

Understanding Sex

Woodside Bible Church values God's Word, the Bible, and healthy, growing marriages. As Christians we have a commitment to take our lead in thought and action from the Bible and apply it to all areas of life. The Bible is clear that a sexual relationship is intended for marriage and that sex outside of marriage is wrong. We also know that a couple who is sexually active before marriage is more likely to experience marital dissatisfaction and divorce than one who is not. This document looks at sex, its role in life, and why it ought to be experienced only in marriage.

Sex Is

. . . created by God

Sex is not a mistake. It is not an aberration. It is not unnatural. Sex is one of God's better ideas. God created everything which exists and culminated in his creation by creating humanity. He created us as male and female. He created us as sexual beings. He created us to have sex.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:27

. . . wonderful in marriage

A sexual relationship within marriage is to be enjoyed, celebrated and treasured.

"May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer – may her breast satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love." Proverbs 5:18-19

A sexual relationship outside of marriage keeps us from God's best experience of sex within a marriage relationship. A sexual relationship outside of marriage exposes us to emotional and spiritual pain. Sexual relationship outside of marriage is contrary to God's purpose for our lives.

"But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion." I Corinthians 7:9

. . . makes two people one

If God created sex, then why the limitations? Why is sex intended only for a marriage relationship? As the designer of the human race, God developed within us a need for intimacy on many levels. The physical intimacy of a sexual relationship is intended to reflect the spiritual and emotional intimacy of commitment of a couple through marriage.

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." Genesis 2:24

Marriage draws two people together into a oneness of intimacy found nowhere else. The sexual relationship consummates or completes that oneness. Two lives are united spiritually and emotionally, as well as physically. This oneness only really takes place after the individuals leave their parents as their primary relationship, and cleave (commit themselves) to the other without reservation. Sexual union before marriage unites two people into one without the spiritual and emotional oneness of the marriage commitment. Sex is intended to be the last grand uniting of two lives into one through the commitment of marriage.

. . .designed for giving

God never intended a sexual relationship to be a taking relationship, a relationship which focuses on self. Rather, the sexual union of husband and wife is intended to be an opportunity to give to another, to seek the fulfillment of another, not the sole satisfaction of self. A sexual relationship outside of marriage tends to focus on taking for self rather than giving for the other.

*“A husband should give to his wife her sexual rights, and likewise a wife to her husband. It is not the wife who has the rights to her own body, but her husband. In the same way, it is not the husband who has the rights to his own body, but the wife. Do not deprive each other, except by agreement for a definite time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then, resume your relationship, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.
I Corinthians 7:3-5 (NET)*

. . .a wonderful way to get to know your spouse

The Bible often uses the word “know” to describe sexual intercourse. In the oneness of the marriage relationship, sex provides a wonderful environment to better understand yourself and your spouse emotionally and spiritually, as well as to develop and enhance communication. The openness of oneness allows a couple to become vulnerable with one another and grow as they share together. Sex before marriage can push couples apart spiritually and emotionally and can hinder communication.

. . .designed for reproduction

One reason God intended sex for marriage is that it is within the commitment of a marriage relationship that God has chosen to bring children into the world. Sex produces children. Children need the safe, loving environment of a marriage commitment.

“God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground’” Genesis 1:28

. . . worth waiting for

When you wait, you enter marriage honoring God and each other. Our obedience to God strengthens our relationship with him and our spouse. You learn to control your passions. There are times within marriage when sex will be unavailable to you, during business trips, during or after pregnancy, or perhaps because of illness. Self-control developed before marriage will be useful during marriage.

“It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God.” I Thessalonians 4:3-5

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.” I Corinthians 6:19-20

Why Wait?

. . . to maintain an objective view of your relationship

Stepping away from sex in a relationship until marriage can provide a more objective view of your relationship. When a couple is sexually active before marriage, sex can become the focal point in the relationship. This diminishes or even destroys the growth of other vital aspects of the relationship. Because of guilt, your relationship with God is hindered. This impacts your relationship as a couple. Abstaining from sex before marriage allows an honest evaluation of the relationship. Without guilt about sexual activity, the couple feels the blessing of God and develops other vital aspects of the relationship. Everything is open for communication. There is no guilt or shame with which to deal.

. . .to develop other areas in your relationship

Waiting until marriage for sex brings growth in other areas of your relationship. Because God intends sex for marriage, we feel distant from God when we become sexually involved before marriage. Experiencing God's forgiveness and waiting allow us to develop our relationship with God from a pure heart. Emotionally, waiting until marriage develops within us a better attitude about ourselves and our mate. We view each other as valuable for who we are and not primarily what can be physically experienced. When sex is not the focal point of a relationship before marriage, communication is stronger and more fulfilling. Communication deepens the relationship. Sex can shut down meaningful communication because we are drawn to view each other primarily as physical beings, often ignoring emotional and spiritual aspects.

. . .to keep alive creativity in expressing love

Love is expressed in many different ways. However, sex before marriage tends to become the primary expression of love. When sex is saved until marriage, the couple must discover other ways to express love and commitment – ways that are often more fulfilling and satisfying – the importance of kind words spending time together not because sex will be had, but because of the joy of being together; the special gift which says, "I love you!"; sharing kindness through helping each other; and affection which communicates "I love you."

. . .to have a honeymoon, not just another vacation together

A honeymoon is intended to be a time of discovery and joy, a time to launch a marriage in the completeness of oneness. Sadly, for many, nothing is left for the honeymoon, and it is merely another vacation. Stepping away from sex until marriage can not erase sexual activity that has preceded it, but it can promise a fresh start and anticipation for the development of a sexual relationship with the oneness of marriage.

. . . to develop trust

The development of self-control within your relationship will create an environment of trust in your marriage. The ability to say "no" to sex now will prepare you for saying "no" to sex outside your marriage in the future. When your spouse sees that your passions do not control you, but you control your passions, he or she will respect you and trust you.

. . .to prevent pregnancy

A natural by-product of sex is pregnancy. Pregnancy before marriage creates incredible strain on the relationship before the marriage, and continued strain after.

Where do we go from here?

You have read this because you desire to be married at Woodside Bible Church. Our goal is to help you prepare for a successful, satisfying marriage. To do this, a couple ought to honor God and His word. The Bible is clear that sex is for marriage. Sex before marriage can actually harm a relationship. We want to help you succeed in your marriage.

What is our next step? Contact a pastor you know, or the church office, to set up an appointment with a pastor. He or she will sit down with you and discuss your situation and available options.

In preparing for meeting with a pastor, please be prepared to discuss the following questions:

- When did you become sexually active in your relationship? What led to this?
- What impact has your sexual activity had on your relationship?
- What would be the benefits of adopting a celibate life-style until your wedding night?