

The Purpose of Sexual Intimacy

1) Sexual Intimacy is for Marriage

- a. *The Bible states that the only place for sexual intimacy is within the covenant of marriage – a lifelong emotional, physical & spiritual union between 1 man and 1 woman. Marriage is a promise of commitment and fidelity before God - not merely a legal recognition of the state or convenient social construct.*
- b. Genesis describes the first marriage as man and woman becoming “one flesh” (Gen 1:27; 2:23-24).
- c. Jesus reaffirmed this definition of God’s design for marriage in Matthew 19:4-6.
- d. Malachi 2:13-16 speaks of marriage as a lifelong covenant made before God.
- e. Exodus 20:14, Lev 18:20, Heb 13:4, 2 Peter 2:14, Gen 39:9, & Prov 5:18-20 also speak of marriage fidelity.

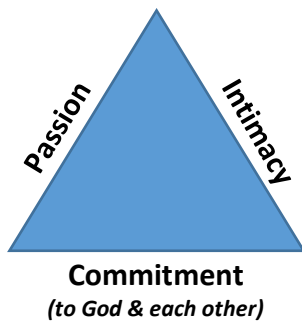
2) What is the purpose of sexual intimacy?

a. The Bible gives us several purposes for sex:

- i. Emotional oneness and Connection
 1. Gen 2:20-25; Song of Songs (*all*)
- ii. Recreation, Pleasure & Sexual Release
 1. Song of Songs; see SS 7:1-12 for an example
- iii. Procreation/Having children
 1. From the beginning, God desired to fill the whole earth with His glory through people who would know Him intimately. This is to happen through child-bearing (Gen 1:28; 4:1, Gen 9:7) and through the Great Commission (Matt 28:28-20).
 2. Children are a gift from God & a blessing (Psalm 127:3-5; Matthew 18:10, Mark 10:14)
- iv. Developing personal holiness
 1. Marriage and sex are not designed purely to make you happy, they are to make you holy. Your character will be put to the test in your marriage even in sex! There will be times when (believe it or not), you will not always want (or be able) to have sex. Unbalanced sex drives, mismatched preferences, times of illness, children, travel & separation, changes in our bodies as we get older mean that sexual release will not always be available or easy. A healthy sex life *requires* the fruits of the Spirit - qualities such as self-control, a heart of service, gentleness, patience, kindness and selflessness must be cultivated even in this area of marriage.
 2. See 1 Thessalonians 4:3-9; Galatians 5:13-26
- v. Giving God Glory
 1. Eph 5:21-33: In this passage, Paul points out the beauty and mystery of the future Kingdom of God being consummated in the union between Christ and his Church at the second coming (vs 25-27). In this section, which is mostly about loving marriage relationships, he points out that sexual consummation is a mini-metaphor for this amazing reality of Christ uniting himself to the church! (vs 31-32). Without a marriage covenant as the foundation, this metaphor of the future kingdom’s consummation doesn’t work - in fact, Paul elsewhere

compares sex outside marriage to uniting Christ to a prostitute (1 Cor 6:15-18). There is union without commitment, which is contrary to God's heart.

vi. Modeling God's *hesed* & covenantal heart



1. *Hesed* (or *checed*) is the Hebrew word for God's loyal, covenantal, steadfast love. It is one of the most used descriptors of God's love, occurring 253 times!
2. God is a promise-making and promise-keeping God. Sexual union without a covenant is taking sex outside of the *foundation* God gives us for a long-lasting & spiritually rich relationship. When couples have sexual intimacy outside marriage, they are taking God's sacred gift of sex and are stealing pleasure without commitment, engaging in what is intended to be the consummation of a lifelong marital commitment.
3. Marriage is built on 3 major ingredients – passion (physical/chemical bond), intimacy (emotional/relational/spiritual bond), & commitment (an act of the will). Without the covenant, intimacy and passion are unstable and fickle. (Also see Malachi 2:13-16).

3) Sexual Intimacy Before Marriage is Selfish

- a. Our world promotes emotional intimacy and sexual pleasure (#1-2) as the primary reasons for couples to have sex. Our culture says, "Why *not* enjoy these benefits"? However, sex *cannot* rightly fulfill its God-given purposes (reasons #3-6) without first being within the context of a marriage covenant.
 - i. Sex sends chemical bonding agents such as oxytocin coursing through your body – the same chemical meant to forever bond mothers and children during nursing & birth! It is wholly unloving to chemically bond to a person when there is no life-long commitment.
- b. Scripture speaks against premarital sex (See 1 Corinthians 7:9, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, 1 Corinthians 6:13-18)
- c. Scripture uses the phrase "sexual immorality" (greek, *porneia*) to describe sexual intimacy outside of marriage, as well as sexual promiscuity and prostitution (1 Corinthians 6:13-18, Proverbs 6:25-26) and any form of distortion of God's original intention for sex (1 Timothy 1:10, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Romans 1:27, Leviticus 18–20)
- d. Jesus expanded the definition of adultery to lustful thoughts (Matthew 5:27-28, 2 Peter 2:14, Prov 6:25-26)
- e. **Pornography & Masturbation** are also sexual expressions that serve only self – they are focused only on receiving pleasure, not on serving or loving someone within marriage. Porn and masturbation also damage real relationships by promoting & creating unhealthy and unrealistic standards and practices for sex.
 - i. *Related Reading: For the facts on the harmful effects of pornography & resources on how to get free, visit <http://fightthenewdrug.org/get-the-facts/>*

4) So then, what kinds of physical intimacy are ok for a dating couple?

- a. Paul calls us to a high standard - Eph 5:2-5:
 - i. "...walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. 3 But among you there **must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity**, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving."
- b. Song of Songs 2:7 & 8:4 remind us that physical intimacy is meant to lead to consummation. It says, "don't awaken passion before it's time." Whatever forms of intimacy you choose to do will start a train you won't want to stop. Be wise, and do what is most loving for your significant other – lead them in purity and holiness.