

Mass Media's 'Hookup' Culture Is Ruining America's View of Sex

(Editor's Note: Due to the nature of this topic, we urge readers to use discretion as you read.)

It is a sad truth, but no one can deny that the culture we live in today is obsessed with sex. We can't turn on the television or drive down the highway without seeing advertisements using sex to sell products. We can't listen to a secular pop song or watch a TV show without subjecting ourselves to double entendre, unambiguous sex-related lyrics or racy one-liners. Nowadays, there are even websites and smartphone apps dedicated solely to helping its users "hook up."

"Hookup." This seemingly innocuous noun was first used to mean "connection" in 1903. In the 1920s, it began to refer to the connection of radio sets and later to television broadcasts. In the early 2000s, it became synonymous with "a meeting for sex," or, according to , a "sex act." Not so innocuous anymore.

Although slightly controversial, a survey conducted last year by *Adam and Eve* found that 70 percent of Americans admitted to "hooking up," at least once, for a one-night stand, while the average number of one-night stands was between two and five. Other studies have also shown that watching media depictions of sexual behavior can promote sexual activity among teenagers and young adults.

Thus, unsurprisingly, today's society preaches that "casual sex" is not only permissible, but in fact advisable. A 2015 *Women's Health* article titled "Seven Times When Casual Sex Is Actually a Good Idea" and advised readers that casual

sex is the perfect way to get over an ex.

Sage advice, right?

A 2014 article in *The Huffington Post* discussed three different studies which sought to answer whether casual sex is healthy or harmful. The author found the studies “limited in scope” and wrote that the inconclusive research forces people to depend on social conventions and personal opinion when discussing hookups. He writes: “If casual sex doesn’t violate your personal sense of integrity in terms of how you treat others, how you honor your commitments and your individual moral code, then what you’re doing is probably not going to cause you either short-term or long-term internal emotional distress.”

The author’s sentiments perfectly reflect the secular humanistic worldview that dominates our culture, the “if-it-feels-good-do-it” reasoning holding man as the measure of all things. Such ethical relativism rejects any form of absolute truth and dictates that each individual must, in any given situation, adjust his moral standards depending on his or her personal judgment. As there is no God in such a flawed belief system, man necessarily becomes his own god. If the secular humanist wants to “hook up” with someone in an effort to get over a breakup, or for no reason at all, he or she may do so as long as it feels right to them.

The Bible teaches man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). The Hebrew root of the Latin phrase for “image of God” (*imago Dei*) means image, shadow or likeness of God. This likeness is what distinguishes us from the rest of creation and the machines mankind creates. We are not merely physical beings, but spiritual ones as well. As such, we have within us a God-given moral compass that functions according to the absolute truths of good and evil, right and wrong. Interestingly, researchers are finding that babies are indeed born with an innate sense of morality.

Often called one's conscience, moral center, or gut instinct, this ethical compass is what we as children would feel moving south as we devised a lie to tell our parents. As soon as the deception touched our lips, the compass needle would spin, alerting us to the inherent sinfulness of our intentions. Now, we may not have heeded it and instead proceeded to fib, but we were fully aware that what we were doing was not morally upright.

Our moral compass is a gift, one we carry throughout our lives to help us navigate right and wrong and any gray areas in between. In doing so, it also serves the double purpose of guarding us from the perils and pain that accompany immoral acts and decisions. After all, even if the secular humanist finds lying acceptable, the law does not. If he lies about his taxes, for example, he could very well find himself in jail.

Perhaps frustrating to the humanist, the laws of our nation reflect the Judeo-Christian worldview (a worldview of absolute truth and objective, transcendent values) on which it was founded. No matter how you *feel* about a particular action, it will bear negative repercussions if it breaks the immutable laws established by our Creator.

Actress Jennifer Lawrence recently made some telling comments that speak of her own moral compass. If you've seen the blockbuster hit *Passengers*, then you know there were a number of sex scenes between her character, Aurora, and Chris Pratt's character, Jim. Miss Lawrence told *The Hollywood Reporter* that shooting those scenes was a "bizarre experience" and comprised the toughest moments of her acting career to date. When asked how she got through it, she answered:

"You drink. You get really, really drunk; but that led to more anxiety. He was married. ... I knew it was my job but I couldn't tell my stomach [that]."

Her stomach, aka her moral compass, was unconvinced that her

on-screen hookup with Pratt was simply her job. Passionately kissing a married man felt wrong to her, so wrong that not even alcohol could mask her misgivings.

Miss Lawrence's "bizarre experience" is not unique. Many women (non-actresses, I should add) pair alcohol with their one-night stands. A study published in the *Journal of Sex Research* found that females who drank before "hooking up" "were more likely to feel discontent with their hookup decisions." It seems obvious that if people are reaching for alcohol to help them get in the mood for sex, then it's highly probable they shouldn't be engaging in it at all. When our moral compass is trying to tell us something, one of the worst things we can do is silence it with mood-altering substances.

Despite the fact that Miss Lawrence wasn't really having sex with Pratt, she was nevertheless apprehensive about the make-believe sexual scenes. She's not the only actress who's ever felt uncomfortable pretending to make love on screen. Maria Schneider (*Last Tango in Paris*) and Dakota Johnson (*Fifty Shades of Grey*) have also spoken negatively of their cinematic love affairs. Miss Johnson called her experience "the worst thing ever," while Miss Schneider admitted that during her sex scenes, her tears were real.

Like it or not, young people in America admire celebrities and look to them as role models. Teenage girls and even small children idolize actresses and display their adoration by dressing like them, talking like them, buying the products they endorse and following them on social media. Perhaps revealing statements, such as those made by Jennifer Lawrence, will get young women's attention and show them that "hooking up" isn't as wonderful as the world and its advertisers make it out to be.

Sex was never intended to be uncomfortable, emotionally painful or "the worst thing ever." On the contrary, God designed it as a sacred gift to be unwrapped again and again

by husbands and wives. Just read Song of Solomon for proof!

In an interview about her Lifetime Original Movie *Love by the 10th Date*, Christian actress and author Meagan Good told *The Christian Post* that “in God’s timing love will come. A lot of times the reason we’re single is because we have to focus on what it is we’re supposed to be doing, so that when that person comes along, they complement that.”

That is a message MOVIEGUIDE® prays will resonate in the hearts and minds of young people in this country. While the world wants us to buy into its hedonistic, pleasure-seeking philosophies, the Lord wants us to taste and see that His way is the best way, a way that leads to ultimate contentment, joy and satisfaction that the world does not and can never offer.

“Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him” (Ps. 34:8). {eoa}

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This article originally appeared on Movieguide®.