead of marriage being a place early on to express God-given passion and sexual desire and a safe haven to enjoy intimacy, there is greater temptation and pressure to engage in premarital sex. For those who are unable to find a spouse, being older and still single increasingly becomes a place of great frustration and loneliness.

Sensuality

What about sensuality in marriage? Is the capacity to crave and enjoy the intricate details surrounding sexual and emotional intimacy wrong? As a church, we are afraid of acknowledging—let alone delighting—in this; incorrectly correlating it with erotica and pornography. After all, we argue, the Bible often negatively refers to sensuality. But those references denote pleasure in sin; not the beauty and holiness of sexual intimacy in marriage. The [Song of Solomon](#) quickly reiterates that, as does [Genesis 26:8](#) (NASB):

"It came about, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was caressing his wife Rebekah."

I think it's safe to say that for most of us, it will be a very difficult struggle to try and get past the shame and negative messages surrounding the act of sex. Add to that a positive view of the existence and in-depth sharing of our bodies with one another (especially our genitals) that we've heard for so many years and from so many sources. So we shouldn't be attacking the *content* on this subject; we need to be addressing the *context*:

"Women write in to me sharing stories of how they don't enjoy sex because they can't seem to grasp how they are supposed to enjoy it or communicate it. Then, they start to wonder if they are even allowed to enjoy it. Since [as women] our bodies are designed with one specific organ solely devoted to sexual pleasure—the answer would be yes." — Jessica Harris, [Eating the Poisoned Apple: How Legalism Demonizes Sex](#)

For all intents and purposes when it comes to intimacy, marriage is designed to be the closest thing to the Garden of Eden we will ever experience on earth. Why would anyone—husband or wife—want to deny the sheer beauty and breathtaking pleasures of God's generous gift that He commands husband

and wife to engage in (1 Corinthians 7:5)? Especially those who have literally been waiting and longing for it for decades?

Sexual apologetics and spirituality

Some Christian ministries claim that "...every sexual question is ultimately a spiritual one." I take issue with that notion or belief. While there are most certainly issues of sin and the heart as relates to sexuality, there are physical, emotional, and mental issues that have no specific connection to the spiritual, and it is a grave mistake to assume otherwise.

I first need to stress that in **no way** am I saying (or trying to say) that biblical commands and principles are debatable. They are not, nor will they ever be. But there are clearly aspects of life and sexuality in which Scripture is either completely or mostly silent (such as libido, masturbation, sex toys, sexuality and singleness, etc.) and outside of them, God has given us minds to think and use carefully in regards to those.

An example of what I'm speaking of is a Christian blogger by the name of Bonny Burns. She blogs honestly and openly about the topic of female low libido, doing an excellent job of melding both the practical through medical and scientific research and God's Word on the issue via her website [OysterBed7](#). She looks at **all** possible causes for low libido, whether it's a heart issue or hormonal imbalance due to menopause, etc.

The big danger we face as Christians is doing exactly what the world is, but from the opposite side—rejecting truth because its source isn't from Scripture. We are as equally guilty of throwing the baby out with the bathwater as any non-believer who flippantly rejects the truth of God's Word because it comes from the Bible or "religious right"—instead of simply stopping to first think, check, and ask: "Is this true?" I think we too easily forget that God is the one who created the world we live in. Well-established facts that do not disagree with Scripture (the final checkpoint) and its principles aren't just valuable—they're necessary. Though it may be uncomfortable, God certainly isn't afraid of truth, and neither should we be. Outside of God's Word, we just need to be very careful in what we do, and do not, accept as fact or truth without careful scrutiny and research.

The completely secular book entitled "Brain Sex: The real difference between men and women", underscores in no uncertain terms that men and women are fundamentally different, which goes directly against the grain of modern-day American culture and its societal agenda. The authors noted that they faced significant opposition in simply sharing the facts about these differences. The key here is that the authors were not afraid to ask: "*What is the truth about men and women?*" and then write a book about it.

Even the book "Vagina" by feminist author Naomi Wolf, points out the devastation to women caused by rape and abuse, even when it is verbal and not physical. Do I agree with her visit to a "sexual guru" to see if she can be 'freed' of the trauma she endured? Of course not. But the point is that, while her investigation of the 'cure' for these problems is clearly not Scriptural, her research into the extent of devastation caused by rape and verbal abuse is accurate and can easily be verified. Most importantly, we can learn from that.

Why is all this important? Our perspective and motives regarding truth directly impact our ability to engage with unbelievers in a secular world. If someone you knew well from work, who wasn't a believer, one day poured out their soul to you about their past sexual abuse and subsequent beliefs about sexuality, what would you believe, and what would you discard—and why? How would you

know what's trustworthy and what's not? Would you believe anything they say? Why or why not? How will we engage the world we live in for Christ if we have no knowledge of where they are, and how they're thinking? Being able to honestly say to an unbeliever "*I see what you see; do you see what I see?*" holds a great deal of truth and impact.

If we show our ignorance of established (not controversial) scientific fact and medical research (being careful to look closely at how objective and extensively the research was conducted, etc.), how can we expect anyone to take our message about God and His Word seriously? Now, I understand this can be dicey, in that what the medical (and scientific) community may tout as truth one day can change years later; e.g. total carbs vs. net carbs (or total carbs - grams of fiber = net carbs). When a relative of mine was diagnosed as diabetic (controlled by diet) the hospital nutritionist told me that she was told to instantly "change what she used to state for years as matter-of-fact" and that net carbs are now meaningless when it comes to carb counts for diabetics. So trying to discern what is and isn't truth coming from the medical and scientific community is clearly not an easy or bulletproof process.

Challenges to intimacy

"Sex is nasty, dirty, and wrong, so save it for the one you love." — Unknown



God designed marriage to be a place for husband and wife to frequently express and fulfill sexual desire for each other ([1 Corinthians 7](#)); not frustrate it further. It's a command; not an option:

[1 Corinthians 7:5](#) (ESV) "*Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*"

In reality, however, many married couples experience disappointing, if not non-existent, sexual intimacy. Why? There are numerous potential reasons:

- **Unconfessed personal sin:** fornication, adultery, pornography/erotica (before and/or after marriage), etc.
- **Effects of unresolved sin from others:** childhood abuse, incest, rape, parents' divorce/lack of love from parents
- **Perspectives:** beliefs, unrealistic expectations, poor body image, feelings of physical and/or sexual inadequacy
- **Life:** children, finances, work, demands on time
- **Medical issues:** physical conditions/disease, hormonal imbalances, depression/stress/anxiety/fear, side effects of medication (birth control, anti-depressants)

Obedience to God's commands are designed to protect us from the consequences of sexual sin ([1 Corinthians 6:18](#)). However, God makes no guarantees of a rewarding sex life in marriage, even when obedience to Christ has been first and foremost in our lives. For many people, fulfillment will be a challenge (if not impossible, due to any number of potentially debilitating health issues). Clearly, God expects husband and wife to do everything they can to establish and sustain frequent, fulfilling sexual intimacy between them. So while most married Christians would love to experience ongoing and truly fulfilling sexual intimacy, is it prevalent? My guess for most would be no. A big no. Why? In addition to the aforementioned problems, marriage is under attack like no other time in history, and coupled

with the above list, the proliferation of books and other media—whether secular or Christian—seeking to resolve those problems indicates that biblical sexuality is rare. Christian marital counseling blogs back up this truth, with numerous accounts of ongoing [sexual refusal](#), [disinterest](#) by a spouse, or even [rape within marriage](#)—just as bad as continual [sexual refusal](#) (which churches are not treating as sin like they should)—not to mention common low- and high-sex drive differences.

As a reader [shared](#) on [Julie Sibert's](#) guest post:

"...It seems like as women we have all of these outside influences about sex. Most women talk about sex in such a negative way that I think it becomes commonplace or 'ok' for us to think like that...it in turn bleeds into our marriages because we have allowed these negative influences to invade our minds and for the most part haven't had anyone to combat those negative assumptions. What do you think it would be like if more wives stood up for the intimacy in our marriages and encouraged the younger married women to think in a positive way about sex and not as their 'duty' to their husbands?"

*I remember, when I was planning my wedding, having all of these older married women tell me about how after a few months I wouldn't want to have sex with my new husband and how they **have** to give it to their husbands a few times a month to keep them happy. They dreaded it and laughed about it—and were ok with that; it seemed they were fulfilling a dreaded obligation, as if their husbands were these cavemen that bashed them on the head and dragged them by their hair into their caves to have sex. It terrified me! I didn't know what to think, and my mother had never really explained to me that sex in marriage is beautiful and not this dirty, hush-hush, awful obligation. So I entered into marriage under the assumption that sex was, as you said, an obligation to the fine print in the 'marriage contract'. I am **so** glad I no longer feel that way, and I plan to teach my daughter the beauty of it as she gets old enough."*

The good news is that there *are* [answers](#) and [testimonies](#) of married couples who, by God's grace, have [worked](#) through the [problems and issues](#), and seen [complete restoration](#) (or a [beginning!](#)) to their sexual intimacy. Prevention is better than cure, so complete transparency in pre-marital counseling becomes even more important. It *should* include the following questions, requiring honest answers to address—and Lord willing—resolve potential issues and conflicts **before** marriage:

1. Did you engage in sexual sin before marriage?
2. Were you abused as a child?
3. Do you consider yourself to have a positive self-image regarding your body?
4. How do you feel about touch (sexual and non-sexual)? Does it make you uncomfortable?
5. Do you have a positive view of sexuality in general?
6. What experiences in your life might affect your ability to be intimate?
7. Are there any sexual acts or activities between a husband and wife that you know you are not comfortable with at your current level of knowledge and understanding?
8. Can you describe your view of what a biblical sexual relationship should look like?
9. Do you consider yourself a generous person?
10. Do you consider yourself a low sex-drive or high sex-drive person?
11. Do you keep your promises, and if you marry, will you commit to work through any areas that might be unexpected struggles for you and your spouse?

Marriage is work, and it undoubtedly takes a great deal of understanding, generosity, and genuine motivation on the part of both spouses to sustain fulfillment; setting aside time and intentionally

creating and maintaining an atmosphere or environment that allows for sexual feeling and expression. With God's grace, understanding, and a [willingness](#) to address these problems, there can be [resolution](#) and a new-found joy in passion and intimacy.

Balance lost

"Satan's win-win strategy when it comes to lust is to get single people to have sex before they are married...and those same people to stop having sex once they get married." — Unknown



[Lamont](#) to Rollo: "So why don't you get married?"

[Rollo](#): "What, and give up sex?"

