

What Does the Bible Say About Sex?



Kay Arthur, David & BJ Lawson



What Does the Bible Say About Sex?

Kay Arthur, David & BJ Lawson

PRECEPT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL



WATERBROOK
P R E S S

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SEX?

PUBLISHED BY WATERBROOK PRESS

12265 Oracle Boulevard, Suite 200

Colorado Springs, Colorado 80921

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © Copyright The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org). Scripture quotations marked (KJV) are taken from the King James Version.

Italics in Scripture quotations reflect the author's added emphasis.

ISBN 978-0-307-45771-4

Copyright © 2008 by Precept Ministries International

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Published in the United States by WaterBrook Multnomah, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Random House Inc., New York.

WATERBROOK and its deer colophon are registered trademarks of Random House Inc.

Printed in the United States of America

2009

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

SPECIAL SALES

Most WaterBrook Multnomah books are available at special quantity discounts when purchased in bulk by corporations, organizations, and special-interest groups. Custom imprinting or excerpting can also be done to fit special needs. For information, please e-mail SpecialMarkets@WaterBrookMultnomah.com or call 1-800-603-7051.

CONTENTS

How to Use This Study	v
Introduction: What Does the Bible Say About Sex?	1
Week One: The Origins of Sex	3
Week Two: The Truth About Virginity	17
Week Three: What God Says About Incest	33
Week Four: The Problem of Adultery	49
Week Five: Other Violations of God's Design	59
Week Six: The Path of Repentance	73

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SEX?

Sex! Everyone is talking about it, yet many people are uncomfortable having honest conversations on this topic. If you bring God into the discussion, people often grow even more uncomfortable. Many find it hard to believe that God would care about this facet of their lives, while others resent what they see as interference with a private matter. Perhaps you are among those who consider their sexual behavior to be completely separate from their faith.

As our culture has grown more obsessed with sex, various misconceptions have cropped up, leaving people both inside and outside of the church confused and asking questions such as...

Why does God hate sex?

Does my choice of sexual expression really matter?

*Whatever we do is okay as long as we love each other,
right?*

If love makes it okay, why do I sometimes feel guilty?

How far is too far if we're not married?

God has a lot to say in His Word about sex, both inside and outside of marriage. You may be surprised to learn that He is not antisex. On the contrary, He invented sex and values it so much that He wants to help us deal with it properly.

We will spend the next six weeks looking at what the Designer of sex says about His intention for this priceless gift.



WEEK ONE

Many people believe that sex is a physical need that must be fulfilled just as our need for food and water must be met. They consider it just another “animal appetite” to be satisfied, without any deeper spiritual meaning. In this lesson we’ll look at the true origins of sex—who invented it, why it was created, and what boundaries, if any, were designed to protect it.

OBSERVE

Let’s go back to the very beginning, to Genesis, the first book of the Bible, and see what God says about the first union between a man and a woman.

Leader: Read Genesis 1:25–28 aloud. Have the group say aloud and...

- mark every reference to **God**, including pronouns such as **Our**, **Us**, and **His**, with a triangle, like this: 
- draw a box around every reference to **man**, including the pronouns **him** and **them**: 

As you read the text, it’s helpful to have the group say the key words aloud as they mark them. This way everyone will be sure they are marking every occurrence of the word, includ-

GENESIS 1:25–28

25 God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and

over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

ing any synonymous words or phrases. Do this throughout the study.

DISCUSS

- What did you learn from marking the references to man?
- Who created man?
- What specifically did you learn about the creation of man in verse 27?
- What is the first thing mankind was commanded to do in these verses?
- Is it possible to fulfill this command without sex?
- Is it possible in a same-sex union?
- Since God created mankind, who created sex?
- Logically then, who would determine the specifications and limitations of sex?

OBSERVE

Now let's look at Genesis 2, which offers a more detailed look at how man and woman were created.

Leader: *Read aloud Genesis 2:7–8, 15–25.*

Have the group say aloud and...

- *draw a box around every reference to **man**, including pronouns.*
- *circle every reference to **woman**, including pronouns and synonyms such as **wife**.*

DISCUSS

- Discuss what you learned about the creation of man and woman in this passage.
- Who was created first?

GENESIS 2:7–8, 15–25

⁷ Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

⁸ The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed....

¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

¹⁶ The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

18 Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.”

19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the

- Within a garden filled with so many good things, one thing was not good, according to verse 18. What was it?
- What was God’s purpose for creating woman?

INSIGHT

The word translated as *helper* in this passage means “someone who comes alongside to help accomplish a task.” It does not indicate someone of lesser value or position. As a matter of fact, the same Hebrew word used here often is used to describe God coming alongside us to deliver us from trouble. According to this passage, man needed a helper, a partner every bit his equal whose strengths would compensate for his weaknesses. She would be suitable for him, spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

- What was man's response to God's creation of woman?
- What did you learn from Genesis 2:24 about God's design for man and woman?
- Who is involved in becoming "one flesh"?

sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.

²² The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

²³ The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

²⁴ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:15–18

¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!


¹⁶ Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, “The two shall become one flesh.”

- Discuss how this compares to what you see in our culture today.

