

Sexual Desires:

The Poison and Energy Drink of Great Relationships



by Michael Bronson

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Preface: Worth the Wait



Janet and Mike before they were married

As any single person will tell you, waiting until you are married to have sex is easier said than done. The pressures and temptations are almost unbearable at times. So, why then should we wait? Is it worth the wait? Can the benefits of waiting until your honeymoon outweigh the pleasures of the present?

You probably will not wait if you do not have a solid understanding of why it is important to wait. Not only are we commanded by God to wait, it is actually *worth* the wait. There will be a great deal of satisfaction when you check into the

motel on your honeymoon and let out a sigh of relief, “Whew, we made it!”

This book covers many of the benefits of waiting; it also describes many of my struggles, successes, and failures. I chose to wait until I got married to have sex. It was a complex, relentless battle, but it was worth it. I am intimately aware of the struggles of singleness. I was single when I started writing this book and I finished it four years later just before I married. I married when I was thirty-five and my wife and I were both virgins. Even though it was a difficult struggle, I can honestly say it was worth the wait.

Part I:
Problems With Premarital Sex

Chapter: 1.01

The Beneficial Energy of Our Sexual Desires

It was a drug deal gone bad. On February 28, 1989, an undercover DEA agent was shot to death while sitting in his car. Although an APB (All Points Bulletin), was issued in Staten Island, the suspect could not be found. The DEA widened its dragnet, but with no success. They finally resorted to an old trick called the “squeeze play.” The basic premise of the squeeze play is to crack down hard on *all* criminal operations, including the petty illegal activities that are normally ignored.

As the police started making large numbers of arrests, they discretely made it known that the reason for the crackdown was the DEA wanted this cop killer. After a period of time, this crackdown caused all illegal operations to lose money. As a result, the underworld took it upon itself to find the cop killer. Within a couple of days, the cop killer turned up dead.

Applying pressure to accomplish a given task also works in building healthy relationships. Instead of letting the tremendous power of our sexual attraction take its natural course, we can redirect this energy to help us build stronger, deeper relationships. When used correctly, this energy can be a valuable resource; when used incorrectly, this energy can be a wild and destructive force. Depending on where you are in your relationship, too much or too little physical intimacy can damage a beautiful relationship. If you learn to use this sexual energy correctly, you can move your relationship to new heights.

Physical intimacy is an important part of any relationship and its dynamic power is not neutral; it will either destroy or strengthen your relationship. Some people are surprised that I am advocating physical intimacy in a premarital relationship. Yes, it is true that the term “physical intimacy” sometimes refers to sexual intercourse, but it can also refer to something as simple as a gentle touch on a shoulder. Physical intimacy is simply the expression of affection between two people romantically interest in each other.

We need to understand that God was the one who created the sexual capacity of our bodies and that sex, in and of itself, is not dirty or evil. God created it for several reasons. It is not only for procreation (having babies), but also for pleasure and emotional bonding. The strong attraction and desire we have for the opposite sex is normal and its presence indicates we are healthy. There is no need to feel guilty or ashamed that we have them. God has designed them for a purpose and responding to them properly will bring fresh life into our relationships. The purpose of this book is to show you how to make the most of your sexual desire.

The mighty Niagara Falls can provide us an example of diverting energy for a productive use. During peak flow season, over 12.1 million cubic feet of water approach the falls every minute. That’s enough water to fill a NBA basketball court (94 feet by 50 feet), with 43 feet of water every second. Although you would never know it by looking at the volume of water falling, the hydroelectric power companies divert between 50 and 75% of the water before it even gets to the falls. This water allows them to generate 4.4 Gigawatts of energy, which is enough to power 3.3 million homes.

This diversion of water has had an unexpected, but beneficial side effect. As you can image, this high volume of water is very destructive to the face of the falls. The erosion from this water flow causes the edge of the falls to deteriorate at a rate of about three feet a year. In other words, the edge of the falls moves upstream at a rate of about three feet a year. Over the past several thousand years the falls has moved upstream about seven miles. However, after the power plants started diverting the water, the erosion was reduced to about one inch a year. The lesson we can draw from this example is obvious; if we divert the energy of our sexual desires for a productive use, we can also avoid the damage brought on by letting our sexual desires run free.

Our sexual desires are similar to the unstable nature of the original formula of nitroglycerine. When it was first developed, nitroglycerine was highly unstable. Simply dropping the container on the floor was usually enough energy to cause it to detonate. People who carelessly handled the material didn't live too long. Although powerful explosives can be very destructive, they have the potential of doing a great deal of good. Likewise, we must treat the tremendous power of our sexual attraction with great respect and determine how we can use it for the greatest good.

We can get a better understanding of the energy of our sexual attraction by looking at the energy of magnetic attraction. When you place two magnets close to each other, you develop energy of attraction. The energy from this attraction increases as the magnets are moved closer together. A tremendous amount of energy is generated when the two magnets are brought so close that they are almost touching. As long as they are not touching, they generate this tremendous energy. Our sexual attraction is similar to this. When we meet someone of

romantic interest, we start to generate the energy of sexual attraction. This energy increases as we move closer to each other (i.e. our relationship becomes more emotionally intimate). As long as we don't touch (i.e. engage in sexual activities), we will generate a tremendous amount of sexual energy.

Most people assume that the purpose of these strong sexual desires is to energize us for sexual intercourse. There is, however, another purpose for these strong desires. The early stages of a relationship require a great deal of energy to develop properly. In fact, the energy required in the early stages of a relationship is substantially higher than what most people would normally be able to give. This is why God has created this additional energy source.

It is similar to the extra help God brings to the plants during spring. God knew that most plants in their initial stage of growth needed extra water to mature properly, so He provided the spring rains. Thus, the phrase, "April showers bring May flowers." Just as new plants need extra water, new relationships need extra energy. If the early stages are deprived of this additional energy, the relationship can encounter severe developmental problems. Unfortunately, these problems often don't become evident until many years later.

Growth in the early stages of a relationship should center mainly on getting to know your partner's values, thoughts, and feelings. This means trying to understand everything about them; their inner secrets, fears, and joys. You should know what motivates them, what makes them tick. It is important to know the hidden "inner soul" of your partner. Deep intellectual and emotional intimacy does not come easily or naturally. You need to watch and listen; paying careful attention to minute details. This is hard

work and it can even be boring. In many ways, it is similar to studying an extremely boring subject at school; if you are not motivated to learn the material; you will neglect it.

Fortunately, God provided us a solution to this problem. Think about when you first started dating someone you really liked. Remember the excitement you had just thinking about this person; remember the intense curiosity you had that spurred you to explore everything about your new friend. Things that normally would have been boring suddenly become exciting; all you wanted to do was be consumed by this person. God gave you this extra energy to help you explore their life; to watch them act and react. If this energy is channeled toward studying the other person; the relationship will benefit tremendously. However, if this energy is channeled towards sexual encounters, much of the necessary growth will not take place.

All forms of physical intimacy will consume a certain amount of sexual energy and this consumption will increase as your physical intimacy increases. If we consume too much of this sexual energy, we will not have enough energy to properly study our partner. As a result, the energy needed to get to know each other deeply will be gone. If we are not forced to study each other, we usually won't.

I do not, of course, advocate complete abstinence from physical contact; this is neither healthy nor productive. In fact, later on in this book we will see that a certain amount of physical intimacy is needed and is important for the bonding process of the relationship. However, physical intimacy should be controlled and limited.

Unfortunately, many couples start out with high levels of physical intimacy at the

beginning of their relationships; they concentrate more on their partner's body than on their partner's true inner self. As a result, they never really get to know their partner and their relationship remains shallow. On the surface it may appear that they know each other, but in reality their relationship has not developed any true depth.

In a sense, their relationship is similar to a tree that is growing on the edge of a lake. The abundance of water makes it easy for the tree to find its water so the tree is not forced to develop deep roots; all of the roots are near the surface. As a result, the tree can be easily blown over by high winds.

Many couples disagree with me about the dangers of being sexually active; they say being sexually active has actually brought them closer together and has even increased the depth of their emotional intimacy. Let's go back to the illustration of the tree that was growing too close to the water. This abundance of water has caused the tree to grow faster and larger than other trees that are further from the water; thus giving this tree the appearance of being stronger than the other trees. In reality, the tree is not stronger. In fact, this rapid growth has made the tree weaker and more brittle than the other trees. Likewise, couples who are sexually active are also misled into thinking their relationship is stronger because of their sexual intimacy.

Unfortunately, this is one of the dangers of excessive physical intimacy. Intense physical intimacy gives people a false sense of emotional depth. Couples caught in this trap do not realize they are endangering their relationship with this false sense of security; they don't realize they are decreasing their chances of having a successful marriage. It usually takes several years for a couple to realize they don't have any substantial depth

in their relationship. Of course, by then it is very difficult to undo the damage.

This extra energy from sexual attraction is usually a one shot deal and if the couple does not utilize it at the beginning of their relationship, they probably will not have a second chance. This surplus energy will diminish significantly about a year or two after a couple starts dating. After that, there usually isn't enough surplus energy to really get to know each other. I am not saying that a couple can't regain the things they've missed, but it will be difficult without the surplus energy.

As discussed earlier, when we first meet someone that we find romantically attractive, we have a strong desire to know everything about them; we have an intense hunger and thirst for them. The natural tendency, of course, is to satisfy this thirst as quickly and thoroughly as possible. Becoming physically intimate seems to be a natural way to quench this thirst.

Not all thirsts should be quenched immediately; in fact quenching them incorrectly can be harmful or fatal. Castaways in a life boat can provide us a good example of this. After a period of time the occupants become dehydrated and have a tremendous craving for water. At some point the castaways may resort to drinking the ocean water to quench their thirst. Although this appears to immediately quench their thirst, the high concentration of salt in the ocean water will usually kill them. As you can see, there is a right way and a wrong way to quench your thirst.

When the American soldiers were marching through Germany near the end of WWII, they were horrified when they came across the concentration camps. The Germans had two ways of killing their civilian prisoners. They had death camps where they executed

the prisoners upon arrival and labor camps where they would literally work the prisoners to death. These prisoners were given just enough food to keep them alive for about two to five months. A thin person would be skin and bones in a couple of months whereas it might take a heavier prisoner five months to burn off all of his fat and muscles. At that point the prisoner would die of starvation or a nutrition-related disease.

The first thing these soldiers saw when they entered these camps were thousands of "walking skeletons." In response, the soldiers quickly unloaded their packs and gave the prisoners all of the food that they had. This act of compassion, however, ended up harming the very prisoners they were trying to help. Most of these prisoners had not eaten anything substantial for a couple of months so their stomachs had lost much of its elasticity. When they started eating the food given them, their stomachs literally ripped apart. Hundreds of prisoners died from something that is normally safe. As you can see, life is full of hidden dangers. Even something as beautiful and "natural" as sex has its own set of hidden dangers.

As mentioned earlier, God desires that we use our surplus sexual energy to enhance our relationships. Before we look at how energy can be used in productive ways, we'll take a look at the laws of physics to see why energy can be so destructive. Heat can provide us a good object lesson on the destructive force of energy.