— Sanford and Son, [When John Comes Marching Home](#) (Season 6, Episode 17 - Feb. 4, 1977)

Sexuality is like a river: flood its banks, and it damages and destroys. Block it up or deny it, and surrounding life withers and dies. But flowing within its banks, it sustains life and creates beauty. On the one hand, you have the world pushing sex to the extreme with all the wrong messages and motives resulting in shattered lives and even death, and on the other, you have Christians who seem to treat sexuality (and anything connected with it) as though it were inherently ugly and shameful, resulting in repression and denial of something God designed—and commands—for our good (1 Corinthians 7:5).

It's perfectly fine to talk excitedly with most everyone about weddings, pregnancy, having children—even the fact that the most recent child "was a surprise," etc., but mention anything regarding sex itself, and suddenly the conversation stops and the ice-cold stares begin. Why is it that behind closed doors so many Christians are completely desensitized to pornography and content that grieves God, and yet suddenly become uncomfortable the moment sexuality in a biblical context is spoken of? While sexual sin/issues surrounding sexuality certainly isn't the only area where the church has failed (doctrine, apathy, materialism, lack of reverence for God, and balanced compassion for the lost), it has the most immediate and deadly "domino" effect undermining the very health, testimony, and ministry of the church.

"Sex is Everything"	Biblical Sexuality	"Sex is Evil"
Leads to the virtual worship of sex and the human body, pornography, lust, and immorality. Commitment and enduring love are irrelevant or at best, optional; get whatever you want—with whomever you want—whenever you can get it. Whatever attracts and pleases you is what matters.	Understands and respects our bodies as made in God's image, and follows through with obedience to Him. Understands and embraces the truth and value of commitment, love, intimacy, selflessness, and fulfillment within a one-man, one-woman marriage as God intended.	Regards our physical bodies and sexual desire as inherently shameful, and denies or stifles the beauty of sexual intimacy within marriage (acceptable only for reproduction), resulting in refusal of marital intimacy. Disobeys God's command in 1 Corinthians 7:5, giving a foothold to sin.

As disheartening as it is in even Christian circles, social stigma is such that many women wrestle with the dichotomy of being classed in one of two roles: a lady who is a wife/mother, or (only for lack of a

better term) a "slut." Socially, there seems to be no safe middle ground for wives to express both God-given parts of themselves; enjoying sex as much (or more!) as their husband, and long for that expression. No room is given for [recognition](#) that God created women with the potential for every bit as much sexual need and desire as men. As my friend Chelsea again confided:

"People are not taught, for the most part, that sexual intimacy is a powerful and sacred thing and very beautiful and wonderful when used in the right context, but instead they are told their whole lives, "Sex is bad...sex is bad...sex is bad...sex is bad..." then they get married and it's suddenly okay. I know too many girls who have felt dirty after being with their husbands on their wedding nights because of how they've been taught their whole lives. That just isn't right."

Naturally, the world is only too happy to amplify and tout these perspectives and stigmas, and Satan will do anything he can to distort and cheapen the beauty of what God has created and intended for good. Between these two opposing views lies the biblical balance. In October 1989, Josh McDowell had two t-shirts made for his "Why Wait?" abstinence tours with [Petra](#). The shirt for singles had "I'm NOT doing it" written on the front, and a list of reasons why not on the back. The shirt for married couples simply stated "I'm doing it, and enjoying God's plan." To me, this was a good, albeit rare example of balance.

Sexuality and the church

"The Bible talks about it—we ought to talk about it. Where the Bible speaks,

we need to speak. Where the Bible is silent, we need to be silent." — [Pastor Dave Engbrecht](#), July 17, 2005

Pastoring the Modern-day Issues

March 28, 2019

Most Christians worry about the pushback of sharing their values at work or in school, but at church? Well, according to a new survey from the Barna Group, some pastors feel the same pressure. It's not an easy job navigating today's culture -- even in the place it should be safest.

Nearly three in 10 pastors (27 percent) think it's gotten harder to speak from the pulpit about moral and social issues. And when they're asked which topic gives them the most trouble, the answer is almost always sexuality and same-sex marriage. That's not to say that church leaders don't want to talk about the moral struggles of the day, but they certainly agree the stakes are high.

I always choke on the bitter inconsistency of the church's openness and downright glee when it comes to talking about weddings ("When is the big day?"), marriage ("When is your anniversary?"), pregnancy and babies ("When are you due?", "Is it a boy or a girl?"), and children ("How many kids do you have? What grades are they in?"). But mention anything about sex—the very reality of life that all of these things either relate (or owe their existence to)—and suddenly the exuberent, chatty discussion grinds to a halt, and the smiling faces get ice cold; as though everyone suddenly had a gun pressed to their head.

Pastors have the biblical obligation to preach **all** of God's Word—not just what they feel comfortable sharing, or are willing to risk. When it comes to attitudes and responsiveness, there are many similarities between typical sex education in the home, and exposition of biblical sexuality in the church: that of [avoid whenever possible](#). One could almost imagine discussion of it as a contestant's challenge on *Fear Factor*. It seems that the best the church can muster are [rare, and brief](#) "If you really have to know, then, yes—it's okay to have sex in marriage" statements, or "There are plenty of books available, so why mention it from the pulpit?" The truth is that *minimizing it* is a statement in and of itself—a reflection of the church's position that, at best, it's something shameful and

inappropriate, and incorrectly implying that God sees it the same way. A lady, writing to J Parker's *Hot, Holy, Humorous* blog on this topic, asks:

I am really curious to read your thoughts on the church's often, if not total, blatant omission of Song of Solomon from any kind of preaching and teaching. Even on the level of targeted group studies, I find it gets ignored.

Part of me believes that it's just a stubborn belief that we should hang on to the guilt and discomfort that twisted beliefs and ideology about sex over millennia have brought us, but at the same time, I have heard my own pastor proclaim the joy and blessing of sexual union within marriage, usually with reference to Paul's New Testament writings, and yet he has never to my knowledge even come close to using a Song of Solomon text to preach on, even from the allegorical/metaphorical standpoint.

I don't know about you, but I feel the church has done a lot of damage in this regard, and I really have a bone to pick. Why a gap, and why this particular one? Because Solomon dares to get frisky and then write about it? Keeping our mouths shut about sex (particularly in a godly, biblical context) is one of my personal grievances with Christianity today, and I suppose I just want to understand why leaders persist in encouraging it.

Even church weddings are rife with questionable silence. When the "Charge to the Couple" is made, though numerous Scripture is frequently referenced concerning love, patience, roles, duties, etc., the completely non-optional role of sexual intimacy for both husband and wife in marriage (1 Corinthians 7:5) is either completely ignored, or blatantly minimized to a side note in passing of "the two shall be one flesh" (Ephesians 5:31). Any biblical mention of the very thing that actually makes a husband and wife...a husband and wife—and not just cozy roommates is denied. "Nudge nudge, wink wink" is enough. Would someone please tell God that His devoting an entire book of the Bible to arguably detailed sensual, sexual expression between a husband and wife just isn't appropriate for mention in our churches?

Here's an example (partial introductory transcription to his [full message](#)) of one pastor, Dave Engbrecht of Nappanee Missionary Church, that *did* speak about it on July 17, 2005:

[Opens with illustration about reading manuals]

Take your "manual" [Bible], let's go to Proverbs 5, 6, and 7, because what I want to do today is I want to work on this whole concept of a biblical view of sexuality. And in these moments, I'm going to talk to you as honestly, as courageously, as kindly—and frankly—as bluntly, as the Holy Spirit will allow me to talk to you.

Now as I'm preparing to share with you today, I have to tell you, I'm plowing through my own issues. Because as I was preparing all week, I could hear the words of my grandmother, who's gone home to be with the Lord echoing in my head.

You needed to know my grandma. She was a widow for, I don't know was it, 45 years or so—a long time—she lived life as a widow. German lady; brusque; direct—get to work, get it done. And one time early in pastoring, I was talking to my grandma, and her pastor was a mentor of mine. I loved him. I just...he was a model for me of pastoring; and I, I just went to grandma, and I said, "Grandma, how are things going at your church? How

is your pastor doing?" And without missing a beat—in her German brogue—she said, "All he ever wants to talk about is sex, sex, sex, sex!" And I thought, "Grandma!" you know, I mean... and, and I so I said, "Grandma, tell me...", and she just...she just...she just couldn't get it off in that German brogue. Sounds like another German lady you may have heard of. But, it just, it just sounded so funny! It just...and so all week as I've been preparing, I've been haunted by my grandmother, saying "Don't talk about this. Don't talk about this."

But here's the deal: The Bible talks about it; we ought to talk about it. Where the Bible speaks, we need to speak. Where the Bible is silent, we need to be silent. Proverbs 5, 6, and 7 are three chapters that are devoted almost exclusively to the whole concept of a biblical view of sexuality. A biblical view of doing sexuality as the Book would teach us. Now; before we get in there, let me give you a couple foundational basics. That...I know you all come from different backgrounds and different ideas, and when I talk about this mere subject even the fact that I use the word in the pulpit on a Sunday morning some of you are about ready to melt down and say, "I can't believe that he just said that word." It's okay.

[Remainder of message]

This only stirs more doubt and questions in the minds of people (youth especially), causing them to turn to other sources for their answers: friends, books, TV shows/documentaries, movies—and of course—the Internet. Sexuality in marriage should be *a lot more* than just "okay." It needs to be esteemed and prized as much as God Himself does in His Word, and addressed more frequently. The media's belittling of sexuality in marriage is just as deadly as their assaults on marriage itself, and the longer the church remains silent, the easier it is to believe that it's just not worth waiting for. That being said, it should be realistically portrayed—that it probably won't be sexual bliss from the honeymoon night (according to many Christian marriage bloggers, sexual intimacy tends to get better over time), but that it's what God has commanded from us—for our own protection and good. Anything outside of that is sin. Our failure to acknowledge and boldly address these very real issues is rotting us from the inside out.

Following are just some of the topics I believe the church needs to address from God's Word (wherever applicable, backed up with medical facts):

- Negative/unbiblical views of sexuality
- Sexual demands/refusal in marriage
- Pornography and nudity in cultures
- Navigating body image issues in a healthy way
- Men and womens' vastly different views of one another
- Masturbation: what the Bible does, and does not, say
- Technology, media, and the sexualization of our society
- What constitutes sexual sin?
- Healthy appreciation of the opposite sex
- Beauty vs. sexuality: how are they different?
- Healthy interaction and boundaries between men and women
- Dispelling lies about the opposite sex
- Biblical roles of men and women
- Is healing possible when sexuality and its abuse has been a source of tremendous trauma and pain?

So *why isn't* the church dealing with it?

