

Sex is God's gift to be enjoyed within natural marriage.

"The hookup culture is unraveling the social fabric. It produces isolated, alienated adults who come together temporarily for physiological release. By repeatedly breaking up (or never connecting in the first place), many people fail to learn how to form the strong, resilient bonds needed to create happy, fulfilling, long-term marriages and families...Secular morality doesn't fit the real universe."

– Nancy R. Pearcey, *Love Thy Body*¹

Proverbs 6:32

He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;

Sex and God's will

- God's will is for you to be sanctified – 1 Thessalonians 4:3a *For this is the will of God, your sanctification:*

Q: What is sanctification?

A: Becoming more like Jesus.

Q: In context, what does sanctification look like?

A: Abstaining from sexual immorality – 1 Thessalonians 4:3b *that you abstain from sexual immorality;*

- God's will is for you to exercise grace-driven self-control – 1 Thessalonians 4:4 *that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,*

- God's will is for you to live differently than those far from God – 1 Thessalonians 4:5 *not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;*

God's purpose for sex

- 1) Procreation – Genesis 1:28a *Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth...*
- 2) Establishing the family unit – Genesis 2:24 *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*
 - Sex is not separate from natural marriage.

"The irony is that science is constantly uncovering new evidence of the profound interconnection between body and person. Pick up any recent book on sexuality, and you will read about the role played by hormones such as oxytocin and vasopressin. Scientists first learned about oxytocin because of its role in childbirth and breastfeeding. The chemical is released when a mother nurses her baby, and it stimulates an instinct for caring and nurturing. It is often called the attachment hormone.

Imagine the surprise when scientists discovered that oxytocin is also released during sexual intercourse, especially (but not exclusively) in women. Consequently, the desire to attach to the other person when we have sex is not only an emotion but also part of our chemistry. Oxytocin has been shown to create a sense of trust. As one sex therapist puts it, when we have intercourse, we create 'an involuntary chemical commitment.'

The upshot is that even if you *think* you are having a no-strings-attached hookup, you are in reality creating a chemical bond--- whether you mean to or not. An advice columnist for *Glamour* magazine warns that because of hormones, 'we often get prematurely attached.' Even when you intend to just have casual sex, 'biology might trump your intentions.' That may be why Paul said, 'Whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body' (1 Cor. 6:18). Sex involves our bodies down to the level of our biochemistry.

The same holds true for men. The main neurochemical responsible for the male response in intimate sexual contact is vasopressin. It is structurally similar to oxytocin and has a similar emotional effect. Scientists believe it stimulates bonding with a woman and with offspring.

Vasopressin has been dubbed the monogamy molecule. As Grossman observes, 'You might say we are designed to bond.'

Paul's words ring even more true today than in his own time: 'Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh"' (v.16). Lauren Winner at Duke University translates Paul's words like this: 'Don't you know that when you sleep with someone, your body makes a promise, whether you do or not?' The implication is that repeatedly hooking up involves repeatedly breaking that bodily 'promise.'" – Nancy R. Pearcey²

- 3) Pleasure – *The Song of Solomon* is an entire book in the Bible dedicated to romantic love within marriage.

Song of Solomon 2:6 *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me!*

4:5 *Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, that graze among the lilies.*

4:7 *You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you.*

5:14-15 *His arms are rods of gold, set with jewels. His body is polished ivory, bedecked with sapphires. ¹⁵ His legs are alabaster columns, set on bases of gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars.*

Proverbs 5:18-19

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, ¹⁹ a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.

Action steps

- If cohabitating, repent, then separate or get married.
- If single, pursue purity.
- If married, seek to love and please one another.
 - Husbands and wives, if sex is sporadic or non-existent, agree on a schedule and put it on the calendar.
 - Allow Scripture rather than porn or past sexual addictions to set your expectations.
 - Don't deprive one another of God's gift: Being sexually distant creates a fertile breeding ground for your spouse to sin.
 - Husbands, how you treat your wife outside of the bedroom sets the tone for the bedroom.

- Wives, without you, your husband cannot righteously fulfill his sexual needs. You are the only person who can.

Recommended resources

- Focus on the Family: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com>
- *101 Questions to Ask Before You Get Engaged* by H. Norman Wright
- *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions About Life and Sexuality* by Nancy Pearcey
- *Unchanging Witness: The Consistent Christian Teaching on Homosexuality in Scripture and Tradition* by S. Donald Fortson III & Rollin G. Grams

Christian contrast with the pagan world

It's helpful to remember that Christianity was not created in a vacuum. Two central distinctions set Christianity apart from the surrounding Greco-Roman world:

- a. Exclusive worship of Jesus Christ as God: Rejection of idol worship.
- b. Exclusive sexual monogamy: Sex is reserved for monogamous heterosexual marriage (Acts 15:29) ...a foreign concept in Jesus' day outside the Jewish community. What a revolutionary idea stemming from Jesus and the Apostles!

The early Christian writer Tertullian (155-240 A. D.) highlights this distinction between Christians and the culture in *The Apology*:

But we Christians look upon ourselves as one body, informed as it were by one soul; and being thus incorporated by love . . . among us all things are in common, excepting wives . . . and this is the only thing you enjoy in common; for you not only make no conscience in violating the wife of your friend, but with amazing patience and gratitude lend him your own.³

Tertullian's point: A Christian man is willing to share everything but his wife. Why? Because of the uniquely Judeo-Christian concept that sex is reserved for marriage. On the contrary, being a Swinger was mainstream in the pagan world of the early church. There were several sexual norms that were widely accepted in Jesus' day outside of the Jewish community:

- a. Pederasty (child molestation).
- b. Sex with slaves (men, women, and children), prostitutes, mistresses, etc.
- c. Homosexual acts (homosexual orientation not required).

Philosopher Martha Nussbaum explains, "What is socially important is to penetrate rather than to be penetrated . . . the passive recipient is marked by that fact as of lower social status."⁴ Fortson & Grams write, "The sexual ethics of Paul the apostle and the early church which followed his teaching turned the Roman world upside down. In a radical reversal of Greco-Roman values, Christian leaders instructed believers that sexual relations were only acceptable in heterosexual marriage."⁵

¹ Nancy R. Pearcey, *Love Thy Body* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2018), 128, 11.

² *Ibid.*, 128.

³ Tertullian, *The Apology of Tertullian and the Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius*, trans. W. M. Reeve and Jeremy Collier (London: Newberry House, 1889), 111.

⁴ Martha Nussbaum, *Philosophical Interventions* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 73, in Pearcey, 105.

⁵ Fortson & Grams, 43.