When a fuel, such as paper, starts to burn, the fuel and the surrounding air molecules are heated. Heat causes the individual molecules to move further away from each other. As the fire gets hotter, the molecules will move even further away from each other. Of course, the faster the molecules

are heated, the faster they move. That is a basic law of physics; molecules naturally move closer or further away from each other as they get colder or hotter. This is why hot air balloons are able to fly; the less dense hot air weighs less than the more dense cold air.

As the air molecules move because of the heat, a miniature version of wind is created. Some fuels burn so hot and fast that they actually create miniature “wind storms.” As the fast moving air molecules move past surrounding objects, they exert pressure on them. Obviously, the pressure exerted on the surrounding objects will increase as the speed of the wind increases. In many ways, this miniature wind storm is similar to the destructive winds found in hurricanes.

Tearing things apart with fast moving air is the basic principle behind explosive devices. High-explosives can create winds that are dozens of times greater than a Class 5 hurricane (a storm with winds greater than 155 mph). For example, a high-explosive used by the military, called CL-20, has an explosive velocity of 21,000 mph (30,800 feet per second). That means that the shockwave front created by this explosion is 135 times greater than a Class 5 hurricane. This is the reason why explosions are so destructive and can twist iron structures around like they were made out of rubber.

Of course, we are only talking about conventional explosive devices. The shockwave front from a thermonuclear (hydrogen) bomb is millions of times greater than this. The largest thermonuclear bomb ever detonated, called the *Tsar Bomba*, was tested by Russia in 1961 and had a yield of 50 megatons. A 50 megaton bomb has an explosive force equal to that of 50 million metric tons of TNT, or 110 billion pounds of TNT. To help you visualize the magnitude of this number, it would take a train almost 4

times the length of the United States (11,363 miles) to haul all of this TNT.*¹ Of course, this is not taking into consideration the hundreds of miles of engines that would be needed to pull this mammoth train.

Although the random release of energy from explosions is usually destructive, it can also be productive if it is confined and channeled in the right direction. A gasoline engine is a good example of this. Normally, when gasoline fumes explode, the force of the explosion moves in all directions. However, in a gasoline engine, the energy is channeled to move in only one direction. Instead of allowing the energy to destroy its surroundings, the engine harnesses the energy and puts it to productive use. Likewise, we should harness our sexual energy and channel it toward building a stronger relationship.

Unfortunately, many couples have decided to let “nature take its course” and have allowed their physical intimacy to progress in an unrestricted manner. They have chosen to let their sexual energy flow unimpeded in any and all directions. Not only is this unproductive, it is destructive to the relationship.

Footnote

- 1 A metric ton is 2,205 pounds, therefore, 50 million metric tons would be 110,250,000,000 pounds. A 6000-7899 Northern Pacific boxcar can carry up to 100,000 pounds, so it will take 1,102,500 boxcars to carry this weight. Since these boxcars are 54' 5" long, the train would have to be 59,994,367 feet long, or 11,363 miles.

Chapter: 1.02

Easy for You to Say

Ralph locked his brakes as he saw the oncoming car run the red light. The squealing of his tires became a prelude to the horrifying sound of metal collapsing around him. The oncoming car hit the driver's side of Ralph's car, pinning him inside. He was trapped in his car for almost an hour. Finally, rescue units were able to cut him free.

Three days later Ralph woke up in the hospital in severe pain; suffering from multiple contusions, abrasions, and broken bones. Ralph's worse injury, however, was the fractured neck that left him completely paralyzed. His prognosis was dim and the doctors gave him little hope for even a minimal amount of improvement.

Ralph took his disability hard. The days turned into weeks and the weeks into months. Being a quadriplegic was bad enough, but having it brought on by a drunk who walked away from the accident was almost unbearable. Depression set in and Ralph became increasingly bitter toward God and life.

Several of his Christian friends tried to console him, but Ralph refused to listen. His pet phrase became, "You don't know what I'm going through; you've never been in my shoes. You have a lot of nerve coming over here and passing out advice on something you know nothing about."

Deep down inside, Ralph appreciated his friends' concern and desire to help. He knew they meant well, but he felt that their advice was unrealistic. "If they were

quadriplegics," he thought, "they would see that their simple solutions don't work with problems similar to this."

Although Ralph's friends did not have personal first-hand knowledge of his problem, Ralph was wrong in automatically assuming their solutions were unrealistic. You don't have to live through an ordeal in order to be able to give sound advice. Wisdom and insight can come from many outside sources. Truth is truth, regardless of the source.

First-hand experience is not a prerequisite for a person to be able to pass out sound advice, but a person who has gone through a tragedy usually has more insight, understanding, and compassion. A person who has overcome a similar tragedy is more likely to have practical and workable solutions, not just theoretical rhetoric.

More important, first hand experience automatically provides the person a higher level of credibility. Joni Eareckson Tada is a good example of this. No paralyzed person can say to Joni, "It's easy for you to pass out advice; you don't know what I'm going through." Joni became a quadriplegic through a swimming accident when she was a teenager and she has successfully adjusted to her new and difficult life. People are more likely to listen to Joni than to someone who has not had any first-hand experience.

This same principle applies to passing out advice on premarital sex. There are many excellent books written by married people concerning dating and premarital sex. Although most of these authors are providing sound Biblical advice, many singles still view married authors as being unrealistic and narrow-minded. Some singles respond to married authors with, "Well, that's easy for you to say; you're not facing the pressures of dating anymore.

Besides, you have a wife so you don't have the continual build up of sexual tension. The abstinence you are suggesting is neither realistic nor possible."

I am, by no means, the final authority on this subject. I am, though, very familiar with the pressures and temptations that the single person faces; I too am single. Not only do the suggestions I make in this book apply to you, they also apply to me as well. I have to live by the same guidelines I present to you. I am living proof these guidelines are realistic and feasible.

Having been single for so many years has forced me to carefully consider the benefits and dangers of physical intimacy. The things I say in this book are not some hollow words that sound spiritual; I actually practice them. Up to this point, my life has backed up what I have written. Obviously, the future holds no guarantees for anyone, and it is possible that sometime in the future I may yet stumble. I know the power of sexual seduction and I am aware of my limitations and weaknesses.

Being aware of my weaknesses, though, has been one of the factors that has helped me. In the movie *Magnum Force*, Clint Eastwood, playing the part of Dirty Harry, makes the classic statement, "A good man knows his limitations." Knowing your limitations is so important. I have strong sexual desires and I have found that carefully monitoring the areas where I am most vulnerable has been an effective way of helping me maintain my standard. Outside my walk with Christ, I am very weak. It is only because of the grace of God and my commitment to His principles that I have made it this far.

It is important to note that guarding against sexual traps does not mean a person cannot be passionate; it simply means you should

not be careless. You should know your limits, especially during the times when you are emotionally vulnerable. Passion has its place in the relationship and being passionate does not necessarily mean a person lacks self-control. As I will discuss in an upcoming chapter, kissing and facial caressing are both important parts of the dating relationship. Although you will not have the same deep physical intimacy and pleasure that results from a sexual relationship, you can still have a relationship that is rich and exciting.

Everyone should have a standard to help them maintain sexual self-control. In a nutshell my standard is: I would like to treat my girlfriend the same way I would want someone to treat my sister, future wife, or future daughter. There have only been a few times where I had not maintained this standard and even during these times I have never crossed my absolute limits; I am still a virgin.

I am not a virgin because I lacked the desires or opportunities; I am a virgin because my standard has helped me avoid most of the situations where it would have been easy for me to lose control. I must admit, there have been times when I had come close to slipping. The only reason I didn't was because God's principles were planted firmly in my heart. This is the reason I decided to write this book; I feel it is important for you to understand the underlying principles of this complex and frustrating subject.

[Author's note: I started writing this book when I was thirty-one years old and finished it four years later just before I got married. While I must admit I never intended to wait this long to get married, it has given me a unique opportunity. Not only did I face the same pressures as you, I've probably had to endure them longer than most readers of this

book. Although it was a difficult struggle keeping the sexual desires under control, I know it can be done. My wife and I were both virgins when we got married. I found that it is possible to have a passionate, intimate relationship without having sex.

As I already mentioned, I finished this book just before I got married. Although I planned on publishing the book shortly after I got married, things didn't work out. Quite frankly, my writing skills were not good enough for publishing, so the book was put on the back burner. After I got married I wrote eight other books; two of which have been translated into Portuguese and one into German. During the process of writing these other books, my writing skills improved. As a result, I decided to revise this book with publishing standards in mind. Although the quality of the writing has improved, the advice and principles presented in the polished edition are identical to the original manuscript.

As you read through the book, you will see that I have made some additions to the original manuscript. Basically, I've added a few paragraphs here and there to provide you some insight from a married person's perspective. I think you will find these additions will be fairly obvious.

Being unable to publish the book right away turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Having had to wait several years to publish this book gave me the rare opportunity of being able to present certain issues to you from two perspectives: the single person's perspective and the married person's perspective. As already discussed, I was bound to follow the advice I was passing out because I too was single. However, as a married person, I am now able to provide you some insights that I wasn't aware of when I was single. More specifically, I am able to point out to you how certain actions

done while you are single will affect your married life. Our actions as a single can either help or hinder our married life.

For example, I found that demonstrating sexual self-control when I was single made my wife feel more secure in our marriage. She knows I can be trusted when I am around other attractive people. Another example is the addictive power of masturbation. I didn't realize that becoming addicted to masturbation when I was single would cause me problems when I was married.

This rare opportunity allows me to give you the best of both worlds. This opportunity is similar to what happened to me when I was working at the prison. I am a correction officer at a prison that was once known as "the largest walled prison in the world." Several years ago an emergency situation developed where some specialized computer programs needed to be written in order to generate reports for the Governor and Legislators.

The person programming these unique reports needed to have two qualifications. First, he obviously had to be proficient at computer programming. Second, he had to have an extensive and intimate knowledge of the prison system; he needed to know its operation both inside and out.

Obviously, it would be difficult finding someone with both qualifications. Most people with these computer skills would not be a correction officer and most people working as a correction officer would not possess the necessary computer skills to this type of programming. Due to some unique circumstances, I happened to have both skills. As a result, the Deputy Director of corrections personally asked me to work in his office creating these reports. I was at the right place at the right time. This unique

situation was advantages for both of us. They got the needed reports shortly after I started working on them and I ended up working in the Deputy Directors office for several years. As you can see, approaching an issue from multiple perspectives has its advantages. It provides insights that are usually unattainable from a single vantage point.

Chapter: 1.03

Summary of Why We Should Avoid Premarital Sex

When God created mankind, He designed us to operate efficiently under certain conditions. When we step outside these boundaries, we start running into serious problems. It is similar to what happens to an unbalanced wheel that is spinning at a high rate of speed. Just as a unbalanced wheel can cause parts to fly apart, stepping out of God's boundaries can cause your life to shatter. The dynamics of sexual intimacy are so powerful, that straying outside these boundaries can be detrimental and even destructive to a beautiful relationship. This chapter provides a summary of several reasons why we should avoid premarital sex and the upcoming chapters will expand on these reasons. We should avoid premarital sex because:

- The Bible clearly condemns premarital sex. Simply put, if God Almighty says we should not do something, we shouldn't do it.
- Premarital sex causes guilt and remorse. Sin, by its very nature,

produces guilt and remorse. If you engage in premarital sex, you will be plagued by the conviction of sin. This is a fact of life whether you believe God exists or not.