- Numerous [pastors](#), youth pastors, etc. who should be preaching and leading biblical discussion regarding sexuality are [already involved in pornography](#), [adultery](#), and other [sexual sin](#) (and yes, that's sexual sin—not "baggage"). Though I cannot recommend her book *The Fantasy Fallacy: Exposing the Deeper Meaning Behind Sexual Thoughts* due to a lack of Scriptural support, Shannon Ethridge notes a chilling reality on page 11:

"In talking last year with the manager of one Cincinnati hotel, part of a chain that hosts some of the largest Christian conventions in our nation, I discovered that the hotel chain profits greatly from hosting these particular meetings. The conventions are attended each year by hordes of pastors, religious broadcasters, Christian writers, speakers, and musicians. Would you like to guess what is attributed to the hotel's bottom-line increase during these conferences? According to the manager, purchases of pornographic movies are tremendous!"

- Neither most church leadership nor congregations themselves are willing to risk what they know it will require in broaching the subject and speaking biblical truth to it: vulnerability, conviction, patience, criticism and judgment from fellow believers, and potentially losing people who disagree with the truth:
 1. *"Sexuality is a personal and intimate subject, so it isn't appropriate for Sunday morning services."* It is God's creation, is no less part of biblical truth than any other part of Scripture, and is talked about frequently throughout the Bible. It certainly matters to God; it's high time it matters to us.
 2. *"Talking about sex stirs arousal, and incites sexual desire."* There's a vast difference between graphic discussion for the purpose of inciting lust, and appropriate dissertation for the purpose of upholding biblical truth. We need to be teaching as much biblically sound and medically accurate truth as each person (young or old) needs to properly understand, defend, and communicate the truth about sexuality for their age and environment.
 3. *"My young children are with me in the service—I don't want them to hear about sex at such a young age."* Think again. It will probably be the only place they will ever hear the truth about it. President Obama, Planned Parenthood, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bi, and Transgender groups are actively working on force-feeding your children their graphic sexual agenda. And without your knowledge or permission. Common Core is rapidly doing just that, and as it does, you'd better believe you will [no longer have a voice](#) or control of your own children. In their eyes, you are already the evil that needs [eliminating](#).
 4. *"Sex wasn't talked about in my home—why is it being brought up in church? I don't want to be uncomfortable."* It's a massive issue that's been neglected for far too long, and it's destroying the church from the inside out. God is not concerned with our comfort—he is concerned with truth, and the state of our hearts.
 5. *"It's a waste of time. Preaching about sex is like preaching to the choir—we already know what we need to about it."* That's an incorrect assumption not only for older generations, but younger ones as well. Critical truths such as 1 Corinthians 7:5 are not being taught from the pulpit. Neither are opinion and tradition biblical (let alone medical) truth. In fact, they frequently deny or contradict God's design for sexual intimacy.

The world is [forcing our hand](#) on the issue of sexuality, and obedience to God is being sacrificed for comfort and a false sense of security. How much more sin, pain, and destroyed lives and families will

it take before we stand and speak up for the truth? You can't fix a coolant leak after your car's engine burns up; you keep a vigilant eye out for leaks and get it repaired immediately.

In a college and career Adult Bible Fellowship (a.k.a. Sunday School) class at church I attended in the late 90s, the leadership asked each person in the class to submit their questions about dating and the opposite sex, with the intention of carefully answering each one. The response was overwhelming, resulting in nearly two pages of questions. Sadly, however, *only two* of those questions were ever addressed. Such is the need today, and it will only grow in intensity as we are increasingly surrounded by non-biblical views of sexuality. Because of the proliferation of media, even young children are being exposed to deceptive views—and imagery—of sexuality at increasingly younger ages. It's time the church stepped up to the plate and dealt with it in an appropriate, but effective way. Here are some examples of questions that need honest answers:

- What does a biblical view of sexual intimacy look like, and how do I hold onto it in the midst of a world that constantly lies, deceives, and abuses it?
- I'm addicted to pornography, but want to be free of it. Is this possible? Where can I find help without judgment or criticism?
- I struggle with same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria; how can I find a biblical view of myself and others? Who can I talk to that won't criticize or judge me?
- Is it lust to be attracted to the opposite sex?
- Is it lust in general to want to have sex and recognize my sexuality?
- Is it lust to want to be around the opposite sex?
- Is it lust to want to dress attractively?
- Is it lust to be 'turned on' or sexually aroused?
- Where do I draw the line in what movies and TV shows I watch and which books I read?
- What's the difference between purity and legalism? Whose standards of modest dress do I live by? How do I know they are right?
- How do we speak the truth in love to an unbeliever when confronted with a sexual practice they believe is perfectly normal, or witness to homosexuals or homosexual activists while standing firm and not compromising the truth?
- Is there such a thing (as the world so ardently claims) as "[sexual compatibility](#)"?
- How do I deal with sexual tension and desire?
- What do I say to someone who believes porn is not only harmless, but beneficial, and sex is "whatever you want, whenever you want it?"
- How do I respond to someone who says that marriage is irrelevant since they love the person they are living with and they're doing just fine?
- Women are beautiful and desirable—how do I admire and respect their beauty and respond to their desirability without lusting?
- Can I compliment and encourage women without being seen as having prurient motives, and if so, how?

Ignoring these questions and failing to honestly answer them results in what you see around you: a dying church in the midst of a *Twilight Zone*-like world. We need to process these things in our minds and hearts—to know what we believe, and how to respond to an immoral world that believes lies are the truth. The problem is that in rightly guarding intimate details, we are clearly stifling biblical truth—throwing the proverbial baby out with the bath water. As a lady [noted](#):

"I think part of the problem is that we rightly understand that sex is supposed to be a very private affair between a husband and wife, but as Christians we have taken that to the extreme of taking great pains to ensure that nobody ever suspects that we even have sex."

However, contrary to Scripture, it's much easier for the church to simply take the opposite view of the world without lauding the positives—the beautiful, honorable, desirable aspects of it:

[Song of Solomon 7:11-12](#) (NASB) *"Come, my beloved, let us go out into the country, let us spend the night in the villages. Let us rise early and go to the vineyards; let us see whether the vine has budded and its blossoms have opened, and whether the pomegranates have bloomed. There I will give you my love."*

[Proverbs 5:18-19](#) (NASB) *"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."*

[Hebrews 13:4](#) (NASB) *"Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."*

[Genesis 26:8](#) (NASB) *"It came about, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was caressing his wife Rebekah."*

As Christians, we are masters at being comfortable, and since immorality (especially pornography, lust, and homosexuality) are challenging topics to address, we just avoid them; choosing to remain silent. However, Jessica Harris of [Beggar's Daughter](#) and Crystal Renaud of [Dirty Girls Ministries](#) are two women who know first-hand that comfort and silence are the two biggest environments in which lust and addictions to pornography flourish. Both women have shared how disheartening it was believing that they were the only women who struggled with pornography, and how seeking help was frightening and seemed impossible. Why do women struggle with pornography? As Jessica [notes](#):

"For many women, pornography satisfies the desire to be accepted, to be cherished, long before it ever satisfies a physical, sexual desire."

So why is [breaking the silence](#)—especially for women—so critical? Because frankly, knowing that women aren't somehow impervious to lust is very reassuring. No, as a man I don't get some kind of twisted enjoyment out of that knowledge. It's just encouraging because it finally removes the mask and pretenses, and is being honest with—and about—yourself. That simple acknowledgement of your sinful humanity that says, "Yes, I struggle with this too!" It also destroys the near-perpetual myths that: 1) women don't struggle with lust, and 2) women have no God-given desire for sexual intimacy. Everyone knows that men struggle with visual lust and pornography, but that doesn't make living in that reality and stigma any easier. So any woman who struggles with porn knows first-hand how disheartening and intimidating that silence and solitude is.

I've only witnessed it once, but it's refreshing to have guarded and general—not graphic—discussion of sexuality between Christian men and women in a small group setting. The goal being to simply share the struggles and frustrations encountered in striving for godly living while acknowledging the beautiful, positive aspects of sexuality and ways in which God has made us. Misconceptions, presuppositions, assumptions, and stereotypes of the opposite sex abound, and we can have the right perspectives of one another when we realize



there are similar struggles and earnest desires to live and love as God intended us to. But it takes raw honesty driven by the right motives—truth in love. We know both men and women think about it, but we seem frightened of even hinting at what we really think and feel for fear of what others will think of us. Again, I have only seen this openness happen once (and as an observer), but it was clearly helpful to everyone, and I believe honoring to God. As it should have been, it was neither graphic nor suggestive.

The church needs to realize that *it's not about glorifying sex*. It's about *reclaiming lost territory*. From Scripture and using personal testimonies of God's grace in people's lives (where appropriate), frankly address numerous issues.

Whether intentional or not, most Christians (especially young people) have [already been exposed to things](#) that the church remains too intimidated to acknowledge and deal with, and the glaring lack of honesty and grace-filled confrontation serves only to frustrate, rather than challenge and edify. I pray that the church wakes up to that fact before it's too late, but time is rapidly running out.

Single sexuality: an oxymoron?

(Please note: this section is very much a work in progress. As always, I welcome comments and feedback.)

Sexuality without expression *feels like* sexuality without value. Here's what I know:

1. Pretending it doesn't exist and isn't an issue or concern doesn't work.
2. Spiritualizing it with Christianese ("just give it to God") or ignoring it doesn't make it go away.
3. If our hearts are right before God, we are capable of discussion and it should never stop us from *processing truth about it*, especially in a world aggressively shoving lies and deceit about it down our throat.
4. Being single frequently means being treated like a leper in the church, because no-one knows what to do or say about us, and isn't going to be bothered to try.

In a few paragraphs from her post [Being Single: What Do I Do With This Sex Drive?](#) ([archived copy](#)), Kristin asks the tough question that everyone without a means of sexual expression and fulfillment have long been wrestling with:

My question is... What the heck do I do with this sex drive?!

The stereotype is that guys want sex more than girls. Well, I guess I haven't been in a guy's mind to know, but I'll just say that I want sex, and I want it a lot. And no, it's not just when I'm ovulating.

For some people this really isn't an issue—just go get some! But for me, this is an issue. I am a virgin, and have the conviction to stay abstinent 'till he, whoever he is, "puts a ring on it." But with this sex drive, I have had plenty of thoughts of abandoning this conviction.

What I'm trying to say is that I want to know how to have a healthy sexuality when I am single and unmarried. I don't want to know how to suppress it, but how to live within as a complete spiritual, emotional, physical, and sexual being.

I'm not blaming others for my lack of knowledge, but I wish that those who I had looked to for mentorship when I was growing up would have shared not just the "when you're married" or "sex is bad and here's why" info, but they would have shared what lies in between the two extremes.

Those who are sexually refused by their spouses receive no backing from the church to confront their spouse—to the church, there is no such problem deserving a biblical response. And singles, widows, etc. either get treated like lepers ("Come back when you're married, and then we'll treat you like an adult"), and/or lots of Christianese:

"You need to give it to God!"

"So what exactly does that look like?"

