

What Does the Bible Say About Sex?



Kay Arthur, David & BJ Lawson

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BIBLE STUDIES

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PRECEPT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL



WATERBROOK
P R E S S

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

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This small-group study is for people who are interested in learning for themselves more about what the Bible says on various subjects, but who have only limited time to meet together. It's ideal, for example, for a lunch group at work, an early morning men's group, a young mothers' group meeting in a home, a Sunday-school class, or even family devotions. (It's also ideal for small groups that typically have longer meeting times—such as evening groups or Saturday morning groups—but want to devote only a portion of their time together to actual study, while reserving the rest for prayer, fellowship, or other activities.)

This book is designed so that all the group's participants will complete each lesson's study activities *at the same time*. Discussing your insights drawn from what God says about the subject reveals exciting, life-impacting truths.

Although it's a group study, you'll need a facilitator to lead the study and keep the discussion moving. (This person's function is *not* that of a lecturer or teacher. However, when this book is used in a Sunday-school class or similar setting, the teacher should feel free to lead more directly and to bring in other insights in addition to those provided in each week's lesson.)

If *you* are your group's facilitator, the leader, here are some helpful points for making your job easier:

- Go through the lesson and mark the text before you lead the group. This will give you increased familiarity with the material and will enable you to facilitate the group with greater ease. It may be easier for you to lead the group through the instructions for marking if you, as a leader, choose a specific color for each symbol you mark.

- As you lead the group, start at the beginning of the text and simply read it aloud in the order it appears in the lesson, including the “insight boxes,” which appear throughout. Work through the lesson together, observing and discussing what you learn. As you read the Scripture verses, have the group say aloud the word they are marking in the text.
- The discussion questions are there simply to help you cover the material. As the class moves into the discussion, many times you will find that they will cover the questions on their own. Remember, the discussion questions are there to guide the group through the topic, not to squelch discussion.
- Remember how important it is for people to verbalize their answers and discoveries. This greatly strengthens their personal understanding of each week’s lesson. Try to ensure that everyone has plenty of opportunity to contribute to each week’s discussions.
- Keep the discussion moving. This may mean spending more time on some parts of the study than on others. If necessary, you should feel free to spread out a lesson over more than one session. However, remember that you don’t want to slow the pace too much. It’s much better to leave everyone “wanting more” than to have people dropping out because of declining interest.
- If the validity or accuracy of some of the answers seems questionable, you can gently and cheerfully remind the group to stay focused on the truth of the Scriptures. Your object is to learn what the Bible says, not to engage in human philosophy. Simply stick with the Scriptures and give God the opportunity to speak. His Word *is* truth (John 17:17)!

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?

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?