

# SEXUAL INTIMACY

A Message To Young People

By Andy Snoke

Sexual intimacy. What is it? What does God have to say about this subject? The airwaves of radio and television are filled with an animalistic one-sided message of sex. Sex is everywhere! Publishers and advertisers have found that sex sells. It is used to sell everything from toothpaste to automobiles. But what does the infallible Word of God have to say on this subject?

The Word of God is not silent on this issue. In fact, it is very clear and to the point. The Lord wants His ways to be clear to the church. Let's examine what the God and Creator of everything, including sexual intimacy, has to say about this subject.

"Marriage is honorable in all, and undefiled, but fornicators (single people that partake of sex outside of marriage) and adulterers (a married person that partakes of sex outside of their marriage) God will judge." (Hebrews 13:4)

God created sex for procreation of life and He places His blessing on it. Sex is not a dirty subject. But listen carefully, it was created for and it belongs ONLY IN MARRIAGE! Sexual intimacy is a gift that God gives to the marriage of a husband and wife and is very honorable. It was designed to be enjoyed by husband and wife and never to be shared with any one else other than one's spouse!

When a person follows God's commands there is always a blessing associated with it. But when we break God's laws there is always a penalty to be paid. At the same time that God says that marriage is honorable He also warns us that He WILL JUDGE fornicators and adulterers.

Permit me to very briefly list some facts and figures that are associated with fornication and adultery in North America.

- \* As of 1992 there are now 1 million reported cases of HIV.
- \* Sexual transmitted diseases infect 3 million teenagers annually.
- \* 1.1 Million teenagers get pregnant every year, of which 400,000 will end the life of their child through abortion.
- \* 75% of these teenagers will then drop out of school, greatly reducing their chances for education and a good future.
- \* Over 30% of those that engage in sex while using the so-called "safe sex" protection will still get AIDS (when having sex with HIV infected partners).
- \* 500,000 new cases of herpes are reported in the US annually.

We could list page after page of the consequences of sex outside of marriage. I think it would be interesting to list on a piece of paper the pro's and con's of intimacy outside of marriage. On one side of the paper you would see all of the statistics listed above plus pages of more heartbreaking data, on the other side of the paper you would see "Marriage is honorable and the bed undefiled."

Some may say, "Well, it's my body, I can do with it what I want!" Nothing could be farther from the truth. It is not your body. God has loaned it to you for your earthly years only. After your years are over, it is returned to the dust and we are to give account to God for the things done in our bodies. We are simply stewards (a person who takes care of another person's goods or properties) of our bodies.

1 Cor. 6:13-20, "Foods for the body and the body for foods: but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord: and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he who is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is outside the body: but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

The scriptures have some very strong warnings about sexual intimacy outside of marriage. Sex is much more than a physical act. There is a joining of the heart and spirit during intimacy. The two become one flesh. When you become one with a partner other than your spouse, the intimacy begins to send mixed emotions. It then becomes so very difficult and emotionally devastating when you separate and become involved with someone else, because you "were one" with a previous partner.

In fact, the best way to kill a beautiful relationship, is to begin having sex outside of marriage. When couples begin engaging in sex outside of marriage one of the first things that they lose is communication. A relationship without communication is dead.

So, what should a young person do? 1 Thess. 4:3-5 says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel (body) in sanctification (setting your life apart for God) and honor, not in the lust of sensuality, even as the Gentiles (those outside the household of God) who know not God."

Please note in this verse that he says that we should know how to possess our bodies with sanctification and honor.

Let me recommend a few pointers.

1. First and foremost, purpose in your heart, that you will remain a virgin until the day you are married. (Daniel 1:8) Make a conscious decision before God of what your standards are and **don't compromise!**

Don't be afraid to tell your friends and your date that you will not engage in sex before marriage. If this statement scares a few dates away, then they were not worth dating in the first place.

2. Because of your decision, refrain from dating and socializing in places that may promote immoral activity. Many sincere, well-meaning Christians have become parents before marriage because they allowed themselves to go places with too much temptation. Absolutely, and at all costs, avoid any function that serves alcohol!

3. Don't get in a hurry to date. Statistically, the sooner a person begins dating, the more likely they will lose their virginity before marriage. Spend time getting to know God. You won't miss out on anything.

4. Dress modestly. A person can dress modestly and look sharp at the same time. Ask yourself, "What type of message is my dress and mannerisms sending?"

5. Don't be in a hurry to make a commitment. Many young people are under pressure to be "going steady" with someone, regardless of who it is. The dating process is a time to get to

know the opposite sex. Look for the God given qualities that you can live with the rest of your life.

6. When dating, be conservative with physical affection. By design, the physical attraction between a man and a woman is progressive. It may begin with a stolen glance, then eye-to-eye contact is made. Soon the couple is engaged in conversation. Hands are held. Later, the arm is innocently placed around the shoulders when walking, or it may move to the waist. Each step is a progression to the next step. As a couple begins to fall in love there is a natural desire for a greater intimacy. The idea is not to condemn physical affection for unmarried dating, but the warning is there of the danger of going too far. You have to know what the limits are and have the courage to say, "That is far enough." The word, 'No' should be used without fear. We think of the men being the usual aggressor and this may be true, however, the ladies have been known to be open to the ultimate because they feel it is a must to win the man. The scripture says in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor." Learn to respect one another as the temple of God where God dwells. God has designed this progression of affection to reach intimacy in marriage only. When young people progress quickly in physical affection, the senses begin to send all types of wrong messages that were intended for married couples only.

Don't believe the world's lie, that a person can't control themselves sexually. Of course they can! The philosophy of the day tells us that we are only a bag of chemical matter led by our impulses. If we are only a bag of matter then we really don't matter after all! You can resist sexual temptation just as we have been discussing, by living a Godly life and having a plan to live by.

7. Don't bend to peer pressure. I like the story of the 15-year-old girl who was being ridiculed by her friends for still being a virgin. With dignity she said to her friends, "Listen, any day of the week I can become like you, but you can NEVER become like me again!" Remember, the fornicator before marriage, can quite often become the adulterer after marriage.

8. Flee youthful lusts and evil desire! 2 Tim. 2:22, "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Avoid anything and everything that promotes lust (i.e. pornography, rock music, improper TV, inappropriate friends, literature, etc.) Remember, God has created intimacy for marriage. Your virginity is a gift that you give away only once. It is God's wedding gift that you share with your spouse. It is not to be shared as just some part of a "relationship" with different people.

Follow God's plan for intimacy and in marriage it will bring a lifetime of enjoyment and blessing. Don't cheat your future spouse and yourself by engaging in sex before marriage. Let it be a blessing in marriage as it is intended.

Now, to those that have already short-circuited God's plan by engaging in sexual intimacy before marriage, there is forgiveness. Tell God what happened and ask for His forgiveness and divine guidance, and SIN NO MORE! A woman, who had been caught in the very act of adultery, was brought to Jesus. The unmerciful mob reminded Jesus that Moses law required that she be stoned to death for her sin. Jesus wisely told them that he that was without sin should cast the first stone. All were with sin and they all dropped their stones, one by one. Jesus then looked at the woman and asked her, "Where are your accusers?" She replied that they had all left. Christ then told her, "Neither do I condemn you, but go and SIN NO MORE." He forgave her but commanded her to change her lifestyle and no longer continue in sin.

However, if you have sinned and are planning a wedding, it is important that you be honest with your future spouse about your past. Don't begin a marriage by keeping secrets that can be devastating later on in the marriage when the truth comes to light.

Let us adhere to God's program for us and enjoy to the fullest God's very best!

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