"Well, if you're married, sex is okay. If you're single, then, it's...uh, well...hmm. Look, I'm busy preparing for a marriage class right now; come back when you're married and have something to offer. OK?"

...meanwhile, Jesus in [Matthew 19:12](#) and Paul in [1 Corinthians 7:9](#) admit it is a problem, but the only known biblical answer is: *"Get married."*

But if you can't find a spouse, what then..? It's like saying:

"I'm a race car driver!"

"Wow! Really?"

"Yes, God literally gave me a high-powered super car in my early teens! Can you believe it? Of course, I don't have the keys so I can't drive it, the engine looks pretty bad with rust, and there's two inches of dust all over it, but that's what I am!"

Separating beauty and sexuality

Both what we see and hear in the world around us and what we learned, were taught, or picked up as children are responsible for the view that sexuality and beauty are one and the same (i.e. attractiveness inherently equates to, or spawns, sexual desire). Yet this is **not** ([original link, now broken](#)) God's view. We can't reclaim the Garden of Eden (as much as we would love to!), but we can have the same attitude and perspective in the way we think, feel about, and treat women—that of honoring them by seeing and acknowledging beauty in context (both physically and within them)—with the right motives and intentions.

God never wired men to lust; but He did wire us to notice and appreciate women. When I see a colorful sunset or a majestic mountain, it's breathtaking, and I admire its beauty. That's how I feel when I see a woman. To me, every aspect about her is beautiful, and not just physically, but emotionally and mentally—the way she thinks, feels, speaks, and carries herself—and this is just the tip of the iceberg. God created women in an incredibly beautiful way, and they need not look like Miss America for this to ring true. Beauty does not—and should not—ever imply sexual desire or lust. I understand that there is a fine line between the two, but it **is** possible to admire without having lustful thoughts. There's a *big* difference between them. I find the concept of "bouncing your eyes" when you see a woman—touted by the authors of *Every Man's Battle*—as not only impractical, but

downright ludicrous. Not only does it make you think about it more, but it's an insult to the beauty God created and blessed women with and denigrates His character. No, we are not to ogle women. But did God endow women with curves, charm, poise, and femininity so He could test our discipline and resolve in turning away from it? 'Bouncing your eyes' is confirmation that you are incapable of treasuring without lusting. The idea of praying for a lady if you're tempted to lust after her is far more practical. There needs to be full admiration of, and appreciation for, women as God intended; thoughts of "she's beautiful" instead of "she's sexy." Jesus makes it clear that looking *with lust for her* is what's sin; not admiration or attraction:

[Matthew 5:28](#) (NASB) *"But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*

Job 31:1 (NIV 1984) reiterates this (note that it doesn't say "...not to look at a girl"):

"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl."

Women take time and effort to look their best and take pride in their appearance—it's important to them. [They want, and need, to know that they are beautiful](#). What does it say about us if the things they value—and that God created for good—become the very things we objectify and relegate as 'evil'? One woman shares about this:

"...I, too, see it as a cop out. I believe Christian men have been led to believe the lie that they will always struggle with lusting after women. It's taught when they are teens, and supported through adulthood. This lie leads them to treat half the Christian population like they are invisible (bouncing the eyes) and keeps them from reaching out to women who aren't believers because they may be dressed skimpily.

*Yes, men **can** and **do** have lust problems, but they don't have to be slaves to lust! Jesus came to set us free—how do we display that freedom with the current ways we teach men? Seems to me they become even more enslaved to the program of keeping themselves 'pure' while beautiful sisters in Christ are not looked at, not talked to, etc. because these teens/men are encouraged to 'bounce their eyes.'*

*Yes, it's a sore spot for me as a beautiful woman who is friends with beautiful women who have **all** felt weird by men who **won't look at us when we say hi!**"*

However, it can be difficult for men to make eye contact with a lady that they find attractive, because it's both overwhelming and frustrating to see beauty without any means of expressing to them how/what we feel about them (let alone a safe way of complimenting them). It can then become a real struggle to not intentionally avoid them for those reasons. But the pain goes both ways—as the saying goes: *"Don't hate [or avoid] me because I'm beautiful."* If we are incapable of admiring and appreciating without lust, then we are in sad shape indeed; but there is admittedly an inherent, awkward tension in being around beauty.

The ability to simply admire, respect, and acknowledge the beauty that God has given women is **there**, and we need to use it. I wish I could genuinely affirm and personally *tell* women that they're beautiful, because it's the truth; but I can't do that without coming across as having an ulterior motive or questionable intentions, as the world we live in neither promotes nor wants this philosophy. In the midst of mistrust and lawsuits, the truth is inevitably subject to suspicion. Most speakers on the subject of purity are too quick in pointing fingers. The truth is that **there are many** beautiful and

attractive things about women that have nothing to do with lust or sex; their eyes, hair, smile, the way they think and feel about things, the form and curves of their body, the sound of their voice, the way they move and carry themselves, how they laugh; their attentiveness, poise, intuition, energy, and sense of humor.

A pleasant, heart-felt smile is all that is needed to acknowledge beauty when we see it, and should never limit itself to the physical. There is great beauty to be found in patience, tact, politeness, a listening ear, understanding, and acceptance without criticism or judging. 'Wolf whistles', 'cat-calling' (or similar responses) underline the fact that the men who use them not only lack [respect](#) and sensitivity for women, but know—and show—only lust.

Only God sees and knows our hidden motives and thoughts, but with His help, we can see to it that we acknowledge and practice that which is good and not only honors Him, but also the women He created and blessed.

Men and women: discerning our differences



God designed and created men and women with significant physical, sexual, emotional, and perspective differences intended to complement one another ([Genesis 2:18](#))—[they matter](#) ([additional link](#)). Our perceptions and understanding of those differences—let alone the differences themselves—*directly affect* how we interact and relate to each other. It also impacts if, and how effectively, we address common issues and struggles; e.g. a greater awareness and approach to [modesty for men](#) ([additional comment](#)), and the increasing danger of

visually-based [lust](#) via pornography for women.

The mainstream media, arguably influenced by feminism, would like us to believe that men and women perceive and relate to sexuality in identical ways. However, there is significant disparity between them in all things related to physicality/sexuality. One of these key differences (that few are willing to admit to) is men's physicality/sexuality—arguably obtrusive and intimidating to women; whereas women's physicality/sexuality is highly appealing to men, and to some degree, even a number of women. Unlike men, women's bodies are streamlined.

It can be argued that pornography addiction among girls and women is increasing. Sharing her observation that Christian women are afraid—even anonymously—to admit to an addiction or draw to pornography and erotica, Jessica Harris notes that there is a lack of believable statistics dealing with what percentage of Christian women struggle with them. In an audio interview with Jonathon Van Maren entitled "[Girls Watch Porn, too: An Essential Conversation](#)", she shares that of the female audiences she typically speaks to, she believes about half are struggling with lust via pornography and/or erotica, and 75% as having been exposed to one and/or both at some time in their life. She bases these percentages on her own experience over many years of ministry to women on this topic.

However, part of why pornography is such a serious problem for men and boys is that most (if not all) find the female form and genitalia beautiful, desirable, and arousing in all aspects. But unlike men, most women (not all; but most) have no innate attraction or desire for the male form and genitalia in and of themselves; finding them gross or, at best, uninteresting and irrelevant. While the

implementation of some men and women's genitals may not be perceived as visually appealing, only women's genitals arguably blend in with the rest of their body in an artistic, sensual way. In truth, most women are afraid to say what they *really think* of men's physicality and sexuality, because they know it is **not** complimentary (quote below from intimacyinmarriage.com):

"Woman to woman, I acknowledge that many of you reading this are just plain grossed out by the penis..."

This helps explain the significant [statistical discrepancy](#) that consistently appears in pornography addiction rates between males and females (e.g. "64% of guys and 18% of girls look at porn at least once a week")—a more than 3-to-1 ratio difference. Only a handful of people in the Christian community are even willing to admit this truth; but it explains, in part, why sexual refusal in marriage is such a problem:

Alli, a woman commenting on a post entitled [Lies \(and Half-Truths\) the Church Tells About Sex](#) notes:

"I often hear women complaining about their marital sex life, how they pridefully refuse their husbands or roll their eyes at the thought of those intimate moments. My first reaction is shock to the disrespect toward their mate and my second is total sadness out of their disrespect towards their marriage bed."

Most men and women simply do not view physicality and sexuality in the same way, nor to the same extent(s). The *primary source* of male sexuality stems from their inherent visual sensitivity and allure to the innate aesthetic appeal of the female form. The *primary source* of female sexuality stems from their mind and emotions, which can, and often does, fluctuate throughout their lives.

How these differences play out can be challenging to grasp. Unlike women, there is no clear sense of mystery, modesty, or sensuality in a man's anatomy. Many of us men genuinely don't understand how we can be found attractive (let alone voluptuous) by women; often wondering, "What on earth is appealing about an arm or jaw line—let alone our insipid, stack-of-cardboard-boxes design or any other awkward, unsightly part of us?" It's also virtually impossible to know why—let alone how—we are attractive or desirable to women when what appeals to every woman varies significantly. So while we can acknowledge on a theoretical level that, yes, there are women who struggle with lust, it's difficult *to really believe* if we struggle to understand *why, how, and how many*.

It is common knowledge the world over that men have a relentless, visually-based sex drive...but what about women? Without any substantial and consistent real-world evidence of what—if anything—women find desirable about men and their physicality/sexuality, it is impossible to believe simply because it's so rarely verbalized, and even then it frequently lacks enough specifics to be believable. If women themselves frequently struggle to articulate what they find desirable, then how can men be expected to understand and believe it? As a lady once shared with me:

"I think your question about how women find men attractive is valid [trying to make sense of it all]. And, as crazy as it may sound to you, most women ask the same thing of themselves!"

For women, sex carries a certain amount of inherent resentment, or propensity in that direction as the "victim" or "one being done to" just by nature of their physicality/anatomy and the 'mechanics' of sex.

This is reinforced in the world of electrical, computer, and plumbing connectors: "male" and "female", making for some occasionally awkward conversations at times in those careers.

It's unsettling that most women can't (or at best find it difficult to) articulate how, or if, men are attractive to them. Why? Because if it takes intentional effort to try and explain how or why, then what does that say about the attraction itself?

When they *are* honest enough to say it, it looks something [like this \(archived copy\)](#). It also places mens' physicality and sexuality in constant question and doubt, and our appeal fragile and precarious:

"There is a basic imbalance in sex—men are stuck with the fact that their sexual excitement is visible. There is no hiding the failure to achieve an erection and, simultaneously, no certain way to gauge the woman's sexual arousal or orgasm. That he is a good lover is difficult to ascertain, and [consequently] many men are unable to accept a compliment or reassurance from women." — Dr. Gerald Fogel M.D., The Psychology of Men: Psychoanalytic Perspectives

We [long to know](#) that our bodies/physicality are—somehow—just as desirable to women as women's bodies/physicality are to us. But it's rare when this is ever realized. No-one debates the fact that, more often than not, the less a woman wears the more enticing to men she becomes. But the less a man wears, the more disdain and disgust he garners from most women. In her book *For Women Only* (p. 100), Shaunti Feldhahn notes one husband's words that echo this issue:

"She doesn't understand how even her occasional dismissals make me feel less desirable. I can't resist her. I wish that I, too, were irresistible. She says I am. But her ability to say no so easily makes it hard to believe."