- Continually engaging in premarital sex will harden your heart toward God. Our hearts harden a little bit more every time we deliberately go against God's will. There are two ways we can respond to God's conviction of sin. We can either stop doing the activity and move closer to God or we can continue on with the activity and move further away from God.
- The "first time" will only happen once. Just about everyone remembers the first time in which they had sex and this first time will only happen once. Don't casually throw away this precious gift. If your first time is on your wedding night, you will have a very special gift to present to your spouse. It is quite an experience to sit down at the end of your bed on your wedding night and let out, "Whew, we've made it!"
- Multiple sexual partners makes sex empty and meaningless. When a couple grows close emotionally, they expose their real inner self to their partner. They share the deep secrets of their souls and become naked emotionally. The physical nakedness of the sexual experience is the culmination of the emotional nakedness that has already taken place. This is where the true fulfillment of sex comes from; it is not the sex itself. This is why most people who engage in casual

premarital sex find sex so empty and meaningless. There cannot be any true fulfillment in sex without the deep emotional foundation.

- Premarital sex diverts sexual energy that is needed to build a healthy relationship. Contrary to what most people think, the strong sexual attraction (in the dating relationship) is not there to provide us energy for sexual intercourse. God designed this strong sexual attraction to provide us with the much needed energy to help us study our partner; to really get to know how they tick. It is similar to the phrase, “April showers brings May flowers.” If you consume this energy by having premarital sex, you will not have it to energize the growth of your relationship.
- Premarital sex interferes with the bonding process that is necessary to develop a healthy relationship. Each healthy relationship has to go through several layers of bonding in order to make it complete. Each stage requires a certain amount of physical intimacy and too much or too little physical intimacy can severely interfere with this bonding process. Unfortunately, the damage from a defective bond seldom shows up until it’s too late. This is part of the reason why so many marriages end up in divorce.
- Premarital sex causes a couple to prematurely feel they are ready for marriage. Premarital sex causes the couple to feel that they are closer emotionally than what they really are. This, in turn, causes the couple to feel that their relationship is

stronger and more developed than what it really is. It gives them a false sense of security; it makes them feel they are ready for marriage long before they actually are.

- Premarital sex will make it more difficult for you to trust your mate when you are married. There will be times in almost every marriage where one partner will have cause to wonder if their mate is being unfaithful. It may not necessarily be based on a valid reason, just a set of circumstances that look suspicious; nevertheless, the doubts are still there. Common sense tells us that if a person has demonstrated sexual self-control when they were dating (when the temptation was probably at its greatest); it is much more likely this person will still exercise sexual self-control once he or she is married (when the temptation is usually much less). Of course, the inverse of this is also true. Therefore, the sexual self-control you exercise now will have a great influence on how your future mate will respond if your marital faithfulness is ever called into question.
- Having sex in the dating relationship makes it hard to break up if it ever becomes necessary. The dating period is a time to determine if this person is someone you want to marry. If you discover that this is not the person you want to marry, you will usually breakup or at least slow down in your dating relationship. Unfortunately, excessive physical intimacy makes it hard to break up or slow down. In fact, many people (especially girls) deliberately use sex as a ploy to keep

their partners from breaking up with them.

- Premarital sex can make you feel obligated to get married. Many people feel obligated to get married simply because this was the only person with whom they have had sex. Many people feel that having sex with the person with whom they are going to marry is the same as getting an advance on a paycheck that is owed to them. They feel it is not fornication if you are going to get married anyhow. Of course, this line of thinking causes a problem if the couple breaks up; the couple feels like they have cashed a check that didn't belong to them. As a result, many couples go ahead and get married simply to avoid the feeling that they have committed fornication.
- Engaging in premarital sex will make you "used goods." A simple fact of life is most people would rather marry a virgin, or at least someone who was not been promiscuous. This is especially true for guys. They don't mind making other girls "used goods," but when they want to settle down and get married, they usually want a wholesome girl that they can "take home to mom."
- Engaging in premarital sex reduces your self control for future relationships. Once you have experienced a certain level of physical intimacy, it is difficult to settle for anything less in future relationships. Once you have made the mistake of having sex with one person, you will always want sex in

your future relationships. It will be hard to be satisfied with a non-sexual relationship in the future.

- Premarital sex often produces unwanted pregnancies. Millions of unwanted children are created as a result of premarital sex. Although having a baby out of wedlock doesn't have the same stigma that it used to have, it will still significantly alter your life. It will greatly change your dating life and significantly reduce the number of quality guys willing to marry you. You face a large number of other problems if you chose to abort your child. Apart from the selfish act of murdering an innocent and defenseless human being, you risk becoming sterile and being riddled with guilt. There is even a chance of dying from the complications of a legal abortion. Currently, the world performs over 150,000 abortions every day and the majority of these abortions are for unwed mothers. Although a portion of these abortions are done for married couples, these statistics clearly show that having a pregnancy outside of marriage is a realistic possibility.
- Engaging in premarital sex exposes you to sexually transmitted diseases. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are serious consequences of premarital sex. If all sex were confined strictly to a monogamous marriage relationship, STDs would almost completely disappear. Keep in mind, when you have sex with someone, you are "having sex" with all of their past partners and their partner's partners, etc. Even if these partners have had sex with only a

few people, you are realistically exposing yourself to the diseases of over 100,000 people. If any of these people have had a STD, it could realistically be passed on to you. When you consider that some of these STDs are incurable (AIDs, Herpes, etc.), you are exposing yourself to a lifetime of misery. According to *American Social Health Association* (ashastd.org), each year one in four teens will contract a STD and half of everyone under twenty-five who is sexually active will eventually be infected by a STD. In the United States alone, over 52,000 people are infected each day with a STD.

- Having premarital sex can have a negative impact on your testimony. What will happen to your Christian testimony if others were to find out about your premarital sex? Seldom can you keep your sexual activities a complete secret. Some of your friends or your partner's friends will know about it. If one of these people happens to mention it to the wrong person, your testimony could be severely damaged.
- What will you tell your children about your dating experience? If your future children are like most other children, they will ask you about your sexual past. Will you tell them to mind their own business or will you be honest with them? If you are honest with them and tell them that you have had premarital sex, you will send them either one of two messages. The first message is, "Do as I say and not as I do." The second message is, "It is okay to have premarital sex."

Chapter: 1.04

Do As I Say and Not As I Do

I'm a Correction Officer at a prison, which means I am a state employee. Recently, the economy went sour and our state had a billion dollar deficit in its budget. Part of the solution was to reduce the pay of each state employee by about \$3,000.

Obviously, no one wants to take a pay cut, but the thing that infuriated the state employees the most was the fact that the legislators (the ones ordering our pay cut) exempted themselves from the cut. The Senate Majority leader gave this appalling explanation, "The legislators are adults and they are in a position to know if they can afford a pay cut. If they can afford a pay cut, they will voluntarily take one."

This explanation, of course, made us feel betrayed. The thing that compounded this betrayal was what the legislators did at the beginning of the recession. The legislators gave themselves a 38% pay increase. A week later, they announced the state was in severe financial trouble and they were going to have to make some substantial cuts to the rest of the state's budget. The legislators had the audacity to give themselves a pay raise at the same time that they cut everyone else's pay.

Ideally, leaders should lead by example; that's probably why we call them "leaders." Leaders should never force others to do things they are unwilling to do themselves. Although this behavior is common in the political world, it is also true in the Christian community. This is especially true when it

comes to passing out advice on dating and physical intimacy.

Parents, pastors, and Christian leaders are always giving advice to singles concerning sexual abstinence. Yet, many of them did not practice abstinence when they were single. In fact, many Christian leaders are *currently* involved in various forms of sexual misconduct.

In the 1980's, the world was shocked when a major television evangelist fell into sexual immorality. Many Christian leaders made it a point to condemn this fallen evangelist from their pulpits. One of these leaders called the fallen evangelist "the cancer of Christianity." Surprisingly, a couple of months later this leader was forced to step down himself because of his own sexual indiscretions with a prostitute.

A book by Patrick Means, *Men's Secret Wars*, sites a variety of surveys that highlights the sexual failures of some of our spiritual leaders. One survey found that 64% of pastors or church staff are struggling with sexual addiction or compulsion. Twenty-five percent admitted to having had sexual intercourse with someone besides their wife while married; and this happened after they had accepted Christ. Another 14% admitted to some form of sexual contact short of intercourse. In 1991, a national survey of mainly Protestant pastors was done by a group at the *Center for Ethics and Social Policy*. It said that about 10% of those surveyed had been sexually involved with a parishioner.

The winter 1993 edition of the *Journal of Pastoral Care* had a study of Southern Baptist pastors. Of the pastors who responded to the survey, 6.1 % admitted to having sexual contact with a person either currently or formerly affiliated with their church. A survey listed in the *Leadership*

magazine asked this question: "Since you've been in local church ministry, have you ever done anything with someone (not your spouse) that you feel was sexually inappropriate?" Almost one in four pastors answered yes to the question. One in five pastors confessed to sexual misconduct of some kind, and one in eight pastors admitted to having committed adultery.

The poor example made by our Christian leaders has only made a difficult task (sexual abstinence) even harder. Obviously, people can still give sound advice without having practiced it themselves. After all, truth is truth, regardless of the source. Nevertheless, this hypocrisy has alienated many singles.

Like I said in the previous chapter, my wife and I were virgins when we got married. I was thirty-five and Janet was twenty-four. It was a difficult struggle, but we made it. I don't claim to be the best example out there, but I have provided an example that other can follow. I have not always kept my ideal standard, but I have maintain my ultimate standard.

Chapter: 1.05

Sexual Frustrations

"Okay you wimps," the Marine drill sergeant yelled, "I want the hole dug right here. Make it six feet deep, four feet wide, and eight feet long. Do you morons think you can handle that?" The recruits quickly grabbed their shovels and eagerly started

digging. In a few hours, the hole was ready for inspection. However, when the sergeant saw the hole, he flew into a fit of rage. “You knuckleheads, can’t you do anything right? I bet you maggots can’t even boil water; my two-year old son takes orders better than you. Pointing a location thirty feet away, he said, “I told you slime balls I wanted the hole dug over there. Fill in this hole and dig the hole in the correct spot.”

Having followed the sergeant’s second set of instructions, the recruits again waited for the inspection. Once again the sergeant yelled at the recruits and told them that the hole was in the wrong location. This scenario was repeated two more times.

Military boot camps are notorious for their intense training; stupid or contradictory orders are given to instill discipline and to teach the soldiers to take orders without question. These inconsistencies, though, can frustrate even the strongest of personalities. Not knowing what to expect brings continual stress and confusion.

Contradictions always cause confusion and frustration and this holds true with our sexual desires as well. Our strong sexual drives make us feel that premarital sex is natural and proper. Yet, the Bible clearly teaches that premarital sex is sin. Most single people have dealt with the frustrations of trying to answer the question: “How intimate can I become in a romantic encounter?” We have strong attractions for the opposite sex and these feelings seem so natural, so right. We often ask ourselves, “If God has given us these strong desires, how can they be wrong; especially if we love each other?”

This conflict often causes immense confusion and frustration. The thing that makes this issue even more confusing is the fact that not all physical intimacy is sinful.

