

Friends With Benefits

“Friends with benefits” flies in the face of the faith conviction that sex is reserved for marriage.

Sherry attends a Christian college. I asked her how her sophomore year was going. She hesitated. What followed shocked Sherry’s mom because she was totally unaware of an unconventional dating trend often found on college campuses.

It’s called “friends with benefits,” also known as “bed-buddy arrangements” or “hook-up buddies.” And although Sherry had the sense and spiritual conviction to resist engaging in this supposedly uncomplicated sexual arrangement, a few of her friends were picking up the practice.

Friends with benefits (FWB) involves having friends with whom you can have sex or engage in sexual activity. The relationship is not “official” in terms of dating or going steady. Instead, it is an arrangement made between two people to engage in sexual activity anytime the two of them decide to do so.

Teens and young adults who advocate this behavior believe this is a way to fulfill their sexual needs without putting the time and attention into a formal relationship. You hook up, have sex and get on with life.

With the pressure of college acceptance, preparing for the future and living in a sexually saturated society, FWB is convenience-store sex enjoyed in an amoral context. The assumption is that sex happens, so you might as well take control and have it with people who are friends but who require nothing more from you. At least that is the theory.

Engaging in sex outside of marriage is hardly new behavior, but the change in attitude toward conventional dating rules should concern you. FWB is another attempt to debunk the faith conviction that sex is reserved for marriage.

The media play a part in developing the attitudes of teens toward sexuality. A recent study found that the more exposure to media sex teens have, the more likely they are to engage in sexual behavior. And with more teens regularly exposed to Internet pornography, sexual attitudes are being influenced in ways that reduce sexual partners to mere objects of gratification.

The Internet has changed the way people meet and date each other. Though many casual sexual relationships happen spontaneously at parties and events, popular teen Internet sites such as [or](#) provide new ways for teens to meet people and hook up online. You could potentially find a bed buddy online in your local area without having to choose someone from your school. That way, you could have sex without meeting that person in the hall at school the next day.

But how well does FWB work? When you talk to kids, not well at all. Friendships are lost. Rejection is felt. Sexual purity vanishes in a meaningless context. Emotional upheaval results. Deep scars are created.

Therapists—myself included—will tell you FWB will never work, no matter how much one tries to revolutionize dating. Emotional fallout is always present. To believe otherwise is foolish. But the spiritual and moral fallout is even greater.

The truth is that FWBs aren't really friends. They are simply

deceived people giving in to lust. James talks about this when he says: "Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1:14-15, NKJV).

There is good reason to follow God's way of doing things. It prevents us from destroying our lives and perverting God's design. Casual sex never works because sex wasn't designed to be enjoyed in a casual context. You can't redefine truth. Rationales for sex outside of marriage are based on lies.

With FWB, you lose more than a friend. You give away a precious and beautiful part of yourself for a moment of pleasure.

If you think FWB is harmless and hurts no one, you are wrong. If you've engaged in this practice, there is healing. And if you really want a friend with benefits, let me point you to a true friend, Christ. He doesn't take what is sacred from you; He gives His holiness to you. You lose nothing and gain everything.