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Dealing With the Effects of Pre-Marital Sex

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This is an important subject — especially today. Young people (and older folks, too) are bombarded with the world's (Satan's) standards of morality, or immorality. The values and moral standards which were endorsed by most Americans in years past are now ridiculed and/or ignored by many. Teaching on sexual purity before and after marriage is no longer held before young people as a law of God nor even an ideal goal to strive for. So-called sexual freedom is flaunted as the norm among teenagers and adults and often those are ridiculed who expect and encourage young people to remain virgins until marriage. God's law is plain:

"Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body; but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (**I Corinthians 6:18**).

God, our Creator, knows our needs and what is best for us, his creation. He is not a cosmic killjoy. Behind each negative Bible command are two positive principles. One is to protect us, the other is to provide for us. God has "good" planned for us and does not want us to do something that will bring pain

to us and to others. To illustrate this, consider an Owner's Manual that comes with an automobile. I may want to change the oil once a year. That takes less time, and would seem to cost less. But the O.M. says to change the oil every 5,000 miles. Now, if I have good sense, I understand that the manufacturer knows better how to care for it than I do. Following their advice will save me much grief and expense. And we have also come with an Owner's Manual — the Bible. It may seem good to enjoy the pleasure of sex before marriage, but the "Owner's Manual" disagrees. So, whose judgment should we consider — ours or God's? God's motivation in dealing with us is love.

"God is love" (I John 4:16).

He is the author of love, and he knows all about it. God is not anti-sex. He created sex and said it was good, but he gave rules with it. Rules in any realm are to protect us and give us freedom to enjoy the activity we are engaging in — whether it be sports or whatever. Can you imagine a ball game without rules, where everyone does just what they want to do? We have one basic

rule from God with reference to sexual activity. That is, "Wait until marriage."

Look at God's design and plan for our happiness. When we have faith in a powerful and all-wise God, we obey without always understanding the reason behind the command. But in this area of sexual conduct, God has provided evidence that his way is best in words and principles taught throughout the Bible.

Consider four areas of life that will be greatly affected by our choices of sexual behavior. Look first at the effects of unchastity, so that we can know how to deal with these consequences. There are physical, spiritual, emotional, and relational effects of an immoral life-style.

PHYSICAL EFFECTS

We saw in **I Corinthians 6:18** that sex before marriage is a sin against the body. Sinning against the body means losing respect for your body, as well as the body of the one you are involved with. Once respect is lost, it becomes easier to indulge in promiscuous sex. Losing respect then leads to a warped view of love and centers the definition of love around the physical. The emotional needs which God created are not met in casual sex but in the loving commitment of a mate. Only in marriage is it possible for sexual relationships to reaffirm the dignity and uniqueness of each sex partner. Sex combined with love in marriage makes us want to give to our mate — not take. Waiting as God commands

gives peace of mind which affects our physical health. We don't experience the stress of worrying about unwanted pregnancies, or Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) that could kill or cripple us or our children. Now, of course, the "safe sex" campaign across our country fools many into a false peace of mind. Birth control methods are sometimes unreliable, and the high rate of failure for condoms is not understood among many teens. At best, among those who are sexually active, 1 in 6 condoms will fail, and at worst 1 in 3. That's the same or worse odds as in Russian Roulette, which is a pretty stupid game. And of course the pill offers no protection whatsoever against STDs.

Fifty years ago, teens were warned about two STDs (called "venereal diseases" then): syphilis and gonorrhea. What has our newfound sexual freedom brought? There are now over 50 STDs, and AIDS is not the only one that kills. And others can cripple and/or make life miserable. (Herpes is not a picnic.) Some cause birth defects that pass a parent's foolish decision on to an innocent child. Furthermore, that sperm that causes pregnancy can get through a tiny tear or pinhole in a condom. But the virus that causes AIDS is up to 300 to 400 times smaller than the sperm. So what does that same tear or hole look like to the AIDS virus? It looks like a train tunnel! Dr. Koop, former U.S. Surgeon General, doubts that there will ever be an AIDS cure. It is a virus, and we have never cured any virus,

not even the common cold. And do you know about cervical cancer, a disease that is proven to be more prevalent among sexually active teenage girls?

SPIRITUAL EFFECTS

God blesses purity.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (**Matthew 5:8**).

"Watch your heart with all diligence, for from it spring the issues of life" (**Proverbs 4:23**).

We are to be "wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil" (**Romans 16:19**).