Holding hands and kissing is usually considered acceptable acts of physical intimacy for the dating couple. So, we are left wondering why some acts of physical intimacy are considered acceptable and others are not.

What is the appropriate amount of physical intimacy for the dating couple? When I first started dating, I did a great deal of studying to answer that question. I asked myself, “Is premarital sex actually wrong or is it simply a taboo perpetrated by a narrow-minded culture?” As a Christian, I wanted God’s will for my life. Yet, as a single person, I wanted to make sure I was not missing out on anything special and exciting. To be honest, I felt that if sexual intercourse was proper and healthy, I wanted it to be part of my relationships. I didn’t want to miss out on anything if I didn’t have to. Besides, abstaining from sex requires a great deal of work and I didn’t want to endure all of that frustration if I didn’t have to.

While searching the Scriptures, I became even more frustrated because I found the Bible didn’t clearly spell out the boundaries of physical intimacy. I wondered why God was so silent about such an important subject. Later, as I started to piece together the bigger picture, I began to understand God’s evasiveness in spelling out our limits. I began to realize that the question, “How far can I go?” is usually a polite way of saying, “How much can I get away with?” Sexual attraction is a powerful and beneficial part of a relationship, but this volatile force can also be destructive. Instead of asking, “How far can I go?” we should be asking, “How can I use this sexual energy to make my relationship the best it can be?”

We have a large cement driveway, which is 116 feet long. Half of it is twenty feet wide and the other half is about fifty feet wide.

This “parking lot” is a fun place for kids to play and they love to drive around it in our small 12-volt electric car. About a year ago our neighbors were over and their kids asked if they could drive our electric car. We told them they could drive the car anywhere they wanted except they were not allowed to go past the line near the end of the driveway by the road.

Surprisingly, or maybe not so surprisingly, the kids went directly to the end of the driveway next to the road; they got as close to the line as possible. That’s human nature in a nutshell. We never stay happy with what we have been given; we always want more. Instead of taking full advantage of everything given to us, we want to get as close to the limit as possible.

This same principle applies to our study of physical intimacy. Physical intimacy provides a tremendous amount of pleasure and it continually cries out for immediate fulfillment. So, if the Bible were to have said, “This is how far you can go: ... ,” chances are, we would go immediately to that limit instead of gradually progressing to it. If a couple were to go immediately to the limit, they would miss out on all of the benefits of a slow progression. These benefits will be discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter: 1.06

Varying Limits of Physical Intimacy

In an earlier chapter I talked about how the Bible does not clearly define the boundaries of physical intimacy. Apart from clearly

prohibiting sexual intercourse, the will of God on this issue appears to be rather vague. After years of study, I have come to the conclusion that there isn’t a single standard that fits all people and all situations. We all have different strengths, weaknesses, and needs and our boundaries will vary accordingly. Varying conditions require varying restraints. Although I believe there are some absolute limits that apply to everyone, I also believe there are some practical limits that impose even further limitations.

The American Interstate highway system provides us a good example of dual limits. Most states have a maximum speed limit of 70 mph and although this is the maximum limit, there are often other factors that could reduce the speed even further. These could be geographical condition (such as tight curves through mountainous regions), or meteorological conditions (such as rain or snow). Any of these conditions could greatly reduce the driver’s speed. As you can see, varying conditions require varying speed limits. Nevertheless, even when all conditions are optimal, the maximum speed limit is still 70 mph.

Likewise, this principle of conditional limits applies to physical intimacy. Apart from the absolute limits, there are many factors that can impose even further restrictions upon the relationship. The stage of the relationship, the emotional maturity of the individuals involved, and each person’s past sexual history all dictate the amount of physical intimacy that is appropriate for this relationship. Nevertheless, there is a maximum limit to the amount of physical intimacy that can be expressed and no unmarried couple should ever cross that limit. Some things are still reserved for marriage, regardless of the length of the courtship or the depth of the couple’s love and commitment.

Even if you are two days away from being married, you still can't engage in certain activities. A couple of months ago, a guy emailed my website and told me about a heartbreak he had recently experienced. All through his courtship, he and his girlfriend had painstakingly refrained from having sex; they wanted to save it for marriage. However, two days before their wedding they gave in to the temptation. In the heat of passion, they rationalized that it would not be wrong to have sex since they were already committed to be married and the wedding was only a couple of days away. He said "It felt so right." Besides, they reasoned, it was sort of similar to getting a two day advance on their paycheck. The places that give you advances on your paycheck say, "The money is yours; you should be able to spend it whenever you want." They applied this reasoning to their situation; they figured that these marital rights were theirs and they should be able to exercise these rights whenever they wanted.

Unfortunately, it ruined everything for them and they were plagued with guilt, frustration, and regrets. It ruined their honeymoon and the guy was even considering stepping out of the ministry. They wished they had waited because the two-day advance payment came with a very steep price; it was similar to going to a loan shark. Painfully, they realized it would have been worth the wait.

Chapter: 1.07

What does the Bible Say?

What is the appropriate amount of physical intimacy for the dating couple? When I first started dating, I did a great deal of studying to answer that question. I asked myself, "Is premarital sex actually wrong or is it simply a taboo perpetrated by a narrow-minded culture? Is there anything that clearly says premarital sex is wrong, or is it up to each person to set his or her own limits?"

Since I wanted my relationships to be the best that they could be, I decided to go to the "Owner's Manual" to find out how I could fine tune my relationships for peak efficiency. No one knows our inner workings better than our Creator; He knows how our minds are wired and He understands relationships better than anyone else. I wanted His advice and wisdom concerning the subject of physical intimacy.

As I read through the Bible, I noticed that it is God's desire that we richly enjoy life and, as much as possible, live up to our full potential. In order to reach these goals, we need to live our lives in accordance with the way we were designed. God doesn't impose restrictions on us because He is mean and abusive, rather He give us these boundaries to protect us from life's hidden dangers. There are many things that can destroy a beautiful relationship and the misuse of physical intimacy is one of the chief culprits. This is why God clearly forbids sex before marriage.

Following is a small sample of the verses that express God's feelings on sexual immorality. If you look at the last chapter of this book, *Miscellaneous Verses about*

Sexual Immorality, you will find a larger collection of these verses.

Acts 15:20	Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality , from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.
Acts 15:29	You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality .
Romans 1:24	Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised.
Romans 13:13	Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.
1 Corinthians 5:9-11	I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a

	brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.
1 Corinthians 6:9-10	Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.
1 Corinthians 6:13	Food for the stomach and the stomach for food—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality , but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.
1 Corinthians 6:18	Flee from sexual immorality . All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.
1 Corinthians 7:2	But since there is so much immorality , each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.
Galatians 5:19-21	The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality , impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish

	ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies , and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.
Ephesians 5:3,5	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. For of this you can be sure: No immoral , impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
Colossians 3:5	Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality , impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.
1 Thessalonians 4:3-5	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.
Hebrews 13:4	Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral .

Chapter: 1.08

Prisoners of Isolation

Richard’s jet veered out of control after being hit by enemy ground fire. “May Day! May Day!” he screamed over the radio. “Going down, going down. This is Zebra 8. I’m going down about 2 clicks north of the Du Nam Bridge.”

On the ground, Richard buried his parachute and turned on his transponder to direct the rescuers to his location. Unfortunately, the Vietcong got to him first. He was bound, gagged, and dragged away to a makeshift jail. He was later sent to a POW camp, where he spent the next four years. During his captivity, Richard was severely mistreated and brutally tortured.

Most Americans are unaware of the severe mistreatment our captured soldiers endured in Vietnam. The Vietcong soldiers had a special hatred for American pilots and whenever a pilot was captured, they went to great lengths to make him suffer. Torturing the pilots was the Vietcong’s way of extracting revenge for the great damage brought by the American Air Force. Since they could not punish the Air Force itself, they figured that punishing one of its representatives would suffice.

The Vietcong were experts in the art of torture and many POWs cracked under the pressure and confessed to “war crimes” simply to avoid further torture. Although physical torture was an effective tool in breaking the POWs, isolation had proven to be even more effective. Isolation could often accomplish what bamboo splinters could not.

This is why some prisoners were separated from the rest of the POWs for months and or even years at a time. In their isolation, the prisoners were shown newspaper clippings of antiwar protests and would be continually reminded of the American opposition to the war. Their letters from home were withheld and they were told the military had forgotten about them. Even crueler, false documents were created to make them feel even more abandoned or helpless. For example, some of these documents said their wives had divorced them or that one of their children had been seriously injured in an accident. Although these lies were cruel, the isolation compounded their affect. There was no one to comfort them or give them advice; there was no one they could talk to that would provide them support. These prisoners felt all alone with their problems.

Just as isolation compounded the POWs difficulties, it also compounds the difficulties the Christian faces when dealing with sexual temptation and sin. The struggling Christian needs to know he is not alone as he faces his temptations. He needs to be able to talk to others and get advice. It is important for the struggling Christian to know he is not unique in his temptations and that his struggles don't mean he is a sexual degenerate. He needs to know that "good" Christians also have strong sexual temptations and he is not alone in this battle.

Just as secret sins make us feel isolated from other Christians, it also makes us feel isolated from God as well. All of us struggle with impure thoughts and sometimes our immoral thoughts make us feel overwhelmed. Most Christians are unwilling to openly talk about these type of thoughts; they are embarrassed by their shortcomings and do not want others to know they have entertained substantial immoral thoughts. They don't want others to think that they are unfit Christians.

This silence has caused a great deal of damage in the Christian community. When mature Christians are unwilling to openly discuss their struggles in these areas, the younger, weaker Christians feel awkward and ashamed. Unable to obtain the needed counsel and advice, the weaker Christians often flounder in guilt. I think we would be surprised if we knew how many Christians actually look at pornographic material or have had extramarital affairs. In fact, I think we would be even more surprised by the number of mature Christians who are involved in these practices on a regular basis. Remember, it was sexual immorality that brought down two of the top TV evangelists in the 1980s, two highly successful Christian singers in the 1990s, and the Christian politicians in the 2000s.

I think the reason many Christians don't openly talk about their struggles with sexual temptations is because they feel it would cause them embarrassment and condemnation. A large number of Christian leaders have privately admitted that they regularly look at pornographic material. They realize this is wrong, but they are unable to gain control over their sexual desires. Since they are unwilling to be open and honest about their problems, they never get any help.

I am a correction officer at a prison that was once called "the largest walled prison in the world." One of my duties, when working in the cell blocks, is to make regular rounds of the housing unit. As I walk by the individual cells to check on the status of the prisoners, I am continually exposed to pictures of nude girls that have been torn out from various magazines. Sometimes the temptation to look at these pictures is incredibly strong. Like all men, my ability to resist this temptation is limited. I found that if I quickly look away from these pictures as soon as I see them, I can conquer

the temptation the next time. However, if I don't quickly look away, I will have less ability to resist these temptations. At that point, it is harder for me to resist looking at the pictures in the other cells as I finish my round. Since I know my weakness, I am able to resist the temptation most of the time. As Clint Eastwood said in one of his classic Dirty Harry movies, "A good man knows his limitations."

