

# What Causes Sexual Sin?

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## The Roller Coaster Battle for Marriage

Last week was momentous in the battle for marriage in the U.S. It was a little like riding a roller coaster. On Tuesday, the D.C. City Council finished their first of two readings of their proposed same-sex marriage law. The reading passed by a margin of 11 to 2. The council seems determined to prevent the people from voting on this issue. Their rationale is that “civil rights” is not something that should be voted on by the masses. One councilman, who represents a strong, pro-marriage ward, looked visibly shaken. He spoke with a quavering voice. Ironically Harry Thomas, Jr., son of a former city council member, stated that he would not allow anyone in his ward to be “disenfranchised.” Undoubtedly, he meant to say that he did not want anyone to experience discrimination.

Disenfranchisement, however, is exactly what is happening to the average voter in D.C. The council feels that it has a right to vote on this issue, but it will not allow the citizens to vote. They also chafe at the fact that the District does not have a genuine vote on the Hill – it only has a shadow congresswoman. Sadly, there was only voice for democratic justice on the council – Marion Barry. The former mayor correctly told the group that the city council had not gone far enough in allowing liberty and true democracy to have their way. As a result of the fact the city is “deeply divided,” he announced that he would be working for a popular

vote on the issue.

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## An Uncluttered Christmas

I used to be a consummate Christmas shopper. By the time December hit, I was way ahead of the game. I would have a mountain of bargain finds, admired goodies and toys to die for tucked away on a shelf just waiting to be wrapped and stowed lovingly under the tree. I found that shopping ahead spread the financial burden throughout the year and helped me avoid the last-minute holiday shopping rush.

Sounds like a plan, doesn't it? I thought so, too, until several years ago. Something happened that made me rethink my supposedly brilliant strategy.

It was the night before Christmas, and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, but I felt like a louse! The tree looked bulimic – only I was the one who had binged. Brilliantly wrapped packages were bulging from every available nook and cranny.

I slumped to the floor and thought, "We have only two children. There's enough here for

10!"

My husband and I stared at each other. We realized that things had gotten out of hand. We had to ask ourselves: What message are we giving our children?

One by one we started dismantling the swollen pile. This present can wait for a birthday, this one for next Christmas, this one for a special reward for hard work.

Finally the stack looked sensible.

Right then and there, we made a decision. In the future, Christmas gifts would be limited to three types: (1) A gift really desired; (2) a needed item; 3) something educational. Of course, our children hated the idea and hoped we would eventually come to our senses.

We haven't.

And we've seen a change. No longer is Christmas an endless list of "wants." There is a new emphasis on cherished gifts. This represents a stark contrast to the disturbing trend among kids today to feel entitled to get whatever they want, whenever they want it.

As I've listened to children move through the hallways of our house, I've heard the chatter of "more." "We

have more videos  
than you.” “I have a CD player in my room.” “You don’t have  
your own phone  
line?” “I’m asking for a laptop.” “You need a cell phone to  
look  
important.”

They get it from their parents. My favorite is the mother who  
proudly boasts that her daughter will outdo everyone in the  
neighborhood. She  
will have the best of everything – before everyone else. The  
daughter knows  
this strategy and is horrified if anyone beats her to the  
material  
punch.

Not understanding her conscious intention to overload her  
daughter  
with “stuff,” I naively asked, “Aren’t you worried you’re  
spoiling her?” The  
blank stare she gave me was enough to answer my question.

One summer the  
hot ticket was a scooter. Everyone on our block ran to the  
stores to buy one. My  
kids asked, but they knew what was coming: “Tell me again why  
I should run to  
the store to buy you a \$100 item?”

Materialism not only distorts the  
meaning of Christmas but also creates ungrateful kids. It’s  
time to stop the  
madness. Instead of a new scooter, take your kids to a soup  
kitchen and let them  
serve. Visit a homeless shelter or a hospital children’s ward,

and put things in perspective.

I know what I am saying isn't new, but we need to hear it regularly. It's so easy to indulge our kids this time of year. But we need to examine our motives.

Is our overindulgence related to guilt from being absent or unavailable? Is it an attempt to communicate love, compete with others, create an identity or look successful? Is it the result of idol worship, a lack of self-restraint or misguided thinking?

When I see kids quickly open presents and throw them off to the side without even a thank you, I know something is wrong. When little Suzie tells me Christmas was no fun because she didn't get what she wanted, I am concerned. The Grinch hasn't stolen Christmas; our ungratefulness has.

Christmas is about God's giving His Son as a glorious gift to mankind. Don't clutter that gift with so many others that He gets lost in the fray. This season teach the children in your life to cherish the gift they already have – Jesus.

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# The Prosperous Soul

**3 John 1:1-14** Not too long ago there was a lot of prosperity teaching. One of the examples given to try to prove God wanted to bless our giving was the promise of the hundredfold return for the gifts we give to God. Some of these evangelists preaching such a return on gifts were expecting the gifts of money to be given to them. They wanted the hundredfold return, and often were manipulating people by putting guilt trips on them to give monies to their ministry. These evangelists never told the whole truth about the hundredfold return. We are only promised the hundredfold return if we forsake certain things. Listen to what the Bible actually says about the hundredfold return. "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30, KJV).

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# Security in the Lord

**Psalms 125:1-5** We have led many tours to Israel, and sometimes people are hesitant to go because they are fearful of terrorists and possible war in Israel. When they express those fears, Tom and I always share that we feel safer walking the streets of Jerusalem than we do walking the streets of Atlanta. There is a sense of God's peace and presence in

Israel that supersedes the threat of war and terrorism.

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## The Priestly Role

**1 John 5:1-21** Few know the power God has given them through Jesus Christ to confess and remit the sins of others. This is the ministry of reconciliation. God was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to Himself. The possibility of the whole world being reconciled to God was extended on the cross when Jesus died not only for your sin, but also for the sins of the whole world. When Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," Jesus was entering into the ministry of reconciliation.

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## The Bible's Archeological Evidence

Atheists are not the only doubters to scoff at the existence of the Bible. For centuries people have rejected the truth of the Word and its ability to set men free. But like their predecessors, they have failed to disprove the authenticity of its existence. Scripture says Yeshua was "made flesh and dwelt among us." And God Himself inspired men of old to tell His story. To see archeological evidence of the validity of the Bible, watch video below.

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# Ahmadinejad: 'Israel Can't Do a Thing to Stop Iran'

✘ Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Wednesday Israel and its Western backers “cannot do a ... thing to stop Iran’s nuclear work.”

In a televised speech at an Iranian uranium conversion plant in Isfahan, Ahmadinejad rejected the “illegal” censure of his nation by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He said the agency was “under pressure from a few superficially powerful countries.”

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# Saying 'I Do' in the Holy Land

✘ Christians have long made pilgrimages to the ancient Village of Cana where Jesus performed His first miracle. More recently, couples have begun visiting the Franciscan Wedding Church to get married or renew their marriage vows.

Jesus performed His first miracle, turning water into wine at a wedding, thereby validating and blessing the covenant of marriage.

Father Garret Edmunds, a pilgrimage leader to the Holy Land, points out that Jesus’ primary reason for being there was for the wedding.

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