

Bio:

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Andy is a full time youth pastor of Kings Church Horsham where he is a regular speaker. Andy is passionate about seeing people come to know Jesus for themselves. He loves reading the bible and is committed to faithfully preaching the "whole council of God" even when it is unpopular in today's politically correct society.



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Is Sex Before Marriage OK?

Can I have sex if I am not married?

Introduction

This was possibly the most frequently asked question I had as a youth pastor. “Is it OK to have sex before I get married?” **My answer is simple ... NO.** In no circumstance are you to have sex, or be involved in any sexual act unless it is to the person you are legally married to and then I encourage you to have as much sex as you want!

Fundamental Assumptions

There are some basic assumptions that I am making about you the reader and your beliefs.

Assumption 1 – You love Jesus

My fundamental assumption is that you have committed your life to Jesus, you have asked him to forgive your sins, that you love him with all your heart, mind, soul and strength¹ and that it is your greatest desire to live your life for him, to please him by living a life worthy of his name, to fulfil his commands to you – To love God² and Love People³ and to go and share Jesus with everyone⁴ you can either in word or deed.

Assumption 2 – You believe in the inerrancy of the bible

I assume too that you believe that the bible is the inspired word of God and that it is, in its entirety, for our good, for our instruction, to help us live great lives for God⁵.

These assumptions allow us to read the bible and form our decisions on the basis of scripture. We can then avoid offence as we are simply professing the teaching of the bible and thus the word of God however “unpopular” that may be. We can avoid including our own personal preferences where the bible has clear instruction on what we must do even when that seems contrary to what we, or society and our culture, want.

Adjustment of the Question to – Can I have Sex outside of marriage

I would like to alter the question slightly to make it more inclusive in that the question, “Is sex before marriage OK?” tackles the issues more teenagers I deal with are asking. It does not include situations where someone was previously married and whose spouse dies for example. By asking the question - “Can I have sex outside of marriage?” I also address those people who are no longer teenagers too.

Can I have Sex outside of Marriage?

Whilst I have already given the short answer of “No” I will now provide you with the biblical basis for my answer. First of all we need to align our language and terminology. The bible was written thousands of years ago and terms and language might not always reflect exactly what was meant when the bible was written. For example today “Cool” means awesome, great or nice. If we were to translate the phrase “Andy is cool” in many years to come using a dictionary we would translate it to mean “Andy’s temperature was lower than the ambient temperature in the room”. This was not what was meant, what was meant was that “Andy was great”, or “Andy was nice”. In the same way we need to make sure that the bible is translated into words we can not only understand, but also reflect the true meaning that the writer was trying to convey at the time.

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In the context of this paper on, “Is Sex outside of Marriage OK?”, we will come across the biblical term “Sexual Immorality”. It is key that we understand what that phrase really means before we get too far into the discussion.

Sexual Immorality

This is a term we find throughout the bible in both old and new testaments. The phrase ‘Sexual Immorality’ in the New Testament comes from the Greek word “*porneia*”. This is the root word from which we get the English word “**Pornography**” and is more accurately translated as ‘fornication’. In fact the word fornication is the word the bible translators used in both old and new testaments in early translations such as the King James Version, but over the years it went out of fashion and was replaced with “Sexual Immorality”. I prefer the term ‘fornication’ because wherever ‘immorality’ is used we, in our current culture, see morality as not absolute. We wrongly assume that morality is a personal issue, what is right for you is not right for me. However, the bible does not support this at all. God is true⁶ and every man a liar⁷! God’s truth is absolute. He is the moral absolute. So when we talk of sexual immorality we are not defining immorality in terms of popular culture or political correctness, but rather what the bible says is true. Fortunately the word ‘fornication’ does not lead us into a debate on morality. Although a little old fashioned, it does convey the sentiment and meaning of the Greek word “*Porneia*” very well. Looking up fornication in the dictionary we read that it is the, “Voluntary sexual intercourse between two unmarried persons or two persons not married to each other”.

Fornication (for-ni-ca-tion)

Voluntary sexual intercourse between two unmarried persons or two persons not married to each other

www.dictionary.com

So, what does the bible have to say about “*Porneia*”/Fornication/Sexual Immorality?” Well, first and foremost it says we should abstain from it⁸. Even that we should run away, or flee from it⁹. Keep away,¹⁰ even - just don’t do it¹¹!