We are continually bombarded with temptations almost every place we go. I'm not just talking about actual pornographic material; we are also tempted by "innocent" sources such as underwear or bathing suit catalogs. These clothing advertisements are not pornographic in-and-of-themselves, but these near-naked bodies are often the catalyst that spur guys on to sexual fantasies. Two television sitcoms, *Seinfeld* and *According to Jim*, have both done episodes about how catalogs and glamour magazines have led to masturbation. I am not advocating abolishing these magazine or catalogs; I just want to point out that even seemingly innocent things can cause a Christian to stumble.

Recently, my mailman mistakenly put my neighbor's *Sports Illustrated* "swimsuit edition" in my mailbox. In theory, there is nothing wrong with looking at girls in swimsuits; I can appreciate beauty just as well as the next guy. In practice, however, my sexual desires don't need any encouragement; it is difficult enough to keep them under control. It would be hard for me to look at these pictures without being drawn into sexual fantasies and I don't need the extra temptation. I sat in my car for a couple of minutes debating whether to look at the pictures or put the magazine back in the mailbox. The magazine seemed to be calling out to me. After mustering all my strength, I put the magazine back into the

mailbox. I was victorious that time, but I am not always so fortunate.

The temptations guys face are different from the ones girls face. Nevertheless, girls still struggle with maintaining pure thoughts; no one is exempt. Both guys and girls engage in sexual fantasies. It is important to understand, however, that guys are more visually-based, whereas girls are more emotional-based. This is why guys are so easily drawn toward visual temptations, such as pornographic material. Girls are drawn more toward romance and emotional-based fantasies. It may be romance novels or just daydreaming about a handsome, romantic person at work. At some point, however, these daydreams cross the line and the girl is just as wrong as a guy who is looking at a pornographic magazine.

My hope is that other Christians will open up and share their struggles. We need to let the weaker Christians know they are not alone with their temptations; we need to shine some light in their dark worlds.

Chapter: 1.09

The First Time only Happens Once

"Have you heard the news," the congressman asked the general. "The Russians have put a spacecraft into orbit; they call it Sputnik." The 1957 launching of Sputnik threw the U.S. government and military into turmoil and this single event changed the course of the world. During this phase of the Cold War, the ICBM missile system that would eventually have the potential of carrying nuclear warheads to

the other side of the globe was still in its infancy. If the Russians were able to attach a nuclear warhead to their space crafts, the United States would be in big trouble. Many American leaders felt the Russians were building a satellite system to give them the capacity to drop nuclear bombs on the United States.

America mobilized to catch up with Russia's technology. A few years later, President Kennedy set an aggressive goal: to land Americans on the moon and return them safely before the end of the decade. This forced America to pool its resources and develop the needed technology. Our current miniaturization of electronic circuitry is a direct spin-off of our space program. In fact, many of our modern conveniences are a result of the space program.

The race to the moon became an obsession with both the United States and Russia. Being first was everything. In fact, once America landed men on the moon, the Russians abandoned their manned lunar program all together. Interestingly, ancient rivals, Japan and China, have recently announced a new race to put a man on the moon. We'll have to wait and see if both countries actually make it to the moon or if the race will end once one country wins.

Right or wrong, being first is important to us. Our history books are full of "firsts." In fact, entire books have been written just to record the first time certain events have taken place. Even parents find it important to see their baby's first step and hear his first words.

Whether we want to admit it or not, our first sexual encounter is also important. Even among very promiscuous people, most can remember their first time. They may not remember many of their other sexual

experiences, but they usually remember their first.

Your first sexual encounter will only happen once so save it for your honeymoon night. This can be a dynamic experience so don't ruin it. Your first time will only happen once and it cannot be undone. If you ever lose control and go too far, you will always regret it deep down inside.

When a girl gets pregnant, there is a lot of pressure for the couple to get married. There is the feeling of obligation to stand up and do what is "right;" to get married. As I mentioned elsewhere in this book, I do not think it is wise to compound one mistake by making another mistake. You should owe up to your responsibility and provide the necessary support, but you should not feel obligated to get married. These types of marriages seldom last.

Likewise, losing your virginity also causes a feeling of obligation to get married. Sometimes this feeling is as powerful as when a girl gets pregnant. Many people feel that having multiple sexual partners make you a slut, so marrying the only person with whom you have had sex means you are, well ... not a slut.

A person who has had sex with only one person may also feel obligated to get married because they feel they have taken out an early advance on their upcoming marital rights. They feel that having premarital sex with their future mate is the same as getting an advance on a paycheck that already belongs to them. They feel it is not fornication because they are only taking what belongs to them. Although the above feelings are strong, if you find yourself in this situation don't make the mistake of feeling obligated to marry the first person with whom you have had sex; don't compound one mistake with another. Sex

outside of marriage is fornication; even if you eventually marry the person.

Chapter: 1.10

Once You've Been Exposed to the Pleasures of Sex

It's a simple fact of life that once you have been exposed to an enhancement, it is hard to be satisfied with the former inferior product. For example, when the phonograph was first invented, people were just thrilled to be able to hear a simple scratchy voice recorded on a wax tube. Although the quality was crude, it brought great joy, pleasure, and satisfaction to the listener. What do you think would happen if we could go back in time and let these same satisfied people hear the crisp, clear digital sound of a high definition compact disk on a \$250,000 sound system? After being exposed to something far superior, they would never have the *same* pleasure and satisfaction with the original wax phonograph. It is the same way with physical intimacy; once you have been exposed to the seductive pleasures of intense physical intimacy, you will find it difficult to be satisfied with anything less. This is one reason why it is so important to wait until marriage to experience your first sexual encounter.

Not only does this principle apply to sexual intercourse, it also applies to heavy petting (caressing the genitals) and soft petting (caressing the breasts). Once you have been exposed to these types of physical intimacies, you won't want to go back. I found this to be true in my own life. When I

was sixteen years old, I gave my life to God and had a tremendous desire to follow His will. Since I knew He wanted me to abstain from premarital sex, I determined to follow His wishes in that area. Although I was not fully convinced it was truly a sin to touch a girl's breast or genital, I had decided to abstain from touching these areas. Even at sixteen, I knew it would be almost impossible for me to remain a virgin if I engaged in these types of petting.

Despite all of my precautions and safeguards, I still found myself exposed to these types of physical intimacies. Much to my surprise, this contact was initiated by the girls I was dating. These were not "slutty" girls, but were girls that were respected in the Christian community. I had assumed that as long as I didn't initiate these types of physical intimacies, they would not happen. Obviously, I was wrong. Following is a brief description of the three times that girls initiated the encounters.

The first situation involved a girl I met at church and it happened a couple of months after we started dating. We had only been kissing for a few minutes when she suddenly took my hand and put it on her breast. It had been about fifteen years since I had touched a girl's breast (done before I gave my life back to God), and since I wasn't expecting this, I didn't have the will power to move my hand away. A couple of minutes later she pulled up the back of her blouse and moved my hand to the snap on her bra. This, of course, was her signal to let me know she wanted me to remove her bra. Unfortunately, I succumbed to the temptation and took her bra off. Fortunately, a couple of minutes later I was able to gather up enough will-power and I stopped the encounter. That was the only occasion during which I touched her breasts.

The second incident involved a girl I had been dating for several months. Up to this point I had not touched her breast. One day I was talking to her about how I was having a hard time reconciling some of the limits of physical intimacy. I vented my frustration as to why it was okay for me to touch one area of her body, but not another area that was only an inch away. After I finished venting my frustration she said, "You know, I could sure use a breast massage." My resolve was in a weakened state and I obliged her with the requested massage. That was the only occasion during which I touched her breasts.

The third situation involved a girl while we were on our second date. Almost immediately after we started to kiss, she put her hand on my genitals. We had only been kissing; I had not touched her breasts or genitals. I was completely surprised by this aggressive move. For the first time in my life I began to understand how girls must feel with overly aggressive guys.

This was the first time I had ever been touched there and I did not want that to be part of my premarital relationship, but she persisted. It soon became a major point of contention between us; I would tell her no, but she would continue to try. We eventually broke up because of this issue.

Being exposed to genital petting made the following years much more difficult for me. Although I did not want genital petting to be part of my premarital relationship, I found myself desiring it. I would often fantasize about being touched there. During romantic encounters I would secretly hope my date would put her hand on my genitals. This really surprised me because up to this point I had never struggled with the temptation of genital petting.

Before these encounters, it never occurred to me that even brief exposures to these pleasures could become such a major source of frustration for all future relationships. Had I known this, I would have broken off these encounters immediately. These experiences, however, have taught me a valuable lesson; they have given me an even greater resolve to not engage in sexual intercourse. I now realize that having sex even once would be a major mistake. This exposure would make future abstinence almost impossible; it would make the frustration almost unbearable.

Normally, the guys are the aggressors in pursuing sexual encounters and the girls are usually the ones forced to apply the brakes. I have found, however, that when the guy is not making the advances in this area, the girls often makes the advances. The only reason we don't see this happening more often is because the guys are usually the ones making the first move; they usually don't give the girls the chance to be overly aggressive.

Chapter: 1.11

Shattered In an Instant

The cracking of rifle fire shattered the afternoon. As the streets became congested and confused, Secret Service men rushed toward the presidential limousine. President Kennedy's wife, Jackie, hysterically tried to climb out of the convertible, so a secret agent rushed to the rear of the car and

pushed her back in. The limousine then rushed off to Parkland Hospital.

Later that fateful day, two priests left the hospital; silent, sagging. When pressed for information, one said, "He's dead, all right." Those four words exploded around the world. Hugh Sidey's article in *Time* Magazine (November 28, 1988), summed up the incident quite well. "A piece of lead weighing less than an ounce had blown away a single mind, and history had been halted in its tracks, pushed a generation, then hesitantly restarted, but in a different direction."

Life is fragile and can be shattered quickly. A moment of pleasure in the heat of passion can steal something from you that is irreplaceable: your virginity. Although the loss of your virginity is not life threatening; it can be disruptive. Caution must be exercised to guard against this heartache. The slip into immorality can happen so suddenly, so unexpectedly. Being in the wrong place at the wrong time is all it takes.

Sherry was raised in a Christian home and had been taught that pre-marital sex was wrong. As a result of her upbringing, she resolved to remain a virgin until marriage. Unfortunately, the breakup of a two-year relationship had changed all that. She was taking the breakup hard so she decided to take a walk down a Lake Michigan beach. During her walk, a guy saw her crying and went over to console her. They sat and talked for a couple of hours. Near the end of the conversation, her new friend put his arm around her. Sherry was lonely and vulnerable and this sign of friendship brought her great comfort. Within fifteen minutes they were kissing. One thing led to another and they engaged in sex. Unfortunately for Sherry, she was in the wrong place at the wrong time. If she had met this guy when she was not emotionally

distressed, she probably would not have slipped into sin.

I was on the freeway driving to work one winter night when my car hit a hidden patch of ice (black ice) and went into a spin. Although the car ended up in a ditch, I was fortunate that no one was hurt. An interesting fact about ice on the road is that it is temporary. Even though an icy spot on the road can reap massive destruction, the same spot on the road might be completely safe a couple of hours earlier or later. However, during that short period of time when conditions are just right, a small careless move can bring about death, destruction, and heartache.

When it comes to maintaining our sexual control, it is good to keep this principle in mind. Situations that are normally safe and free of temptation can suddenly become overwhelming. An exciting or depressing event may warp your perspective and cause you to drop your guard. Even the hormonal changes during menstruation can make a girl emotionally vulnerable to a guy's charm.