Throughout time, the vast majority of media (books, art, music, movies, the Internet, etc.) constantly emphasizes womens' beauty and desirability, and how deeply driven men are to them. But what about women to men? Rarely is this spoken of, nor with clarity, let alone raw honesty. How do we account for this stark dissimilarity—especially its subtle effects constantly hidden from view? Why is the truth so highly guarded and secretive when it comes to women? All of us—from the pulpit on down—need to understand, acknowledge, and address these issues with objectivity, candor, and biblical boldness.

Is womens' attraction to men purely romantic prince and princess hand-holding "warm fuzzies"? It's difficult to say "no" to that question; after all, the stereotype is that women *don't have* sexual desire and rarely (if ever) struggle with lust, whereas men *only have* sexual desire and struggle with lust all the time. However, even in conservative circles, personal testimonies whether in-person or via [blog](#) prove these wrong. The pastor of a Bible church I attended in the late 90s shared how, after preaching a message about men and the problem of lust, was approached by a woman who pointed out that [many women also struggled with it](#). Indeed, the existence of websites such as [beggarsdaughter.com](#) and [dirtygirlsministries.com](#) back this up. **So what is the truth, and most importantly, where is the evidence?**

[The truth is that most women have a complex, elusive, and less predictable sexuality. Why?](#) Medical science and personal testimony explains:

"The researchers confirmed what most of them suspected all along: that women's arousal [and sexuality as a whole], much more so than men's, rests in the psychological as well

as the physiological." — Roach, Mary (2009-04-06). *Bonk: The Curious Coupling of Science and Sex* (p. 200). W. W. Norton & Company. Kindle Edition.

[Addressing men] *"When you spot the object of your desire, the neurotransmitter dopamine lights up areas deep within the brain, triggering feelings of pleasure, motivation, and reward. (Cocaine acts the same way.) You feel a rush, and your heartbeat quickens. Attraction, too, is a powerful drug. The brain stem also gets into the act, releasing phenylethylamine (PEA), which speeds up the flow of information between nerve cells. It's no wonder your neck and eyeballs track her every movement. **But she's not gawking back at you, and it's not just because you're driving a family bus with a paint scrape on the fender. Her brain acts very differently from yours.** You're keyed in to beauty, shape, fantasy, and obsession; on some biological level that she may be unaware of, she's trolling for a mate who will sire healthy children and protect and provide for her and them. And yes, maybe even buy them a family van."* — Sex on the Brain, Daniel G. Amen, M.D. and Neuroscientist

"Fear of vulnerability. Sex requires such vulnerability for a woman. We reveal our bodies in nakedness, showing our most delicate parts. Our husbands are typically stronger and could take control, so we must rely on him to treat our body with gentleness and love. Also, we're on the receiving end of intercourse, penetrated by his manhood. All of which can leave a wife feeling incredibly exposed—which can be scary. A wife may react by raising a protective barrier to shut out at least some part of the sexual experience." — J Parker, [What Are Your Sexual Fears?](#)

These facts reveal a significant discrepancy between men and women, and the following **must** be asked: are most women hiding or repressing their sexuality, or are they truly asexual? And in what percentages is each true of?

But of equal magnitude is a rarely-spoken-of source of contention between women themselves: not only *if* they struggle with lust, but *in what specific way(s)* [they struggle](#) with it. Generally speaking, some women are visual; others are not. The existence of those who are has long been denied by the church, resulting in an understandable rock-and-hard-place struggle where they [feel alienated](#) from 'normal' women and more like they are male than female.

Statistically, women are better communicators than men. But for whatever reason, they are not communicating truth about themselves with each other. In her post "[Questions Girls Ask: How do I Tell Someone About My Porn Problem?](#)", Jessica Harris notes that:

"The stigma is real. I receive e-mails from women every week, and there is a common theme throughout them. I would say 99% of the women who e-mail me to tell me they are struggling with pornography (or lust, or masturbation) feel they are the only woman in the world who does. Statistically, that's not anywhere close to being true, but I remember that feeling very well. Since I felt alone, I felt like there was no way anyone could even know how to help me. It didn't feel like there was even a point to telling someone. Why would I tell somebody? Just so they could judge me?"

She adds that:

"The culture around us is overwhelmingly slanted male when it comes to anything sexual. So, for women, especially conservative Christian women, it can be uncomfortable talking

about it. I'm not talking about "sinful" sexuality, but sexuality in general. There is such an unfortunate stigma and inherent shame associated with it for women.

Women are expected to be pure, chaste, and have a major problem with romance novels and no more. Stepping forward to ask for help with something like pornography or masturbation can feel like a death sentence, like you'll be forever branded as perverse, unable to be married, damaged goods, a freak. You can't imagine telling your parents, husband, boyfriend, pastor, youth leader, because you're afraid you will feel like you've let them down."

This should never be the case—simple recognition can go a long way toward easing fears and helping them realize they are every bit as feminine and 'normal' as women who are not visual. There is no inherent sin in being able to notice and appreciate physicality providing lust is not part of the picture. Thankfully, some who *are* visual are speaking up. In her article [Debunking The "Only Men Are Visual" Myth](#), Kait Wright (and a number of female readers who wholeheartedly agreed with her) states:

"I'm suggesting that we've been playing along in this mystical fairyland where women are all but immune to visual aids. And the majority of Christians have adopted it ... We can be equally stirred by physicality. And secondly: We are just as susceptible to lust as men are."

However, it is worth noting Kait's use of the phrase "we *can* be...". The implication—unlike men—is that *they aren't always* equally stirred by physicality. Jessica Harris adds to this argument in an excerpt from her [audio testimony](#) (16m 13s - 16m 49s, [original link](#) now broken) by holding a very contrary view. Speaking of her attempt to find help from women regarding pornography addiction, she shares:

*"...so, you get online; like okay—there's gotta be something! Google: 'women struggling with pornography'. Nothing. OK...umm, 'Christians struggling with pornography' and everything that popped up was for men. Everything. **Men's resources don't work for women because we struggle with lust differently than men do. And, so they're really bad to read, actually, for struggling with lust, don't read them—because it doesn't help.** And, I began to feel really messed up. Like really messed up. Like, okay, so I am apparently the only woman on the face of the planet earth that got herself into this mess. Good job, Jessica."*

Sometime later, in her article [Why Women Watch](#), she adds that:

*"As for women, though, I think it is safe to say our reasons are not visual. Believe it or not, for a majority of women involved in pornography the visual stimulation addiction to pornography came long after they were really addicted. **For many women, pornography satisfies the desire to be accepted, to be cherished, long before it ever satisfies a physical sexual desire.** When I first saw pornography, I was confused. I was 13 and had happened upon it completely by accident. **There was a video with a neat title and I clicked on it, and nearly threw up. There was a physical charge, but that did not cause my addiction. I was curious, so I kept looking, but the pornography just made me sick,** so I ventured into the realm of cybersex and erotica. That is how I got addicted. Those men made me feel loved and accepted, even though I was adjusting myself to be whomever they wanted. They desired me, and that feeling was my addiction. I got into*

pornography to figure out how to make them happy. When I tried to back out, that is when my body stepped in and said, "No, you have to have this. You have to have this rush.""

Still other women are very visual, and yet it holds no sexual temptation for them. One such lady (who asked to remain anonymous) notes:

"Personally, men's clothing be it little or lots of it has no affect on me. Shirtless guys don't cause me to lust or stumble. I'm an extremely "visual" person, but it's still not an issue for me personally..."

In addition, [some women](#) just [don't find](#) their husband attractive (emphasis added; [additional link](#)):

"Often the wife just isn't attracted to her husband. No one seems to address that. Women would rather never have sex again than have sex with someone we're not attracted to. We know we're supposed to be attracted to him, we just can't help that we aren't."

Indeed, women in ministry to others on this subject have found that roughly [only one in four wives](#) (see the last "Final Thoughts" section) have a [higher libido](#) than their husband, in which blogger Bonny Burns notes that:

"I am also aware that in 20-25% of marriages, the wife is the higher-drive spouse."

While this contention begs some kind of an answer, it only spawns additional questions; namely:

- What percentage of women are as visual as men, and what ages/generations are involved? Are they only younger generations raised in a pornographic age, or also older women? [Statistical percentages](#) of women's addiction to pornography are still in fractions (25% or less); not majority percentages (60% or more) as is the case for men.
- If desire between men and women is equally matched, then why is sexual intimacy in marriage such a massive problem, with many wives literally going without the slightest desire for sexual intimacy and/or their husband's physicality for not just months or even years, but [decades](#)?
- Why do websites like [Intimacy in Marriage](#) and [Pearl's Oyster Bed](#) exist, exclusively devoted to encouraging sexual intimacy in wives? Why aren't there websites devoted to encouraging husbands who dislike sex to like it? (an almost rhetorical question)
- Why are salacious magazines (originally marketed to women) such as *Play Girl* dependant on homosexual men for *more than half* its readership to survive?
- Where are the male [Mata Haris](#) or "femme fatales" of the world who seduce women with their physicality to obtain secrets for the enemy?
- Why do most women laugh at men in [Speedos](#) or roll their eyes at men mowing their lawns on a hot day without a shirt on?
- Over the years, I've heard some women say they were never really physically attracted to their husband when they married him—and still aren't. They certainly still love their husband deeply, but for qualities other than the physical. However, I have yet to hear of *even one* husband who married his wife *without also being physically attracted to her*.
- How many women do you see ogling men (and not in the passing "oh, he's cute" glance, but the "wow; his maleness is making it awfully hard for me not to lust right now" response)? I think it is safe to say that it is rare to find even *one woman* "checking out" a guy. Sadly, however, anyone can attest to the fact that men frequently ogle women.

If, as a woman, you balk at the notion that most women see little to no appeal in men's physicality/sexuality, then your argument is with those other women—not men.