If it were ok to have sex outside of marriage, why would Paul say, “But because of the temptation to sexual immorality (*Porneia*), each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband¹²”. There would be no need whatsoever for Paul to say this if sex was permissible between people other than your spouse. Clearly Paul is saying here that he recognises that the temptation to fornicate, or take part in sexual immorality, are huge so he says for this reason that each of us should have their own spouse.

Paul goes so far as to say the body is not meant for sexual immorality (Fornication/*Porneia*) but for God¹³. Our bodies we are told are the temple of the Holy Spirit, purchased by Jesus through his death on the cross.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (New International Version)

¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.

As a Christ-follower therefore my body is not my own, but God’s. It is not therefore meant for my personal pleasure but for God’s glory¹⁴. We can only honour God with our body by looking after it and using it in

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accordance with the maker's instructions. He tells us not to take part in fornication, that is not to take part in sexual intercourse or any sexual act outside the context of biblical marriage between one man and one woman.

Sex Outside Marriage is a Sin

With an understanding of the biblical term of sexual immorality or fornication, we read in Corinthians that Paul is concerned that when he goes to the church again that he will have to mourn for those in the church that have, "sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced¹⁵". Paul clearly identifies sexual immorality as a sin that needs to be repented of. This is reiterated in Revelation 9:21 where even as the end of the world draws in, people still refuse to repent of their sins, several of which are named – you will not be surprised that sexual immorality is named as one of those sins.

The bible I believe sees this particular sin not worse than any other in that all sin separates us from God, but a sin that so easily catches us out¹⁶. This is evident in our society today as we witness devastating effects of ignoring God's commands to us as society tries to tell us it's all "OK". I believe the Apostle Paul recognises this as he tells Christians that there should not even be a hint of sexual immorality among us¹⁷. It should not even be on the agenda. We should be setting an example to those around us¹⁸.

Paul tells that we are not even to associate with a person who says they are a follower of Christ yet is sexually immoral¹⁹. This I believe relates to those Christ-Followers who profess faith but who consistently deny the truth of the bible and refuse to receive correction from those in authority in the church.

Jesus himself when speaking through John's vision in Revelation to the church in Pergamum says of them that they professed faith in Jesus yet continued to practice sexual immorality without repentance. He warns them that if they do not repent that he will come and judge them with the sword of his word²⁰.

I believe that scripture clearly shows that sexual immorality is a sin to be avoided, left behind, walked away from and most importantly repented of.

We Should Stop It

If we are involved in sexual immorality in anyway, be it full sexual relations or even if we are "fooling around" getting involved in sexual acts of any kind, such as fondling other sexual parts, oral sex, foreplay or simply touching someone with the intention of giving you or them sexual pleasure, you should stop as the bible clearly tells us this is sin.

Colossians 3:5 (English Standard Version)

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

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Remember, if you are a true Christ-follower and have been born again by asking Jesus to forgive you, recognising that he took the punishment you deserve, that he absorbed the wrath of God in your place then the bible tells us that we are a “New Creation” and that the old desires and passions have passed away²¹. We can therefore overcome these desires as Christ gives us the strength and resolve that we need²².

The Grace of God

Remember that there is no condemnation if you are a true Christ follower²³. God’s grace is more than sufficient for you to overcome this and the weaker you feel the better it is because God’s power is made perfect in your weakness²⁴. As we have already seen, all you need to do is repent, ask Jesus to forgive you for your past actions and turn from them. Through the Holy Spirit God will strengthen you in your inner being²⁵ so that you can overcome. Who is it that over comes the world? Only he who believes in the Lord Jesus (1 John 5:5). Remember that he who is in you is greater than he that is in the world²⁶. You can do all things because it is Christ that will give you the strength you need²⁷

Don’t beat yourself up because of this ... just turn from it to Jesus and ask for his forgiveness and the strength to walk away from it.

If you really love the person you have been sleeping with then you will want the best for them and the bible tells us that God’s best is for sex to be within marriage. If they are a Christian and you love them and you feel your relationship is ready for sex, then the bible says it is ready for marriage as marriage is the only acceptable context for sexual intimacy. If the person you are involved with is not a Christian then there are other things you need to consider – such as, “Can I date/marry a non-Christian?”. I believe the bible clearly says no on this issue too. (If you would like to read more on this issue download my paper [here](#) at www.andyrobinson.org.uk).