While I was preparing for my upcoming wedding, I faced the normal pressures that everyone faces. There was the financial pressure of paying for the ring, honeymoon, etc. I also had the additional pressures of finishing the two books I was writing, installing a new furnace, and doing other major home improvements projects.

About four months before our wedding we were hit with some more difficulties. Jan's grandmother and my uncle died. My dad almost died from a mysterious illness and Janet's doctor discovered a lump in her breast. This was of particular concern to the doctors since her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer the previous year. Several weeks and an operation later the doctors said Janet's lump was not cancer.

There were also some positive pressures. I was asked to serve on the Department's elite Honor Guard to represent the Department at parades, funeral, and ceremonies. I was selected "Officer of the Year" at the prison where I work and I was runner-up on the state level to the person who eventually became "Officer of the Year" for both the U.S. and Canada. Also, an emergency situation arose and the Department of Correction needed some computer analysis done quickly. Since I knew how the prison system worked and was a computer programmer, I was asked personally by the Deputy Director to work in his office. I went from being an unknown correction officer to someone who created reports for the Director, Legislators, and Governor. I was deeply honored by this, but stressed as well.

All of these events happened within a four month period and I felt emotionally exhausted; drained of my strength and will power. In addition to Janet's normal stresses, she was exhausted mentally and physically from her operation. We were both quite vulnerable. Temptation was tremendous and my resolve was at an all time low. Not only did I desire Janet physically, my hurting and frustrated soul sought the intimacy brought on by a sexual encounter. I'm glad to say we didn't yield to the temptations. Although a sexual encounter would have helped for the moment, we would have been buried with guilt later on. A failure in this area would only have added another problem to our list.

It may be helpful for you to keep a journal of the times you are strong and weak. You should note the times and events when you have slipped or felt more vulnerable. Keeping a journal will help you spot patterns of weakness and vulnerabilities; it will help you be on guard.

When I was twenty years old I was working at a Christian summer camp. There was a very attractive youth-worker there whose husband lived in another state. Although he came up on weekends, she was still lonely. One day, as we were walking back toward her cabin, she started talking about how difficult things had been for her and how lonely she had become. She grabbed my hand and said, "I need a man right now." Her loneliness caused her to be tempted by sin. This was something I had never expected. Fortunately, I had enough sense to break my hand free and walked away. She was in a vulnerable state and if I had been in a more vulnerable state at that time, we both may have slipped into sin.

Chapter: 1.12

The Bonding Process of a Healthy Relationship

Third world countries are often unable to afford badly needed construction projects since the cost of the raw materials is often prohibitively high. For these poor nations, a technology of "growing" their own materials underwater has helped them overcome this hurdle. This process allows them to manufacture strong building materials of any shape at a low cost.

Basically, this technology involves applying a low electrical current to a metal mesh submersed in the ocean. This mesh attracts calcium ions from the seawater, which in turn, combines with carbon dioxide to form calcium carbonate. In the following months, this newly-formed calcium veneer provides

a home for shell-bearing invertebrates. These barnacles, corals, and tubeworms need calcium and free electrons to build their protective armor. Since these micro-organisms have short life cycles, they quickly accumulate and fuse to the mesh. When this multi-layered bonding process is done, the finished product is removed from the water and used in the designated construction project. (Source: *Discover* July, 1990)

This technology can teach us a valuable lessons about relationships. As we saw from this technology, the construction material was not made with a single step. It took several steps of bonding to create the desired result. Each layer of bonding is built upon the previous layer. To skip or rush one step will result in an inferior product. Bonding is an important part of nature and is an important part of healthy relationships.

There is a bonding process that takes place between two people as their relationship grows and matures. There are several layers involved in this bonding process and none of them should be rushed or skipped. Of course, the time span required for each layer of bonding varies greatly from couple to couple. While it may take one couple only three months to complete a certain layer, it may take another couple two years to complete the same layer.

When I think of bonding, I often think of epoxy glue. Two items that have been properly glued together with epoxy can withstand a great deal of pressure. Likewise, a relationship that has correctly gone through the bonding process will be able to endure difficult times. Unfortunately, most couples rush or skip several layers of bonding and, as a result, are easily pulled apart during times of hardship.

Physical intimacy plays an important role in this bonding process. Too much or too little physical intimacy will affect the development of the bonding. As mentioned earlier in this book, if God would have said, "You can go this far and no further," most of us would probably have gone immediately to that limit. This, of course, would be counter-productive. The different bonding levels of physical intimacy are progressive; each level builds upon each other. A certain amount of physical intimacy that would be beneficial at a later stage in the relationship may actually be harmful if expressed too early. The inverse of this is also true: withholding a certain amount of physical intimacy at the later stages of the relationship may also be harmful. Of course, there is no set timetable for this progression of physical intimacy; it varies from couple to couple.

As I already mentioned, there are many layers of bonding needed for a relationship and each layer should be fully developed before the next layer starts. When you put a polyurethane sealer on wood, you have to let it dry for a certain period of time before you put on the next layer. If you apply the next layer too soon, the first layer will not have dried (or bonded) properly and your finished product will be blemished and unattractive. More important, however, this weak finish could wear off and exposed the wood to the destructive elements. Likewise, the different bonding levels in a relationship require time to properly cure. If you try to rush through a bonding level, that area of the relationship will be weak and subject to erosion.

Bill and Karen have been dating for almost two months when they became engaged. After the proposal, they set a wedding date that was over a year away. Since Karen was in the process of moving, they started talking about the high cost of maintaining

two separate apartments. They began to reason, "It doesn't make sense for us to pay for two apartments if we are going to get married anyhow. Let's get married right away."

As a result, they got married a couple of weeks later. As predicted, this couple had some serious marriage problems. They made the mistake of assuming that the only purpose of courtship was to determine if the couple should get married. They failed to realize that another major purpose of courtship was the bonding process. They got married too soon and skipped most of the bonding layers.

Bonding layers are critically dependent on each other and if some layers are not performing correctly, other layers may fail. The space shuttle *Challenger* provides us a good example of this. On December 1986, the world watched in horror as *Challenger* exploded shortly after takeoff. As it turned out, a couple of the rubber seals in one of the two booster rockets failed; causing the United State's space program to suffer its greatest set back up to that point.

Basically, an inexpensive seal destroyed a \$2 billion spaceship. The booster rockets are long tubes that are filled with a special solid rocket fuel. Since it is impractical to transport tubes that are 149 feet long, the manufacturers made four shorter tubes (thirty-seven feet in length) and bolted them together at the assembly building. To keep the joints from leaking, they put rubber seals (O-rings) in each joint.

The burning flames you see on most rocket engines originate at the outer end of the rocket nozzles. Basically, the liquid fuel and liquid oxygen are piped down to the end of the rocket, mixed and then burned. Solid rocket boosters, however, burn their fuel differently. Instead of using a liquid fuel,

the booster rockets are packed full of a solid fuel. At the time of the launch, special torches are aimed up toward the bottom of the boosters in order to ignite the solid fuel. The launch cannot be canceled once the solid fuel is ignited. After ignition, the solid fuel burns from the bottom of the booster all of way up to the top of the booster. It burns at a rate of about 1.5 foot per second until it runs out of fuel. Near the end of the burn, most of the booster's interior is filled with a roaring fire. Each booster creates 3.1 million pounds of thrust and has an internal temperature of 5,800 degrees Fahrenheit.

These special O-rings are designed to be able to hold back a tremendous amount of pressure. Although these O-rings are well suited for holding back pressures, they melt like most other rubber products when exposed to heat. An insulating material, therefore, is coated on the inside of the rocket booster to keep the heat from reaching the rubber seals.

Although the insulating material is great at withstanding heat, it cannot withstand much pressure. As long as the O-rings retains the pressure, the insulation will retain the heat. Likewise, as long as the insulation holds back the heat, the O-rings can retain the pressure. Although these materials are useless by themselves, they work together to protect each other and accomplish their designated tasks.

In the *Challenger* disaster, cold weather caused the O-rings to stiffened and become less pliable. As a result, a couple of the O-rings were unable to form a perfect seal. Under the tremendous pressures, small amounts of hot gasses started to escape through one of the joints. As the gasses passed through the joint, it tore off some of the insulator material. This allowed the O-rings to be exposed to some heat, which caused the O-rings to partially melt. As the

O-rings started to melt, it allowed more hot gasses to rush out, which in turn, tore off even more insulator material. Eventually, flames ripped through the side of the booster like a cutting torch. The flames shot out further and eventually cut into the giant hydrogen fuel tank, making an explosion close to the size of a small nuclear bomb.

The bonding levels of a dating relationship are also dependent upon each other. Each layer needs to be fully functioning in order to assist the other layers. If you rush the relationship by increasing physical intimacy too quickly, you increase the risk of developing an inferior bond.

The construction of the famous Samurai swords provides us another example of multiple layers working together. When you melt iron ore with carbon you end up with a compound called steel. Varying the amount of carbon gives the steel different properties that can be useful for different applications. For example, steel with a higher carbon content is harder and stiffer and is much better at holding a sharp edge.

Obviously, a sword that stays sharp is desirable, but this hard steel is brittle and breaks easily when smashed against other swords in sword fights. A sword with lower carbon content is less brittle and won't break during combat. Unfortunately, low carbon steel can't hold a sharp edge as well as high carbon steel. To get around this problem, the sword makers developed a special process several hundred years ago where the core of the sword is made up of softer steel and the outer surface, especially the cutting edge, is made out of hard steel.

There are only a couple of families left in Japan that possess the skills to manually process raw iron ore into the specialized steel that is needed for the samurai swords. One stage of this steel production is so

critical and precise that the person in charge of combining the carbon and iron ore won't sleep during this three-day process. The production of these swords is so complicated that one out of three swords fails to meet the stringent requirements of a Samurai sword.

The lesson to be learned here is this: if you want to have a high quality relationship, you need to carefully groom it using the methods that God has designed. If you don't use the proper methods, your relationship will be mediocre at best. High quality relationships don't come easily or naturally.

Cement provides us another example of how different bonding levels are dependent upon each other. Cement is a hard substance that plays an important role in construction work. This "liquid rock" can be molded into just about any form and, as a result, is often used on highways and bridges.

Although the hard surface of the cement does not compress, its strength can provide a false sense of security. Cement has a terrible weakness; it is brittle and cracks easily. Cement doesn't bend when exposed to uneven pressure; it simply breaks. This is the reason why it is impractical to make long narrow beams out of non-reinforced concrete. Uneven torque will snap the beam in two.

Bridge builders overcome cement's brittleness by combining it with other materials. These engineers insert iron reinforcement rods (re-rod) into the cement and place iron "I" beams under it; thus eliminating most of the bending. As a result, the cement is allowed to do what it does best: provide a smooth hard surface. When designed properly, a cement surface will last a long time. The steel reinforcement structure, however, must be built before the cement is poured.

This example can provide us a powerful application for the dating relationship. The bonding that results from intense physical intimacy is similar to that of cement; it provides a hard surface. This is the reason physical intimacy provides the couple a sense of closeness and unity. It makes the couple feel like they have a protective shell around them; it makes the couple feel that their relationship can withstand anything life can dish out. Of course, this is a false sense of security. Just as a bridge needs a metal support structure in place before the cement is applied, the dating relationship needs the emotional infrastructure in place before the final hard protective shell is added.