I get that (for whatever reason) some women may act as though they're not desirous of men's physicality/sexuality, when in reality they may well be. However, there are plenty of women (arguably a majority) who don't, due to numerous physical, emotional, and spiritual hurdles as listed below. As noted earlier, these challenges to sexual intimacy that women face include (in addition to the aforementioned visual/non-visual aspects):

1. Dramatically lower testosterone levels; the normal range being 15-70 units—approximately 1/15th that of men.
2. Numerous potential hurdles such as: Premenstrual syndrome, Menstruation, Menopause, Perimenopause, Urinary tract and Yeast infections, Polycystic ovary syndrome, fear of becoming pregnant and both mobility and health challenges/changes that accompany pregnancy (e.g. morning sickness), Bacterial Vaginosis (BV), Vulvitis; Vaginitis; Vaginismus; greater incidence and trauma from abuse/incest/rape; and negative body image are but a handful of significant factors.
3. Sex arguably involves greater physical/sexual vulnerability connected with intimacy (including more likelihood of experiencing pain than men); is more messy for women (seminal leakage from the vagina after sex); and they are also less likely to experience an orgasm—minimizing desire to engage in it from the start.
4. Their sexuality depends more on their emotional state of mind (easily losing focus or getting distracted) and view(s) of sex. Amy, a reader responding to a post notes:

"We women need to get ourselves over ourselves, mainly. We know our brains have to be in gear to make love—and our brains are the first to get in the way."

In contrast, the vast majority of men have a simpler, more predictable sexuality. Why?

1. Higher testosterone levels since birth; the normal range is 300-1,000 units—approximately 15 *times* that of women:

*"You've been lit up on testosterone right from the start, even when you were just a multi-celled notion in your mother's womb. The inherited Y chromosome that makes you male (thanks, Dad) triggers two bursts of testosterone that change your brain and body. The first produces a male brain: one that's more interested in objects, actions, and competition. The left (parietal) lobe flourishes in the testosterone bath and helps you visualize objects in three dimensions (good for catching a football or watching a woman cross the street), and it boosts your aptitude in mathematics (that's how you estimate that she's about a 34DD). **In addition, testosterone beefs up your hypothalamus, the area of the brain that's interested in sex. The hypothalamus is twice as large in men as it is in women.**"*

— Sex on the Brain, Daniel G. Amen, M.D. and Neuroscientist

2. Fewer potential hurdles: a smaller incidence of abuse; being raped is rare (obviously from other males only—impossible from women); and body image is less of a factor, though it still exists.

3. Though stress and fatigue can take its toll, their sexuality depends less on their emotional state of mind and/or view(s) of sex. However, there are some men (though rare) who do not fit the "mold" and [have little to no interest in sex](#), even if/when their wife is both attractive and proactive in expressing a desire for frequent sexual intimacy.
4. Their sexuality is impacted more by visuals and aesthetics—immediate in nature:

"Beautiful women cause a man's limbic system (the amygdala and other brain-stem structures, which are in charge of emotion) to fire up at the same time that his prefrontal cortex checks out, leaving the judgment area vacant." — Sex on the Brain, [Daniel G. Amen](#), M.D. and Neuroscientist

However, unique challenges/issues regarding sexual intimacy men face include:

1. Men's typically strong, visually-based libido is its own curse; the consequences of which are all around us: rampant pornography, prostitution, sex trafficking, rape, and abuse/incest are why there is such a prevalent, [ongoing negative stigma](#) ([archived copy](#)) surrounding male sexuality resulting in mistrust and suspicion. Women never have to live with the reality of their physicality/sexuality being viewed as a potential threat or predatory in nature (e.g. in the United States, men are prohibited by law from changing children's diapers in church nurseries). How many female rapists, gangs, pedophiles, and women guilty of initiating incest or sexual abuse are there?
2. Not only can physical conditions such as diabetes result in [erectile dysfunction](#), but also [prolonged viewing](#) of pornography ([additional link](#)), and [declining testosterone levels](#) as they age: "Testosterone peaks during adolescence and early adulthood. As you get older, your testosterone level gradually declines—typically about 1% a year after age 30." This results in a significant decrease in libido and interest in intimacy.
3. God created men with the need to be (or at least feel) respect/respected—and yes, respect must be earned. But even more than respect, to feel *valued*. To feel like we have neither respect nor value is where the [Elliot Rodgers](#) of the world stem from. What value do I really have just as a man? Not who I am—just as a man? Society says I have none; that I'm a one-track-minded sex offender waiting to happen that women have no use for anyway (other than for sperm donations if for some reason some woman wants a child). After all, they can do anything men can anyways; who needs them? Men need women to fix them! This view of men shows up even in Christian circles—the insinuation of the following blog post title, written by a Christian woman: "[How to Change a Guy from a Frog into a Hero](#)" completely defeats the very message she is (trying) to convey in her post.

The question we need to ask ourselves is: are we, as men and women, *genuinely and mutually* willing—and motivated—to understand and appreciate each and every difference in which God created us? It's not about "secrets" or "lording" it over one another to manipulate or denigrate. It is about mutual respect, communication, understanding, patience, and admiration. Sadly, I see little evidence of this—even in the Christian community.

Non-sexual interaction

"What I hear from some of my [female] students is that they are concerned about whether their own emotions will

be overwhelming to a man as well as whether men will be able to emotionally engage with them. Mostly, though, I just hear them say that they don't even know how to act around a man other than their father." — Chris of forgivenesswife.com (quoted with permission)



Tension between the sexes [on display](#) in [You Bet Your Life](#) with Groucho Marx (and a 1956 [polygraph machine](#))
[Ep. 56-02](#), 10.4.1956,
Secret word: "Hand"

Attraction/tension between the sexes is a natural phenomenon and [reality of life](#) (as even a polygraph machine from 1956 [illustrates](#)). Men were created by God to be attracted to women, and women to men. That attraction frequently results in awkward, tense moments, and we need to learn how to relate and interact with members of the opposite sex in a healthy, respectful, and (most importantly) non-sexual way—appreciating and valuing them for who they are without undue preference to their gender or aesthetic qualities. We live in a world filled with sexual messages and technology that is aggressively eliminating opportunities to interact face-to-face. In addition, it can be very difficult to interact with someone that we find attractive—sometimes to the extent that it's easier to simply avoid them. Though perhaps exaggerated at times, numerous movies touch on the fact that female beauty is physiologically distracting and disconcerting to men, such as in [The Gods Must Be Crazy](#) when biologist Andrew Steyn is asked to provide transportation for teacher Kate Thompson through some challenging African terrain.

And as Pastor David L. Hatton notes in [The Dance of the Sexes](#), interacting with members of the opposite sex is a lifelong reality (school, job, neighbors, church, etc.) We need to mesh with peers and others' mates with care, protecting them emotionally and physically not only for today, but for their futures. Integrity and a desire to honor God is central to that:

[1 Timothy 5:1-2](#) (NASB) *"Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity."*

In her article [Ten Lies We Believe About Interacting With the Opposite Sex](#), Courtney Gabrielson notes:

"I would wager that if men and women spent more time interacting in a low-pressure environment with the opposite sex, the desire to rely on pornography as a source of relief would decrease. Is it a scientific fact? I don't know. Perhaps I'm oversimplifying. But from my perspective, it seems as though we're getting more and more uncomfortable with each other while the percentage of pornography users in the church grows. This problem is an essay for another day, but essentially, porn is crippling men and women, stunting their relational abilities while placing incredible pressures on the opposite sex."

How do we measure our progress? With at least two questions requiring honesty and integrity: 1) Do I know how to relate to, and carry on a conversation with, a member of the opposite sex without lust being part of my thoughts and motives? 2) Do I genuinely want to acknowledge, understand, and appreciate the many differences in which God created men and women? With the prevalence and rapid increase of pornography use in increasingly younger ages, the ability to simply relate to others without a sexual mindset is a serious issue, not to mention [lack of trust of men](#).

Again, for someone that we find attractive, it is an ongoing challenge to strike a balance between healthy eye contact, good listening skills, and being polite, but stopping short when you sense that you're nearing a boundary. We can't control the motives and actions of others, but, [like Joseph](#), we are to be accountable for our own; running from temptation if necessary.



Mary Ellen Rogers meets Chester, Tooeey, and Clarence in *Leave it to Beaver's* "[Dance Contest](#)" (Season 2, Episode 33)

The world is aggressively flaunting and forcing sexuality and its immoral use and perspectives on us in every situation and sphere of life they can—where they don't belong—especially through laws, government agencies, liberal organizations, public schools, and all types of media—including advertising—to the point that it trumps all else. They will stop at nothing to abolish the truth that challenges them: virginity until marriage as 'old fashioned' or 'out of date', and committed one-man, one-woman marriage as 'bigoted'.

In addition, the constant barrage of non-biblical sexuality and perspectives about sex and continual erosion of gender roles is wearying. Feminists have created a massive problem for themselves, because if I sense that you don't really need me (which is one of their primary beliefs—that women don't need men), then don't be surprised when I completely lose interest in pursuing a relationship with you; let alone women in general. Here's an interesting quote from a rather unlikely source on this topic—a female sex therapist:

"Many women are reluctant to allow men to enter their domain. They don't want men to acquire skills in what has traditionally been their area of competence and one of their main sources of self-esteem. So while they complain about the male's unwillingness to share in domestic duties, they continually push the male out when he moves too confidently into what has previously been their exclusive world." — Bettina Arndt

Not surprisingly, many men respond in the same way. We push back against those things that encroach on what God designed and gifted men and women to do. That is, in part, why PC/console gaming is so popular and often treated as an escape. We grew up with them. They're fun. And in the end, we're going to spend our time with something we enjoy that doesn't [deride or disrespect us](#). Yes—PC/console gaming can be addicting, and that's a problem. But it's *why* we enjoy them. They don't send us mixed signals about what they want or expect us to be; reject us, or treat who we are with disdain, as the feminist mindset so often does. And men are most definitely not off the hook—we need to show [genuine respect](#) toward women.

In the end, this is about how we treat each other, and how motivated (or not) we are to understand *the truth* about one another, and who God created us to be; which is going to require a lot of patience, raw honesty, and a lot of listening. There are numerous lies to be exposed and false notions to be untangled.

Positive reinforcement

"See that married couple over there? They're always holding hands in church, and they seem to love each other very much, so I suspect they have a great sex life—be like that! Any questions?"

"Christian mentoring about sex for young singles? Isn't that completely counter-productive—even dangerous? Counseling about sex is only for engaged or married couples!" Think again. The vast majority of young people today have grown up without godly parents or mentors to (hopefully) help them through the confusing, deceptive mess that the media and world around them constantly bombards their hearts and minds with in regards to sex and relationships. There is a massive amount of statements and opinions that people believe that need to be exposed and challenged for what they are: lies and deception (and some of them have come from Christian circles too). The Christian community would also do well to acknowledge that hormones and sexual drives are very real, and their impact doesn't go away with prayer (remember who created them?). Pretending they don't exist (or downplaying them) only exacerbates the problem rather than addressing it.

