

What's Driving the Growing Abstinence Trend Among Young Americans?

It's tempting to look at the so-called "Great Abstaining," as The Cut put it, and think it's a notch on the belt of those preaching biblical morality in a culture run amok.

But I don't think that's what's happening, unfortunately.

I think what we're seeing now—this growing (and, on its face, encouraging) trend toward sexual abstinence—is just the flip side of the same counterfeit coin: the siren sound of the world, of our own fractured morality. It's the same voice that has told us: "Sex is just sex." "There's no harm in casual hookups." "What's the problem if it's consensual, with or without marriage?"

Now, apparently, many are choosing to abstain from sex (ironically) for what I believe to be the very same reasons they opted to have sex indiscriminately.

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Scripture urges abstinence outside of marriage because God calls us to keep the marriage bed "undefiled" (Heb. 13:4-6). In the beginning, God made clear His design is for man and woman to join together in marriage and become "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Those principles—the spiritual bond solidified by the act of sex—reverberate throughout the biblical narrative. The apostle Paul urged believers to practice lordship over their bodies and fleshly desires, even going so far as to write that, to the man who has sex with a prostitute, with her he has become "one body" (1 Cor. 6:12-20).

Sex is a gift from God intended to bring about a beautiful spiritual oneness expressed in the physical world.

So what's the issue, then, with this burgeoning "Great Abstaining?" Well, it's rooted not in recognition of just how important and sacred sex is. Rather, it's just the opposite; it seems tethered to the errant belief that there is no real value in sex and its ultimate, tangible purpose—procreation.

People are choosing to opt out of sex because they are rejecting the value of relationship, of romance, and, finally, of marriage.

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Rather than finding satisfaction in husband-and-wife relationships, younger Americans are choosing themselves over sacrificial love. The Cut's Kelsey Osgood wrote the next generation is "deemphasizing traditional romance." They aren't just choosing to shun marriage; many are actively arguing it's no longer valuable.

As for sexuality, they are opting to gratify their own urges in the same hedonistic way our broken world has always encouraged, just with a new spin. This is entirely unsurprising, given our culture's years-long celebration of so-called "self-love."

"The benefits from a period of celibacy are endless because, ultimately, it's about self-development," The Independent reported last year.

The societal shift toward abstinence isn't moral; it's egotistical.

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