OBSERVE

We’ve seen God’s original design for sex between a man and a woman, but did the Designer’s intent change with the passing of time or with shifting cultural standards? Let’s jump forward several thousand years to the New Testament, where we find Paul writing to the believers in the church at Corinth.

Leader: *Read aloud 1 Corinthians 6:15–18 and have the group do the following:*

- *Underline each occurrence of the phrase **do you not know.***
- *Draw a squiggly line under every reference to **a believer’s body**, including synonyms such as **members** and **himself**, like this: *
- *Mark every occurrence of the words **immorality** and **immoral** with a big **I**.*

DISCUSS

- What did you learn from marking the references to a believer's body in verses 15 and 16? Explain your answer.
- Based on what you have read in this passage and in Genesis 2, how would you explain the meaning of the phrase "the two shall become one flesh"?
- How are believers to respond to immorality, according to verse 18, and why?

OBSERVE

Now that we've confirmed that becoming one flesh refers to being sexually intimate, let's look at another place this phrase is used.

Leader: *Read aloud Ephesians 5:25 and 31. Have the group say aloud and...*

- *draw a box around the words **husbands, man, and his.***
- *circle the words **wives and wife.***

17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

EPHESIANS 5:25, 31

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her...

31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

HEBREWS 13:4

Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

DISCUSS

- What did you learn about the “one flesh” relationship in these verses?
- According to this passage, in what circumstances is the sexual relationship to take place?
- From what you have seen so far, what genders were involved in God’s original design for both marriage and sexual relationships?

OBSERVE

We’ve seen that God designed sex as a significant part of the marriage relationship, but is sex intended only for people who are married to each other?

Leader: *Read Hebrews 13:4.*

- *Have the group say aloud and mark the word **marriage** with a big M.*

DISCUSS

- What did you learn about God’s will for marriage?

- What boundaries have been set for sex, and who established them?
- What right does God have to set the standard for sex?

INSIGHT

The word *fornicator* is translated from the Greek word *pornos*, the root of our English word *pornography*. It refers to any sexual activity outside God's design.

Adulterers refers to individuals participating in any sexual activity where one or both partners are married to someone else.

- What is the consequence of not following God's will when it comes to sex? In other words, if someone who is not married participates in sexual activity, what will God do?
- From all you have seen so far, what effect would fornication and adultery have on marriage?

1 CORINTHIANS 7:1–2, 8–9

¹ Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

² But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband....

⁸ But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I.

⁹ But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

OBSERVE

The early believers lived in a culture that, much like ours today, treated sex as a cheap thing rather than a unique design of God. In response to questions from the church at Corinth, Paul—an unmarried man himself—wrote the following passage to explain how to deal appropriately with sexual desire.

Leader: *Read 1 Corinthians 7:1–2, 8–9 and have the group...*

- *mark the word **immoralities** with a big I.*
- *underline the reference to **self-control**.*

INSIGHT

The Greek word translated as *touch* here means “to handle an object to exert an influence over it.” It also means “to light a fire.” So Paul was referring to any action that ignites sexual passion and desire.

DISCUSS

- According to verses 1 and 2, what is a man to do and why?
- Who is to meet a man's sexual desires? A woman's?
- What was Paul's message to the single and widowed?
- According to verse 9, what is God's solution for dealing with sexual desires?
- From what you have seen so far, and taking into consideration what you read in the Insight box, what did Paul mean when he said, "If they do not have self-control, let them marry"? Was he referring only to sexual intercourse, or was he including other sexual expressions as well? Explain your answer.
- Under what circumstances is sex intended to take place? What purpose(s) is it meant to serve?

WRAP IT UP

Despite what you may have heard, God is not against sex. In fact, from the very beginning He planned for sex to unite a man and his wife. There was no alternate plan, no substitute, and no better companion for man than his wife. God designed the sexual relationship—the union of two into one flesh—to bring the blessings of companionship, unity, and pleasure. God planned on our being sexually satisfied within the marriage relationship.

Sex within the bounds of marriage is awesome; it brings about a dimension of total oneness and completeness that cannot be fully explained to those who haven't experienced it. However, as we'll see in the following weeks, sex outside of marriage violates God's design and can lead to hurt, guilt, shame, and perversion.

God's plan remains unchanged since the beginning of time. No matter how our culture changes and redefines sexual activity, God, the inventor of sex, has clearly set the boundaries for the sexual relationship. Sex is:

designed solely for one man and one woman,
to be practiced inside marriage only,
satisfying and pleasurable when enjoyed within God's
guidelines,
but dangerous and destructive when practiced
outside of God's plan.

In a culture saturated with sex and distorted by lust, following God's design may be considered old-fashioned, but it's the only way

to enjoy this precious gift without destructive consequences.

Take the time this week to examine yourself and see what ways you may have personally bought into the world’s view on sex.



WATERBROOK MULTNOMAH PUBLISHING GROUP

A DIVISION OF RANDOM HOUSE, INC.

© Material

Excerpted from *What Does the Bible Say About Sex?* by **Kay Arthur and David and BJ Lawson**. Copyright© 2008 by Precept Ministries International. Excerpted by permission of WaterBrook Press, a division of Random House, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

No-Homework Bible Studies

That Help You Discover Truth For Yourself