This emotional infrastructure does not come from intense physical intimacy. Rather, it comes from building a strong personal relationship with your partner. This is done by becoming actively involved in the partner's life and studying their hidden feelings and emotions. You should build this infrastructure long before you allow intense physical intimacy to become an established part of your relationship. I want to point out that I am not saying you should not be romantic in the early parts of your relationship; I'm simply saying you should be careful and slow. You can be romantic without having excessive physical intimacy. You can hold hands and kiss, but you should not engage in prolonged passionate kissing before your relationship is ready.

It is important to point out that there is a limit to the amount of physical intimacy a relationship should have before marriage. Even when all of the necessary support structures are in place, physical intimacy should never go past a certain point. There are certain levels of physical intimacy that should only be expressed in marriage. Determining this cut off point is discussed in other chapters.

Chapter: 1.13

The Abuse of the Physical Intimacy

Some people use physical intimacy as a tool to keep their partners from breaking up with them. Although this ploy is occasionally used by guys, girls are the biggest abusers of this. The reason girls use it more often than guys is because guys have an inherent weakness with the temptation of physical intimacy.

Several years ago I dated a girl who told me she had deliberately encouraged physical encounters when she thought her boyfriend was considering breaking up with her. She learned this trick from another girl who said it reduces the guy's resolve to break off the relationship. She said that it is an effective tool in keeping guys around.

Later on in our relationship, I came to the conclusion we were not right for each other and was considering breaking up. She must have sensed this because she started becoming more aggressive with her physical advances. For example, one time while we were kissing she took hold of my hand and placed it on her breast. This was the first time in fifteen years I had touched a girl's breast. Shortly after that she moved my hand to the snap of her bra to have me remove her bra; which I did. Fortunately, a couple of minutes later I was able to gather up enough will-power to end the romantic encounter. I must admit that this increased physical intimacy made it difficult for me to break up with her the following month.

The point I'm trying to make is this: the abuse of physical intimacy is all too real and can cause numerous problems. It was hard enough breaking up with her when the only thing I had done was touch her breasts for a couple of minutes. I can only imagine how much harder it would have been if I had gone any further.

Interestingly, a few weeks later when I started telling her about the possibility of breaking up, she made the following statement, "What do you mean you are uncertain about our relationship? You touched my bare breasts; that's not the actions of a person in a casual relationship. Your actions conveyed a certain amount of commitment and responsibility. You need to owe up to your responsibilities." Her comment totally surprised me considering she was the one who initiated this intimacy.

I responded by saying, "As the head of the relationship, I take full responsibility for what we have done. We obviously have gone further than what we should have. Nevertheless, you need to remember who moved my hand to your breasts in the first place and who pulled up your shirt and put my hand on your bra strap. You also need to remember who terminated this contact a couple of minutes later." As I think back on this situation, I am sure her comment was Plan B of her ploy to keep us together. In other words, if she couldn't keep me around with physical intimacy (Plan A), she would try to keep me around with guilt (Plan B).

As you can see, excessive physical intimacy makes breaking up much more difficult. If my limited exposure had caused this much resistance, imagine the amount of resistance I would have encountered if I had gone much further. Physical intimacy can be a tool of manipulation and you need to be careful not to fall into this trap.

I have one more comment about the abuse of physical intimacy. Many guys will use the ploy "If you love me, you'll let me" to motivate their girlfriend to become more physically intimate. Sometimes the girl will think, "If I don't do what he is asking of me, he'll leave me. Besides, he says he loves me and wants to marry me someday." Girls, if a guy tries to use a line like this on you, simply tell him no. If he does not honor your refusal, I would strongly recommend you terminate the relationship and find someone else. If he will not respect your refusal, he is not worth having around. If he does not respect your wishes now, while he is trying to impress you with his best behavior, he certainly will not treat you with respect after you are married.

Chapter: 1.14

Sexual Boredom

I was recently asked the question, "Why do married people become unfaithful to their mates? They have a spouse at home to meet their sexual needs; yet, they find it necessary to sleep with other people. Why?"

Although there are a variety of reasons, one reason is dominant: sexual boredom! Men and women can quickly become bored with sex. A true sexual experience is much more than sexual intercourse; true sexual fulfillment is dependent upon the depth of the emotional relationship. Sex can quickly become boring if a relationship is lacking

this much-needed emotional component. This is the reason why many married people look elsewhere for sexual excitement. It is not that the new partner has some new sexual moves, they are usually drawn by the excitement brought on by being with someone new.

This explains the strange phenomenon of why guys quickly grow tired of pornographic magazines. If all a guy needed was to simply see a photograph of a naked girl to satisfy his desires, he would never need more than one pornographic magazine, or one photograph for that matter. Yet, once a guy sees a photograph, it quickly loses its attraction. He needs new photographs to bring back the excitement. It is not uncommon for a guy to spend thousands of dollars on pornographic material. This diminishing fulfillment is called the law of diminishing returns.

I recently attended a funeral of an acquaintance. When his relatives went through his apartment, they found a couple thousand computer disks filled with pornography. I can't say for certain, but I am sure he had spent tens of thousands of dollars on this pornography. Obviously, one photograph didn't satisfy.

A few decades ago the majority of the people who went to sex therapists did so because they had actual physical problems performing sexual intercourse. Now, as a result of the sexual revolution, the majority of the people seeking help from sex therapists do so because they are bored with sex. They don't have a performance problem, but sex doesn't satisfy them anymore. The reason they are dissatisfied with sex is because they have missed the main ingredient of a fulfilling sexual relationship: deep emotional intimacy.

Any relationship that is centered on physical intimacy will become boring; it is inevitable. To avoid this boredom, couples must build and maintain a strong emotional base in their relationships. This involves having mutual hobbies, good communication, and strong friendships. Thus, sexual intimacy becomes an expression of the emotional intimacy that already exists.

Chapter: 1.15

Trust in the Relationship

It had been a long day for the two correction officers; Gary and Tom had transported prisoners to and from the hospital all day. Rex, a belligerent maximum-security prisoner, was the last one to be taken back to the prison. As they walked down the hospital corridor, the prisoner spat on Gary's face. Anger raged within Gary as he escorted Rex to a remote room for a little talk.

Closing the door, Gary walked toward the defiant prisoner. Spitting on the prisoner Gary said, "Look punk, you may be able to get away with this with the other officers, but I won't put up with it. I won't tolerate this type of disrespect on the street and I certainly won't take it from a lousy convict. My job doesn't mean that much to me; I'd rather get fired than let someone spit on me. I'm giving you fair warning right here and now. I'll beat the crud out of you if you ever do that to me again."

After Rex returned to his cell, he filed a complaint stating the officer spat on him and threatened to beat him up. When presented with the complaint, Gary wrote out exactly what happened. To the surprise of the investigator, Gary's statement was consistent with the prisoner's statement. The prisoner, however, had conveniently left out the small fact that he had started the incident by assaulting the officer in the first place.

The investigator did not expect Gary's admission. When interviewed, Gary said, "I won't lie about what happened. The prisoners know where I stand; I'm fair with them and I don't feel it's my business to punish them any more than their current punishment. You will never find me picking on prisoners just for the fun of it. However, if someone assaults me, I will correct them. If I were to do it all over again, I wouldn't change a thing."

The officer's honesty and the fact he was assaulted first, prompted the investigator to recommend the minimum punishment. The investigator later made the comment, "If the time were to come where I have to decide between Gary's word and someone else's word, even the warden's, I would believe Gary. He has demonstrated he can be trusted."

Trust is essential in relationships; if you have demonstrated in the past that you can be trusted, your partner will trust you more in the future. The potential of infidelity in marriage is great and many spouses fear that their mate will cheat on them. Therefore, it is important to demonstrate to your partner, before you are married, that you can be trusted around the opposite sex.

Trust and respect do not come automatically; they must be earned. It is important to establish strong bonds of trust

in a relationship. There will be times in your marriage when your credibility will be called into question. It could be in the area of fiscal honesty, verbal credibility, or moral integrity. If you have not been trustworthy in the past, it will be difficult for your mate to trust you now.

Most marriages are not storybook perfect; couples do not simply get married and live happily ever after. We prefer to think that after we get married, our mates will remain faithful to us and will never be tempted to seek anyone else. This, of course, is not true. In fact, even strong Christians and religious leaders are not immune to moral failure.

The actual act of unfaithfulness is not the only thing that can damage a relationship; distrust itself can also cause serious problems. Not being able to trust your mate around the opposite sex will put a great deal of stress on the relationship. In today's high pace society, there are plenty of opportunities, plenty of temptations. If you are not absolutely certain your mate will remain faithful around an attractive person, you will be plagued with doubts. These doubts will hinder your intimacy and unity. This irritant can quickly become a rampant infection in your marriage.

A couple of years ago a co-worker's wife came in to see him at work. Jokingly, I said, "Oh, he's having lunch with his girlfriend." Of course, I immediately told her I was kidding and that he would be up shortly. The next day he confronted me about my comment. He said his wife was furious and wanted to know about the other girl. He couldn't convince her he wasn't having an affair. As it turned out, she had already caught him twice having an extramarital affair and, as a result, it didn't take much to make her suspect him of infidelity. My

comment was all that was needed to rock their unstable marriage.

In hindsight, it is obvious that I should not have joked about this subject. I just assumed his wife would have seen I was joking. I apparently live in a completely different world than some of my co-workers; I never suspected that my co-worker has had numerous extramarital affairs.

There is a powerful way of building trust for your future marriage. It involves demonstrating self-control when your temptation is at its greatest. If you are able to maintain sexual self-control during the time before you are married, when temptation is at its greatest, you are much more likely to exercise sexual self-control after you are married, when the temptation is usually much less. Temptation, of course, is very strong when you are young and your hormones are at their highest level. This temptation is even stronger when you are dating the “love of your life.” Your demonstration of self-control will make it easier for your mate to trust you when you are around other attractive people. This is even more important if your mate has a natural tendency for jealousy.

You may think this “lack of trust” will never plague your marriage because your mate actually initiated some of the premarital sex. You may think that since both of you wanted to be sexually active, it will not be viewed as a lack of self-control. This is not the case; you will find that regardless of who wanted it in the first place, your mate will still wonder if you can be trusted when you are in a tempting situation.

An incident happened today at work that provides a good example of this issue of trust. I work in a prison as a correction officer and my assignment today was to process the people who are visiting the

prisoners. A girl, who was obviously several months pregnant, came in to visit her husband. It was obvious that the prisoner was unhappy to see that his wife was pregnant; he had been locked up for a long time so the baby couldn't have been his. She desperately tried to explain how she became pregnant while he was behind bars.

She said that she didn't know how she became pregnant; the only thing she could think of is a party she went to a few months back. She said she had a few drinks and the next thing she remembers is waking up the next morning with some of her clothes off. She said she can only assume that someone put a date-rape drug in her drink and raped her during the night.