For obvious reasons, mentoring should always be conducted with carefully-placed boundaries and accountability. However, it is desperately needed, because the harsh reality is that young people have been exposed to all the wrong messages and beliefs about sex from the Internet, movies, music, and friends—and in far more detail than you want to know. Frank, but appropriately objective, biblical, and medically accurate discussion about sex as God intended are *critical* to helping young people recognize and stand against sexual sin in today's world. The fallacies and damage of pornography must be exposed, the deceit being purported by the mass media countered, and the unique yet complementary differences between men and women that are under attack defended. Godly respect, appreciation, and admiration for one another needs to be instilled and encouraged.

So what can we do to build up and encourage members of the opposite sex in a biblical way? First of all, we can implement the simplest of biblical commands: that of being attentive, and striving to understand each other without belittling or demeaning each other's differences and attributes. Think Rob & Laura Petrie of The Dick van Dyke show. Not perfect; but real, and motivated by genuine love and respect. This means not making jokes about men or women, snide comments about marital strife, or commenting on how you think your husband is insensitive, or your wife is too emotional. Compliment your spouse in front of others and behind their back, being careful to guard and honor their privacy. Work on finding positive things to say rather than things that will hurt. A healthy relationship (let alone an intimate, sexual one) cannot exist between a husband and wife who put each other down by nagging, complaining, or making jokes about each other in public or private. If it helps, imagine your spouse is standing next to you whenever you talk about them. We can present a balanced view of sexuality to believers and non-believers alike, by sharing how God intended it to be something beautiful, safe, loving, and pleasurable; not dirty, cheap, and selfish. Unbelievers will be more likely to listen if we have something positive to say instead of adhering to a self-righteous, negative tone, and most importantly, *when we actually live what we believe*.

Secondly, if you're at a purity conference and have the opportunity to, ask the tough questions that need to be addressed—not glossed over, such as:

- "In what ways are attraction and lust different, and can a man admire the beauty of a woman without sinning? If so, how?"
- "What does the Bible say about the positives of sexual intimacy, and are they important?"

Start concentrating on things about the personality of the opposite sex that you appreciate, and if you have the opportunity to compliment sincerely without being misconstrued or misunderstood, do so,

making sure your intent is clear. Say something you appreciate about the individual, or men and women in general; again, being careful to do so in context. If there's any question in your mind about context or how it might be received, then don't. Remember though that a compliment doesn't exist until it is communicated: just thinking a compliment isn't one. Someone's thoughtfulness, attitude, perspective, or their kind word of encouragement are all things that can uplift and build.

One thing remains clear: sexuality can only be meaningful and fulfilling when true love and commitment in a covenant before God (and not simply lust, because there is also a spiritual aspect to sexual intimacy)—are at the center of it. Love is what enables the full extent of feeling and sustains desire. While both lust and love change over time, only love considers the person as a whole. Anyone who is honest with themselves will find it impossible to argue against love, respect, full commitment in marriage between husband and wife, honesty, sensitivity, and selflessness being crucial attributes of a healthy and fulfilling sexual relationship in obedience to God through Scripture. I believe this is what constitutes a balanced, biblical view of sexuality.

Masturbation: My personal study | [Pastor Ed Martin's study](#)

"I believe there's a biblical balance between "if it feels good, do it" and "if it feels good, it's sin.""

By definition, masturbation is sexual satisfaction independent of a relationship. My personal opinion (much of which is based on Pastor Ed's study) is that it is a scruple, or matter of conscience, in a similar sense that some issues in the Bible are literally considered "conscience-dependent"—i.e. to some believers extremely offensive, and yet to others perfectly acceptable (e.g. [Romans 14:5-8](#)).

What is clear is that it should never include lust as stated in Matthew 5:28. Is it possible that lust or fantasy about a particular person are the impetus for it? Yes it is, and that is clearly sin. But it is also possible to masturbate without lust when the focus is genuinely on the sensations and for the purpose of temporary release from sexual tension rather than fantasizing about a particular person. Providing that lust isn't part of it (and that requires each person to be 100% honest with themselves and God), masturbation provides a means of relief and release that is otherwise a very real challenge and frustration for the single person. Yes, it can be a fine line, and for some people (I suspect this is a greater challenge for women) fantasy is much harder to wrest from masturbation, and so for them, it becomes a sinful temptation. But whatever you believe about it, Scripture is clear we are not to waver in our opinion:

"So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin." — Romans 14:22-23 (NIV 1984)

What facts do we know about masturbation?

1. *Babies in utero (the womb)* have been observed masturbating to orgasm, and young children can (and often do) masturbate without really understanding what they're doing. Are they lusting or fantasizing when they literally know virtually nothing of the world or of their own body? This quickly dispels the notion that sexual arousal and/or temptation only comes with sexual experimentation or viewing pornography.

2. Nocturnal emissions (or "wet dreams") for men *do not serve* as a 'natural' release for sexual tension, because for many, they are very rare and unreliable. Moreover, the dreams that frequently accompany them are arguably very sensual/erotic—are we then guilty of sinning when, or if, that happens?
3. Masturbation was arguably no less common in biblical times than it is today.
4. Lust isn't limited to masturbation. Husbands and wives have confessed that it can be just as easy to use each other to lust and fantasize over someone else while they have sex with each other, as it is to masturbate.
5. The biggest question I would ask of those who declare masturbation to be a sin in, and of, itself (apart from the battle against lust that we all face) is: how is refraining from it working for you? Can you honestly point to the daily, long-term victories you are experiencing by avoiding it or suppressing God-given desire for sexual release?
6. Guilt and shame are not set-in-stone indicators of sin. If it were, then numerous wives are steeped in sin simply by having sex with their husband because they may believe it is shameful or dirty.
7. If masturbation—in and of itself—is sin, then why isn't it explicitly called out in Scripture like all other sexual immorality? Again, (as noted in item three) it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that masturbation existed in Jesus' time as much as it does today. In addition, all biblical references to seminal emission are treated just like menstruation—not treated as sin. Had it been sinful—period—it arguably would have been explicitly declared so.
8. As noted on Wikipedia's [Vasectomy](#) article, *"After a vasectomy, contraceptive precautions must be continued until azoospermia is confirmed. Usually two semen analyses at three and four months are necessary to confirm azoospermia. The British Andrological Society has recommended that a single semen analysis confirming azoospermia after sixteen weeks is sufficient."* Are men, who undergo a vasectomy and obviously have to masturbate in order to provide the seminal sample(s) sinning?
9. If anything, masturbation is a reminder of how much greater sexual intimacy is. Sex, by definition, requires two people, and by its nature is drastically different in terms of sheer interactive scope and multiple sensations that simply cannot be duplicated in masturbation. How does having an orgasm on your own disqualify sex? I'm still a virgin, so naturally have no experiential knowledge of what it's like to make love, but it's obvious to me that (on its own merit) masturbation cannot begin to be a threat to sexual intimacy—it drastically pales in comparison to all that sexual and emotional intimacy entail and provide. If it is impeding intimacy in marriage, it is because there are deeper relational issues between husband and wife that need to be addressed.

Ultimately, God is looking at the heart of the person as to how and why it is used, and each of us are accountable to Him for our thoughts and actions.

In the absence of Scripture that directly addresses masturbation, there seem to be three main arguments as to why it is sin. The first being the story of Onan: he masturbated, and God struck him dead; so therefore masturbation is sin. True or false? Here's the account in Scripture:

[Genesis 38:8-10](#) (NASB) *"Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother." Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother. But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord; so He took his life also."*

God's command to Onan was to *"Go sleep with your brother's widow. Do your duty for her as a brother-in-law, and produce a descendant for your brother."* What is not clear in this passage is whether "wasted his semen on the ground" means [coitus interruptus](#) (which is not masturbation, and is both very difficult to do because of the pleasure involved, and carries a risk of pregnancy) or simply laying beside her masturbating. However, Scripture frequently uses the term "slept with" or "lay with" to describe sexual intercourse, so coitus interruptus is more likely. Regardless, what is clear is that Onan blatantly disobeyed God's very specific command by **not** impregnating her, and thus not allowing his late brother's lineage to continue; in the context of this passage, the fact that his semen spilled on the ground is completely irrelevant to his punishment. Note that Onan didn't just disobey God once—at least two translations ([NLT](#) and [ESV](#)) say "whenever," so it was only a matter of time before his disobedience to God's command resulted in his punishment, and masturbation was not the reason for it.

The second argument is that masturbation is self-indulgent or selfish, and thus sinful. If so, in what specific way(s) is it selfish, and where is the supporting Scripture to back it up? Is engaging in even sexually-related pleasure (which does not necessarily go against God's commands) by and for oneself sinful because it does not involve anyone else? It may seem ludicrous to ask this, but if I indulge in an ice cream cone by myself, isn't it selfish pleasure? God only makes a distinction about selfishness in the context of marriage—neither husband nor wife are to withhold sex from each other for any reason other than prayer and for a limited time:

[1 Corinthians 7:5](#) (NASB) *"Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."*

As an additional example, men undergoing a vasectomy are required to masturbate one or more times to provide sperm samples which are then analyzed until no sperm are found in their semen in order to verify the success of the operation. Is it then a sin to have this procedure done because it would mean having to masturbate?

The third, and only scripturally-backed argument I agree with is *fantasizing about sex with a specific person in the process of masturbating*—not masturbation in and of itself. After all, it can be just as easy to sin by lusting after a woman while walking past her as it may be thinking of her while masturbating. Jesus' words about our thoughts are quite clear:

[Matthew 5:28](#) (NASB) *"But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*

In addition, some men can (and do) have sexual dreams ([nocturnal emissions](#) or "wet dreams"). From my own personal experience, you will experience just as lucid fantasies (if not more so) about someone asleep than you will awake, yet you have no control over them.

There is a similar phenomena in women during REM sleep. A number of studies indicate that vaginal and clitoral swelling do occur during the night in about the same time relationship to REM sleep as

has been observed for penile erections in males. There are also reports that vaginal secretions increase during REM sleep. Moreover, there is reliable data showing that the rate of contractions of the uterus is highest during REM sleep and lowest during slow wave sleep. In her book, [Bonk: The Curious Coupling of Science and Sex](#), Mary Roach highlights the fact that women (like men) also experience [nocturnal erections](#) (in women, the clitoris becoming erect). It seems that women experience these erections at around the same frequency that men experience them. Why did God cause men to have penile erections and nocturnal emissions and clitoral erections and vaginal secretions in women in the first place? Are wet dreams His design for release of sexual tension? Possibly, but again, no Scripture to refer to. The closest Scripture gets to talking about masturbation are nocturnal emissions—three verses address that directly. There is no Scripture that directly addresses when a man or woman stimulate their genitals to orgasm. However, what's interesting is that Leviticus 15:16 hints at the possibility of a man having an emission of semen during the day, which begs the question: was he masturbating, or was he (for some strange reason) sleeping during the day and just had a nocturnal emission? It begs the question: why is masturbation never addressed in the Old Testament when it is full of detailed instructions regarding virtually every kind of possible sin?