"Abstain from sexual immorality...God has called us for purity" (**I Thessalonians 4:3-5,7**).

Clearly God's word forbids any type of sex outside of marriage. There are spiritual consequences any time we disobey God.

"God will judge fornicators and adulterers" (**Hebrews 13:4**).

Sexual sins brought destruction to Sodom and Gomorrah in **Genesis 19**. Many Bible characters committed sexual sins and were judged by God. Great trouble and grief came to Lot and his daughters, to Shechem, Reuben, Judah and Tamar, Samson, and David. Judgment from God may be immediate as in the death of David's son or come in future consequences we will face. Medical science may eliminate or lessen some consequences of my sin, but it cannot remove my accountability before God. Sin separates us from God (**Isaiah 59:1-2; Hosea 5:6**). It causes us to be a bad influence on others, both Christians and

non-Christians. Sexual purity is a way to show respect for others and to confirm their dignity as human beings. It is impossible to show someone the love of God while engaging in immorality with that person. When we maintain sexual purity, we can be channels of God's love and can accurately represent him to others.

Patience is a fruit of the Spirit, and "against such there is no law" (**Galatians 5:23**). Waiting for something builds excitement, as in waiting for a birthday. Sex is something we wait our whole life for until we finally partake of it. A godly character results from patience and perseverance. When we wait for sex till the proper time and place, our character is developed and self-esteem is built. We develop self-control which is required to live a godly life. Waiting builds trust, and God's plan is for marriage to be built on a basic trust factor. Sexual involvement almost always wipes out trust in a relationship. In surveys conducted, it is found that "sexual intimacy produces more broken relationships than strengthened ones."

EMOTIONAL EFFECTS

God's plan gives protection from being put on a performance basis. When put on a performance basis with another person, one is accepted only if he or she acts or does something the way the other person wants. They are respected not for who they are, but for what they do. Their value and dignity is lost. A boy says, "I love you if you will have sex with me" or "because you are

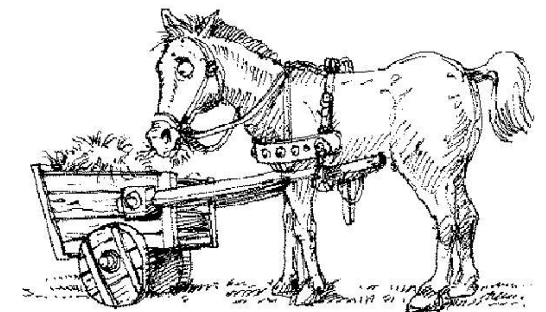
pretty," rather than "I love you." That is conditional love, and is worthless for building a committed relationship. Without the committed bonds of marriage, sex is inherently a selfish act done for personal satisfaction or gain. We must continue to please for the relationship to continue and that leaves one in a constant state of insecurity. God protects us from being put on a performance basis by reserving sex for the commitment of marriage. Are you aware of the various studies that show that sexual satisfaction is much greater in marriage than in uncommitted relationships? Why is it this way? Could it be that God knew what he was doing when he created us, and ordained the marriage relationship as the place for fulfillment?

The emotional baggage that often comes with premarital sex includes sexual dysfunctions in marriage. Many end up in counseling or therapy to deal with problems related to "teenage" sex. Studies have shown that premarital sex also increases the rate of cheating after marriage. Teens don't know that when they are young, but God knew it when he gave the rules in his "Owner's Manual."

Guilt is another consequence of violating God's standard of chastity until marriage. This has long-term effects on future relationships in marriage, and may haunt and affect a person longer than any other consequence. To have the sex act linked with guilt in one's emotions because of premarital activity, causes the joy intended by God for husband and wife to be robbed

and clouded. For example, a couple I know has been married over 50 years, and sex has never had any meaning for her. Premarital sex did its damage. Guilt is an awareness of having transgressed a standard of right and wrong. Or it may be just a lingering doubt of thinking that some act was wrong. Our society is plagued by those two kinds of guilt. The first is a moral guilt, which Christians are subject to, which tells us specifically when we have stepped outside God's boundaries of conduct. It is a conscious awareness of specific transgressions. The other kind of guilt might be called a floating sense of guilt. One psychologist says "It is indeed amazing that in a fundamentally irreligious culture as ours, the sense of guilt should be so widespread and deep-rooted as it is." This floating guilt he spoke of comes from a society that says there is no absolute right and wrong.

***** To Be Concluded in The July Issue of The Beacon. *****



PUTTING THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE

“SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE IS FORNICATION”