Help

If you have read this and now understand that the bible is clear on this issue and that sex of any description is not permitted outside of marriage, then I would suggest that you find someone to talk with who will help you. Not the person you are physically intimate with, although you will have to explain this to them, but someone who will pray with you, stand with you and help you through this. If you are in a church then maybe you can find someone there. If you are not yet in a church my advice is find one, get hooked in and get the support you need. If you are unsure how to find a church near you then visit www.andyrobinson.org.uk/churches.asp

Research Notes:

Root Greek Words which are translated “Sexual Immorality” or “Fornication”

Porneia (Strong's G4202) - πορνεία

- 1) illicit sexual intercourse
 - i. adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals etc.
 - ii. sexual intercourse with close relatives; Lev. 18
 - iii. sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman; Mk. 10:11,12
- 2) metaph. the worship of idols
 - i. of the defilement of idolatry, as incurred by eating the sacrifices offered to idols

References

Mat 5:32, Mat 15:19, Mat 19:9, Mar 7:21, Jhn 8:41, Act 15:20, Act 15:29, Act 21:25, 1Cr 5:1, 1Cr 6:13, 1Cr 6:18, 1Cr 7:2, 2Cr 12:21, Gal 5:19, Eph 5:3, Col 3:5, 1Th 4:3, Rev 2:21, Rev 9:21, Rev 14:8, Rev 17:2, Rev 17:4, Rev 18:3, Rev 19:2

Porneuō (Strong's G4203) - πορνεύω

- 1) to prostitute one's body to the lust of another
- 2) to give one's self to unlawful sexual intercourse
 - a) to commit fornication
- 3) metaph. to be given to idolatry, to worship idols
 - a) to permit one's self to be drawn away by another into idolatry

References

1Cr 6:18, 1Cr 10:8, Rev 2:14, Rev 2:20, Rev 17:2, Rev 18:3, Rev 18:9

Root Hebrew Words which are translated “Sexual Immorality” or “Fornication”

zanah (Strong's H2181) - זנה

- 1) to commit fornication, be a harlot, play the harlot
 - a) (Qal)
- 1) to be a harlot, act as a harlot, commit fornication
- 2) to commit adultery
- 3) to be a cult prostitute
- 4) to be unfaithful (to God) (fig.)
 - b) (Pual) to play the harlot
 - c) (Hiphil)
- 1) to cause to commit adultery
- 2) to force into prostitution
- 3) to commit fornication

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References

Gen 34:31, Gen 38:15, Gen 38:24, Exd 34:15, Exd 34:16, Lev 17:7, Lev 19:29, Lev 20:5, Lev 20:6, Lev 21:7, Lev 21:9, Lev 21:14, Num 15:39, Num 25:1, Deu 22:21, Deu 23:18, Deu 31:16, Jos 2:1, Jos 6:17, Jos 6:22, Jos 6:25, Jdg 2:17, Jdg 8:27, Jdg 8:33, Jdg 11:1, Jdg 16:1

taznuwth (Strong's H8457) - תזנות

1) fornication, harlotry

References

Eze 16:15, Eze 16:20, Eze 16:22, Eze 16:25, Eze 16:26, Eze 16:29, Eze 16:33, Eze 16:34, Eze 16:36, Eze 23:7, Eze 23:8, Eze 23:11, Eze 23:14, Eze 23:17, Eze 23:18, Eze 23:19, Eze 23:29, Eze 23:35, Eze 23:43

Bible References not explicitly stated

¹ Luke 10:27

² Mark 12:30

³ Mark 12:31

⁴ Matthew 28:19

⁵ 2 Timothy 3:16

⁶ John 3:33

⁷ Romans 3:4

⁸ Acts 15:29, 21:25, 1 Thessalonians 4:3

⁹ 1 Corinthians 6:18

¹⁰ Acts 15:29

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 10:8

¹² 1 Corinthians 7:2

¹³ 1 Corinthians 6:13

¹⁴ Isaiah 43:7

¹⁵ 2 Corinthians 12:21

¹⁶ Hebrews 12:1

¹⁷ Ephesians 5:3

¹⁸ 1 Timothy 4:12

¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 5:11

²⁰ Revelation 2:12-17

²¹ 2 Corinthians 5:17

²² Philippians 4:13

²³ Romans 8:1

²⁴ 2 Corinthians 12:9

²⁵ Ephesians 3:16

²⁶ 1 John 4:4

²⁷ Philippians 4:13