[Deuteronomy 23:9-11](#) (NASB) *"When you go out as an army against your enemies, you shall keep yourself from every evil thing. If there is among you any man who is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, then he must go outside the camp; he may not reenter the camp. But it shall be when evening approaches, he shall bathe himself with water, and at sundown he may reenter the camp."*

[Leviticus 15:16-17](#) (NASB) *"Now if a man has a seminal emission, he shall bathe all his body in water and be unclean until evening. As for any garment or any leather on which there is seminal emission, it shall be washed with water and be unclean until evening."*

[Leviticus 22:4-6](#) (NASB) *"No man of the descendants of Aaron, who is a leper or who has a discharge, may eat of the holy gifts until he is clean. And if one touches anything made unclean by a corpse or if a man has a seminal emission, or if a man touches any teeming things by which he is made unclean, or any man by whom he is made unclean, whatever his uncleanness; a person who touches any such shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat of the holy gifts unless he has bathed his body in water."*

Note that no distinction is made between nocturnal emissions and other bodily emissions (such as menstruation) that required cleansing outside of the camp. It is treated the same way as a woman who menstruated.

The truth is that there is no specific Scripture addressing the issue (or a similar enough issue) to make a case either for or against it. It is a controversial subject because of personal viewpoint; not scriptural argument—a matter of personal decision based on one's own study of the Scripture, and one's own conscience before God, much like scruples are in [Romans 14](#), [1 Corinthians 8](#), [1 Corinthians 10:23-33](#).

As a lady [noted](#):

"...Sometimes I wonder why the Bible is silent on this subject. Others may disagree, but I wonder if this is something that's available to us so we can get through those temptations, and not sin sexually. For example, masturbation can be helpful for folks who aren't married, or who are married and are being tempted for whatever reason. It's a physical release that can get rid of the sexual pressure that can build up. Personally, I was a virgin

until I was 25 waiting for the right guy to come along. I'm not sure I would have been able to do that without masturbation, so I'm glad that God didn't specifically condemn it. Of course, anything done excessively is a problem..."

It's blatantly obvious that masturbation cannot even begin to compare with sexual intimacy in marriage. It should never interfere in marriage, and I believe its only legitimate use is as a means of release of sexual tension when marital intimacy is unavailable. Like all aspects of life, it should also never include lust, or be used in excess/become an addiction.

Masturbation: A [commentary](#) by [Pastor Ed Martin](#) of [mychainsaregone.org](#).

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Why is it that we think that since God "forgot" to tell us that masturbation is sin, that we can just write it into the margin of our Bibles and call it "inspired?"

The primary error of the Pharisees was not that they secretly didn't want to avoid sin, it was that they created a whole list of man-made rules by which they could ensure for themselves that they were not in sin...and at the same time, measure (and judge!) everyone else on whether they were in sin or not. This is precisely the error that so many make on the issue of masturbation. They correctly understand that lust is against God's moral law. They observe that masturbation often accompanies lust. They conclude that the way to know if you're lusting or not is to ask if someone is masturbating or not. The problem is that God didn't establish that measure...man did.

Is it possible that masturbation simply did not exist when Scripture was written, so that would explain why God "failed" to forbid it? I don't think so. Some point to the story of Onan who "spilled his semen on the ground" as God's hatred of masturbation. It doesn't work. Let's take a look at why:

[Genesis 38:8-10](#) (NASB) *"Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother." Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother. But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord; so He took his life also."*

The text itself tells us what he did and why:

- What? Spilled his semen on the ground.
- Why? To keep from producing offspring to his brother.

But why did God consider it a "wicked" thing that he did? Was it the "what" or the "why?" Well, since we know that God values obedience above sacrifice ([1 Samuel 15:22](#)), it is easy to check whether there was an issue of disobedience or not.

- Is there any Scripture that forbids masturbation? No. Is there any Scripture that forbids a man from allowing his semen to go anywhere but inside a woman's body? No.
- Is there any Scripture that requires a man to raise up children to bear the name of his dead and childless brother? Yes:

[Deuteronomy 25:5](#) (NASB) *"When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her."*

Admittedly, this law is given after the events happened in Genesis 38, but clearly the social custom was already established before God wrote it into Scripture—and—it demonstrates pretty clearly why God considered what Onan did to be "wicked." Here's the funny thing about trying to condemn masturbation...there's no Scripture that clearly condemns it, so instead, passages like this one are bastardized in the attempt to find any Scripture to support the predetermined conclusion. In the frenzied effort to find a Scripture verse that condemns masturbation, we have completely passed over the one passage that (I believe) clearly does speak about masturbation! In my opinion, it gets passed over for the simple reason that it does not condemn it (therefore it must not be talking about masturbation, 'cuz we know it's wrong!).

Here's where the Bible describes masturbation:

[Leviticus 15:16-19](#) (NASB) *"¹⁶Now if a man has a seminal emission, he shall bathe all his body in water and be unclean until evening. ¹⁷As for any garment or any leather on which there is seminal emission, it shall be washed with water and be unclean until evening. ¹⁸If a man lies with a woman so that there is a seminal emission, they shall both bathe in water and be unclean until evening. ¹⁹When a woman has a discharge, if her discharge in her body is blood, she shall continue in her menstrual impurity for seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening."*

There it is...verse 16.

Of course, some say that this is just a [nocturnal emission](#) or "wet dream" while a man is asleep. Indeed, that situation is addressed [verse below] in Deuteronomy 23:10 ("nocturnal emission" is actually translated from words that literally mean "nighttime occurrence").

[Deuteronomy 23:10](#) (NASB) *"If there is among you any man who is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, then he must go outside the camp; he may not reenter the camp."*

But that's not what we have here—this is how I know. I've quoted four verses, and in them there are three situations mentioned that will make someone ceremonially unclean:

1. The emission of semen alone.
2. The emission of semen with a woman.
3. The blood flow of a woman's menstrual cycle.

Starting with no. 3, clearly, there is no sin in a woman having a monthly cycle—God designed her that way. But, still, it made her ceremonially unclean. That was not punishment, nor was it an indication that her condition was sinful nor that the reason she was now unclean was sinful.

Moving on to no. 2, there is no sin in a man having sexual relations with his wife. Obviously, the emission of semen was inside the woman, because there is no concern about the bedding getting soiled with the semen. Again, no sin, but still the consequence was that they both be ceremonially unclean for the day. And, for the record...the man was awake when it happened.

Finally, we look again at no. 1. Is this only a "nocturnal emission?" Well, was the guy asleep? There's no basis to claim so...no more than the man and woman were in the next verse. But even so, it doesn't matter because even if it applies while the man is asleep, it must also apply if the man is awake. Therefore, this verse must also cover seminal emission by masturbation. So...what is the "penalty?" Where is the condemnation? The "consequences" are exactly the same as for sex with one's wife, or the "sin" of menstruating. In other words, masturbation is not condemned. Well, there is one more thing the masturbating man is told that he must do...clean up your mess! But even the soiled bedding is not forever ruined.

The Scriptures do not have a word for "masturbation." But, the concept is right there in [Leviticus 15](#). We do not need to find out God's perspective on it any further than that. Scripturally, masturbation is as much a natural part of the human condition as menstruation and marital intimacy.

But...you can't masturbate without **lust**! You can't? Says who? The Bible? (well, no...). Those who say they can't masturbate without lust are only admitting that they cannot masturbate without lust. Well...they shouldn't masturbate (because lust **is** forbidden by God). But they have no business creating man-made rules to use to assess righteousness before God.

[Colossians 2:20-23](#) (NASB) says this:

"If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence."

We must reject man-made rules...no matter how much they seem to "make sense!" But there's something more here...we are also told here that the man-made rules are of absolutely **no value** against sin! Actually, when we invent man-made rules of righteousness which God has not declared, we actually serve the enemy instead.

- First of all, by declaring a man-made rule to be God's, we are lying about God. That's a bad start.
- Secondly, we are giving Satan a tool by which he can cause otherwise healthy and God-pleasing people to feel shame and guilt over something that is of no consequence to God.
- Thirdly, we allow Satan to tie a natural urge and normal behavior (just as normal as marital sex and menstruation) with a genuine sin against God (lust) so that after a brutally difficult battle to stave off the natural, when finally giving in, there's absolutely no thought of resisting the temptation to lust, too. In fact, the victim was convinced that simply by deciding to masturbate, he has also decided to lust...and so he does.

Man-made rules for righteousness never help in the life of righteousness. They always serve to thwart it. This post is not a promotion of masturbation...it is an absolute rejection of a man-made rule that has been elevated to be equal with God's Word. God said, "don't lust." He didn't say, "don't masturbate." It is we who have made them inextricably linked. And it is a mistake.

Pastor Ed

In a separate e-mail message, he notes that:

"If you masturbate...don't make a big deal about it. God doesn't. Make sure you're not using it as an excuse to lustfully fantasize and don't allow it to rule your life. But apart from those sins, go ahead and release the pressure. It'll make the rest of your life as a single man a little easier to navigate in physical and mental purity. And you'll also find that the drive you feel for it will be greatly diminished when you decide that you don't have to feel guilty about it. Often, that sense of *"Oh, no, I can feel the urge coming on again...what am I going to do? I'll probably 'fall' again just like always...no, this time I'm really going to try to not do it..."* causes us to focus on it all the more. That, of course, doesn't help at all!

Looking at it from Satan's viewpoint, what better way to defeat a young Christian man than to convince him that masturbation is wrong when he can hardly get through a week without tremendous pressure for release? The poor guy struggles mightily to resist its pressure, all the while wondering why the Lord won't take away the "temptation." He regularly "falls" and then feels lots of false guilt...guilt that God never intended for him to have. While the sexual pressures are mounting inside his loins, his alertness and physical response to sexual stimuli all around (none of us can escape it in our culture today) is greatly heightened. This adds to his feeling that he is perverse for having such a strong mental focus on sex and/or the sexual nature of all the women and images around him. Talk about a recipe for defeat and demoralization...I think that's part of Satan's strategy to make young men who would otherwise be strongly committed to the Lord spiritually impotent. And I think it's working big time."

Related links and files: by Pastor Dave Engbrecht: "Straight Talk about Sex" ([PDF outline](#), [WMA audio, 36.3MB](#)) | by Pastor David L. Hatton: "The Dance of the Sexes" ([PDF outline](#), [web page](#)) | [High-drive wife asks, "I'm not supposed to love sex, right?"](#) | [intimacyinmarriage.com](#) | [Intimacy is not spelled S-E-X](#) | [biblicalsexuality.com](#) | [beggarsdaughter.com](#) and [Christians and Ashley Madison](#) by Jessica Harris | bible.org: [A Touchy Issue](#) ([PDE](#), [MP3](#)) |

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