

Enjoying Sex God's Way

The Bible's prohibitions against our misusing our sexuality are there to protect us, not to punish us.

As a Christian gynecologist, I have had the privilege of treating thousands of women during the last two decades. Many of them have had the courage to ask questions about one of the most private aspects of their lives: their sexuality. The issues have ranged from the values of virginity to sexually transmitted diseases; from wedding night romance to the challenges of geriatric sexual relations; from birth control to plastic surgery.

The majority of couples struggle with these sensitive and important issues of marriage in a spiritual vacuum. They wonder how their faith in Christ and their human sexuality can peacefully coexist. Sensing that there must be more to their sexual lives than they are experiencing but wondering if God really approves of these secret desires, they ask themselves: Is sex the forbidden fruit?

Sex Is God's Idea

Of the many hundreds of questions I have been asked, the fundamental theme remains: What does God think about sex? The answer I give is the response I received from my pastor in my youth when I asked the same question: It's God's idea!

God created the sexes and sexual intercourse. He instilled the sexual drive into our bodies, knowing it would work its way into our thoughts and minds. He is not ashamed of our sexuality, nor does He regret creating it.

From the second chapter of Genesis throughout the pages of Scripture we can read about God's plan for our sexuality. And from one passage to the next, the theme is one of pleasure, joy and fulfillment within the boundaries He has created.

Yet many Christians mistakenly perceive that the few hedges of protection God placed around our sexuality indicate that God is against sex. The truth is, our sexuality is God's gift to us, not just for reproduction, as many in the church seem to believe, but also for intimacy and pleasure in the comfort of marriage. And yes, He knows how much fun it is. He made it that way!

But for so long, the church has looked at the way the fallen world has expressed itself sexually and closed its doors to all discussions of sex, seemingly fearing that the influences of the secular world will corrupt the holiness of the church.

The sometimes irresponsible approach of the church to human sexuality has left many sincere Christians sitting in their church pews each Sunday wondering if God is for or against sex. Is God condemning them as they struggle with questions for which they desperately need answers and for feelings that threaten their very walk with Him? The answer is, absolutely not!

I can tell you on the authority of the Bible that God is definitely interested in your sexual life—and not just so He can say, “Don’t do that!” He longs for you to experience all He has created you for from the beginning. Though we may not achieve what we would have had in the Garden of Eden, we can surely take hold of a lot more than we currently enjoy, and we can do it without the guilt and condemnation that has so often hounded the sincere Christian.

Consider God's motivation for creating a companion for Adam and His ultimate design for their relationship. During God's creation process, He said: “‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'” (Gen. 2:18, NIV). Then, according to Scripture, “The Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’...For this reason a man will leave his father

and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (vv. 22-24).

It was God who created a beautiful woman and brought her to Adam as His precious gift to him. When Adam saw how Eve was made, he also learned how his body fit together with hers. The two became one flesh, which is how the rest of us got here!

In fact, God's first command to them was to "'be fruitful and increase in number'" (Gen. 1:28). In other words, God told them to have intercourse; it was their first assignment as a couple!

Boundaries for Sexual Activity

Clearly, God is the one who initiated sex as an activity to be enjoyed between two people who are married to each other. However, He states in His Word that it is not to be engaged in outside this parameter. Whole chapters in the Old Testament are devoted to the regulation of sexual activity (Lev. 18; 20).

In the pagan cultures that surrounded the people of Israel, sexual activity between father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister, or men and animals was not uncommon. Homosexuality was also a problem. So God established boundaries for His people and commanded them not to engage in these types of sexual activity.

The few rules He established were designed to distinguish the Israelites from the pagan cultures around them. But they were also a hedge of protection around the sanctity of the family in places where sinful sexual practices had destroyed the foundation of those cultures. God did not want the nation of Israel to fall victim to the same fate.

But some Christians read chapters 18 and 20 of Leviticus, in which the punishment for sexual sin is specified as death by

stoning, and conclude that God is fierce and vengeful, ready at any moment to strike them down if they sin sexually. They forget that God is also a God of grace and forgiveness. The boundaries still exist to protect us, but forgiveness is ours for the asking because of Calvary.

New Testament heroes reveal little information of their marital lives to us. But Paul teaches us to present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy unto God (Rom. 12:1). He reminds us that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that we must strive to honor God with it (1 Cor. 6:18).

So how does one honor God with his body, be an acceptable temple for the Holy Spirit, live holy before God, and yet experience the joys and delights of sexual union? Many of us have thought that when the Bible says to present our bodies as living sacrifices, it really means sacrificing a fulfilling and exciting sex life.

We find ourselves envying those television and movie “role models” who seem to enjoy sex with guiltless abandon. Some of us escape into the fantasy world of romance novels, soap operas or worse, pornographic videos, to become spectators of a dark and lonely life from which we have been set free. This dilemma seems especially difficult for those of us who carry memories of a pre-conversion sexual life that was fulfilling.

Though the secular world has, admittedly, pushed the envelope of sexual exploration to extremes, we as a church have been robbed of our inheritance in Christ. The lack of proper scriptural interpretation and explanation of God’s true design for marriage hinders a mutually satisfying intimacy with our spouse.

We have had too few champions from the pulpit to encourage us to reclaim what has been stolen from us. Much preaching that touches the topic of sexuality has emphasized the sins of sex with little, if any, reference to the joy of sex that God

ordained.

A New Look at Biblical and Medical Truths

Thankfully, a new generation of spiritual leaders is dedicated to reclaiming the sexually broken and to teaching young adults a godly pattern for beginning their marriages. We are living with an epidemic of divorce, adultery, fornication, sexually transmitted diseases and pornography.

Yet God has given wonderful promises in His Word to all who would hear and be set free by its truth. And, perhaps surprisingly, the Bible reveals beautiful examples of the pleasures that proper sexual expression should bring to our lives.

The Song of Solomon is undoubtedly the largest and most detailed biblical example of the beauty of sexual life God intended us to share. But it is by no means the only example. The Book of Proverbs warns against adultery while extolling the pleasures of intimacy in your own house:

“Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. ... Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer—may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love” (Prov. 5:15, 17-19).

This passage contains a simple instruction about enjoying sexuality in a healthy way. In the New Testament, Jesus quotes from the Book of Genesis regarding God’s intention for marriage:

“But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate” (Mark 10:6-9).

Jesus reminds us that from the very beginning it was God's intention that man and woman come together sexually and become one flesh, a condition that occurs only in intercourse. This drive to unite is so strong that a man will leave the comforts of home and all that is familiar to begin a new life with his wife. This bond is so important to God that He commands that no man separate it.

The undeniable truth is that God wants you to have great and satisfying sex; it's His idea. By following specific and appropriate boundaries, we can have a life and marriage that are not only satisfying to us but also pleasing to the One who made us.

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