

The Choice We Have

The Bible gives special instruction and emphasis on the sexuality of humankind: for the married, enjoy it as God's gift. For the unmarried—wait. Clearly God expects us to use the rationality of our humanity to control such things as our sexuality, but does that choice matter? I believe it does. The choice affects one's future spouse. It affects one's children. It affects one's partner. It affects the culture, the family image. It affects the cause of Christ. We have the choice to choose responsibility, and we have the choice to choose irresponsibility. We have the choice to choose obedience, and we have the choice to choose disobedience. It's our choice. We would be ignorant to misuse—or worse, ignore—it.

In 1 Corinthians 6:18, Paul gives a clear command: “Flee fornication.” Objections automatically pop up: what about my happiness? what about my needs? what about my choice? But if we really understood the issue of abstinence, we'd see that any choice other than abstinence would be the most dissatisfying decision. Contrary to popular belief, happiness and a fulfillment of needs will not come from a pre-marital affair. True sexual intimacy and happiness can only be found in a married context. “Sex is an expression of intimacy, not the means to intimacy,” says speaker and author Alice Fryling in her article “Why Wait for Sex?” “True intimacy springs from verbal and emotional communion. True intimacy is built on a commitment to honesty, love and freedom.”¹ Sex outside of marriage commits to nothing. In fact, a study linked women's “early sexual experience with dissatisfaction in their present marriages, unhappiness with the level of sexual intimacy and the prevalence of low self-esteem.”²

¹ Fryling, A. (2002 July 13). Why Wait for Sex? A Look at the Lies We Face. Retrieved October 16, 2009 from <http://www.leaderu.com/common/whywaitfor.html>

² Ibid

In that same verse, Paul explains why: “Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” While sex outside of marriage may produce feelings of happiness, security and intimacy, the feelings dissolve soon after; and many couples who have bound themselves together in this way have experienced emptiness and heavy guilt.

Some couples escape with only the emotional scars, but physical burdens catch others. The World Health Organisation shows STDs occurring more frequently in unmarried persons and young people.³ Many women end up pregnant and abandoned, resulting in our single-parent, broken-home trend causing so many aching hearts.

This leads to my point on our decision being culture-impacting. When we abandon responsibility and sin, we create for ourselves a pattern of more irresponsibility and more sin to cover up our past failures. These show themselves in the legacies of families who have known nothing but live-in boyfriends and girlfriends, divorce, infidelity and despair.⁴

Then the problem comes when the mother’s choice to have sex leads to another choice: that of her child’s life. “Nearly half of pregnancies among American women are unintended; about 4 in 10 of these are terminated by abortion.”⁵ Unmarried women make up 80% of terminated pregnancies.⁶ They have made their choice.

Yet perhaps the couple goes unaffected. Maybe they get no disease, have no baby and go on to do as they please. What of abstinence then?

³ World Health Organisation Department of HIV/AIDS. (2001). Global Prevalence and Incidence of Selected Curable Sexually Transmitted Infections: Overview and Estimates. Retrieved October 16, 2009 from <http://www.who.int/docstore/hiv/GRSTI/index.htm>

⁴ Baucham, V. (2009). What He Must Be...If He Wants to Marry My Daughter. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books

⁵ Abort73.com. (2009 15 October). U.S. Abortion Statistics. Retrieved October 16, 2009 from www.abort73.com/abortion_facts/us_abortion_statistics

⁶ Ibid

There is only one reason. Michael Lawrence puts it best: “The Bible teaches that we should reserve sexual intimacy for marriage for no other reason than that, if we are Christians, we belong to God. Sex outside of marriage is not only a sin against ourselves and our partner, but a fraudulent misrepresentation of God and a cruel distortion of the intimacy he created to be a picture of the eternal intimacy of the Trinity itself.”⁷ Sex is a privilege of marriage, and marriage is the unique representation of the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church. To twist the standards on purity and marriage is to twist the view of Christ’s purity, His faithfulness and His ability and claim to save His bride. Bluntly speaking, abstinence and moral purity are gospel issues. The world watches to see how the alleged purity operates, the purity that supposedly comes from Christ. When it sees nothing but immorality and broken lives, what testimony do we give?

In the end then, the Bible issues the call to purity—to remain pure in heart and body if unmarried; to remain faithful in marriage if married—and offers us the choice of obedience. The choice is ours. Will we present ourselves spotless at the altar? Will we possess an unbroken, pure heart? Will we show a testimony of standing for truth and purity to pass on to our children—and our children’s children? To the world, will we be beacons of truth and purity—Christ’s purity? Will we support the rampant infidelity? the abortion? the ungrounded homes? Or will we choose differently? Our choice has that potential. We all have different situations, different decisions and different faults, but the choice remains the same. Choose well.

⁷ Lawrence, M. (2006). Sex Is Not About Waiting. Why Wait for Sex?. Retrieved October 16, 2009 from http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/preparing_for_marriage/why_wait_for_sex/sex_is_not_about_waiting.aspx