Was she telling the truth? Maybe, but it is also possible she made up this story in order to try to conceal her indiscretion. Both are likely scenarios. Right or wrong, her past actions will influence the way he will receive her story. If she had exercised sexual self-control while they were dating, her husband will probably be more likely to believe her rape story. However, if they were sexually active while they were dating, he will have more reasons to doubt her story. Think about it; if she was willing to violate one code of moral conduct (premarital sex), she may also be willing to violate another (extramarital sex).

Chapter: 1.16

Behind Closed Doors

The Cold War between the U.S. and Russia was beginning to thaw and Premier Nikita

Khrushchev and President Eisenhower were developing a genuine friendship. As this relationship grew, the tension between the two countries slowly started to diminish. A sad chapter in our world's history was beginning to come to an end.

Although relations were improving between these two countries, both sides were still spying on each other. Spying is an unfortunate, but important part of national security. Apart from the normal forms of espionage, the United States had an additional tool for spying. It was the new U-2 reconnaissance plane. At first, it was believed that this was an ideal spy tool. It was thought that radar would not be able to detect a plane flying at 70,000 feet, and if it were detected, it would be beyond the reach of Soviet fighters and missiles. Although the jet was out of reach of soviet fighters and missiles, it was not out of range of their radar system. Over a thousand failed attempts to down the plane were recorded. Since the plane could not be shot down, the Russians could never prove the U.S. was violating their air space. This provided the American leaders the luxury of spying on Russia without the worry of political backlash.

As history has often demonstrated, a single incident can alter the course of events for the entire world. On May 1, 1960, one of the U-2's engines stalled. Since the air at 70,000 feet was too thin to restart the engine, the pilot, Francis Gary Powers, had to lower his plane to restart it. Unfortunately, this made the jet vulnerable to Soviet defenses; a missile struck Power's jet before he could return to a safer height.

The U-2 had a built-in self-destruct system that could destroy the plane if the pilot thought the plane could fall into enemy hands. Once the system is activated, the pilot has a certain amount of time to get

away from the plane. Most pilots, however, didn't believe there was actually a time-delay in the explosive system. They knew that a captured pilot of a spy-plane would be even more of a liability to the U.S. government than a captured plane; so many pilots felt the explosives would go off as soon as the system was activated. Power said he activated the self-destruct system before he ejected, but the jet didn't self-destruct. Either the missile that struck the jet damaged the self-destruct system or Powers chose not to commit suicide. Either way, both the plane and pilot were captured.

Back in the U.S., the military received vague reports that the plane was shot down. President Eisenhower was advised to deny a spy plane was even flying over Russia. Since Russia couldn't offer any proof, it would be their word against his. Eisenhower was unaware that the Russians had captured a live pilot who had admitted to the violation.

Once Russia presented evidence of America's violation, Eisenhower was forced to admit that the Pentagon had sent up a plane. Trying to save face, Eisenhower assured Khrushchev that the flight was done without his knowledge or permission. Khrushchev believed his new American friend was telling the truth. Eventually, Eisenhower was forced to admit he had actually authorized the mission. Khrushchev, feeling betrayed, launched the Soviet Union back into the Cold War.

The Bible states we are to be careful of what we say and do, even when we are in private surroundings. Ecclesiastes 10:20 makes it clear that information always has the potential of leaking out. It says, "Do not revile the king even in your thoughts, or curse the rich in your bedroom, because a bird of the air may carry your words, and a bird on the wing may report what you say."

Although the verse was written over 3,500 years ago, it could never be truer than what it is now. As we move closer to what is known as the "Big Brother" society with its high-tech surveillance, we find that very few secrets actually remain hidden.

Here is something that you, Big Brother enthusiasts, may find interesting. The term Big Brother, of course, comes from George Orwell's book, 1984. Some people put special significance on that date, especially in the 1970's. In reality, the date in the title had no special meaning. When Orwell was trying to come up with a title for his new book, he took the current year (1948), and switched the last two digits around. It's as simple as that; no more and no less. Sorry about that you conspiracy enthusiasts.

History, especially recent history, has shown us that activities done in private have a tendency of becoming public knowledge. The fall of Presidential candidates, television evangelists, military heroes, and corporate CEOs are good examples of how acts done in private can easily become public.

As humans, we have a tendency to push things to the limit; to try to get away with as much as possible. We often allow ourselves to violate certain rules simply because we think we can get away with it. Many Christians have allowed themselves to become involved in premarital sex simply because they were convinced no one would find out about it. Although they knew it was wrong, they deliberately shut God out of that part of their lives.

Society has a double standard concerning premarital sex. Non-Christians, even those who may be practicing premarital sex themselves, usually feel Christians should not be engaged in premarital sex. As a result, some single Christians try to cover-up

their sexual activities. In many situations, a person's reputation and testimony would be ruined if the knowledge of their premarital sex leaked out.

The purpose of this chapter is to remind you that these "secrets" have a way of getting out. Unless you are willing to deal with the consequences; do not get involved in premarital sex. Here is a rule of thumb to guide your life: never say or do anything that would make you feel guilty or ashamed if it were published on the front page of a national newspaper. Would your testimony be ruined if your sexual activities were disclosed to others? Would the disclosure of your premarital sex make you feel guilty or ashamed?

Feeling guilty is different than feeling awkward or embarrassed. Some things can be embarrassing simply because they involve a personal or sensitive subject; not because they are morally wrong. For example, a teenage girl may feel embarrassed if others found out she was menstruating, but she would not feel guilty about it. The feelings of guilt only arise when a person feels his activity is actually wrong.

There are many ways that others may hear about your "secret" dating activities. Most people have friends with whom they share their personal thoughts and feelings. In fact, very few subjects remain secret between close friends and romance is often on the top of the list of subjects to be shared. Even if a couple has an agreement not to discuss this area with others, it usually comes out when the relationship is going through difficult times. Since excessive physical intimacy places substantial strains on relationships, the subject will usually come up if the partner seeks advice from others.

The Bible clearly says your sins will find you out (Numbers 32:23). It emphasizes the fact that God is not mocked and a person will reap whatever he sows (Galatians 6:7). Everything we do leaves behind "fingerprints." A humorous example of fingerprints is the true story of a careless burglar who was caught simply because the police were able to follow his footprints in the snow back to his house. Most fingerprints, of course, are more obscure than this, thereby giving the person a false sense of security.

Another example of this is the study of human hand movement done at a university. A group of students in a classroom were given an object to examine and then pass on. Unknown to them, the object had been dusted with a fluorescent powder that glows under a black light. At the end of the class, the students were asked to stand under a black light. Every area of the face and body that the person touched showed up under the black light. The hand movements they thought were secret or unnoticed were now exposed. For several people, this proved to be embarrassing. You never know what invisible telltale marks of indiscretions may become visible later on, so never do anything that you would not want exposed.

The gold medal Olympic champion, Marion Jones, provides us another example. In 2000, she won three gold and two bronzes medals in the Sydney Olympics. As with all other winners, Jones was required to take a drug test to prove she had not been using performance-enhancing drugs. She passed the test. At the time of the test, Jones was taking a type of steroid, called "the clear," that could not be detected with the current technology. Many athletes thought that this was the perfect drug because it could not be detected; it was considered foolproof. This, of course, was not true. In 2007 she was forced to admit that she had taken

performance enhancing drugs in preparation for the Olympics. As a result, she lost her medals, award payments, and her reputation. Clearly, the things that are hidden today may not be hidden tomorrow.

In 1987, a female correction officer at a prison was brutally raped and murdered. Unfortunately, the State Police had a difficult time investigating this murder. There are two basic rules for prisoners living in the prison: don't snitch on a fellow inmate and never help the cops. As a result, police had to rely heavily on forensic evidence.

The prison was locked down and an intensive search was conducted to find possible clues, such as a prisoner with cuts on his body or blood on his clothing. However, finding prisoners with blood on their clothing is not that unusual; violence is inherent in any high security prison and bloodstains from fights are not that uncommon.

Fortunately for the police, the murderer had left his identity behind at the scene of the crime. Inside every person is a blueprint of how they are to be made. This set of instructions, called DNA, is unique to each individual. Sperm taken from the crime scene told the investigators who committed the crime. DNA identification was just emerging and the court systems were reluctant to accept DNA as solid proof of a person's identity. This case was one of the first in the nation to use DNA to convict a person of murder.

As you can see, even the best kept secrets can find their way out. Even secrets that are completely hidden today may not be hidden tomorrow. Therefore, you should live your life as if your deepest secrets could be exposed at any given moment.

Chapter: 1.17

Premarital Pregnancies

Two brothers, Tom and Dave (ages seventeen and eighteen), jumped a train in Michigan and headed for California. Sitting with the hobos in an old cattle car was a new and exciting experience for these young boys. Around Kansas, one of the hobos approached the boys and said, "Take off your watches and hand me all of your money." Reaching into his boot, Tom pulled out a knife and turned the tables on his surprised aggressor. As a result, the hobo was forced to jump off the moving train.

This was just the beginning of Tom's learning experiences. After arriving in California, he tried to get a job. War had just broken out in Europe (1939), and security had increased throughout the United States; everyone was required to provide a copy of their birth certificate in order to obtain a job. Tom wrote to his parents for a copy of his birth certificate and when they did not respond, he wrote directly to the hospital. Much to his surprise, Tom discovered that his parents had lied to him about his birthday; he was actually born six months earlier.

As it turned out, Tom's mother became pregnant before she was married. Back in the early 1900's, pregnant women used to move out of town, have their baby, and then come back home in a couple of years. Premarital pregnancies are not a new phenomenon; they have been happening all along, but people back then just didn't talk about them as openly as they do now. Although some of the stigma has worn off,

premarital pregnancies still presents many problems for the unwed mother.

It is interesting to note that the ultimate expression of physical/emotional intimacy is also the way new life is conceived. God could have separated these two functions, but he didn't. The fact they are indivisible is another indication God expects sexual intercourse to be reserved for marriage.

Premarital pregnancies produce a great deal of strain on relationships. The pregnancy broadcasts to the world that this couple has had a moral failure; it brings shame and condemnation. Ironically, the very people who are condemning the pregnant couple are often engaged in premarital sex themselves, or when single. Although this is highly hypocritical, it is a fact of life.

Not only is shame brought upon the couple, it is also brought upon the "love child." It is easy for this child to feel unwanted and believe that he or she is a burden. This burden is increased if the couple gets married because of the pregnancy. Many of these couples blame the love child for their marital problems. They tell the child that they are the reason for their unhappy marriage. Although this sounds ridiculous, it happens all of the time. Can you imagine the guilt these children have to bare when their parents break up?

Couples that have premarital pregnancies are often encouraged to get married. Guys are told that this is the honorable and responsible thing to do. Yet, most of these young couples are not ready for marriage, let alone parenthood. Although the premarital sex and pregnancy were both big mistakes, it is even more of a mistake to get married because of the pregnancy. Couples that get married because of pregnancies have an increased risk of divorce.

If you are facing the problem of an unwanted pregnancy, do not complicate your problem any further by doing the “honorable” thing. If you are not mature enough for marriage and parenthood, you will make your life, your mate’s life, and your child’s life miserable.

Having said all of that, I need to point out that just because I am not advocating marriage doesn’t mean I believe you are relieved of all responsibility. Since both of you were responsible for the pregnancy, both of you are responsible to ensure that the child safely enters the world and receives adequately care. This means that both of you share the responsibilities for the medical bills, child support, and any other needs that may come up. Fortunately, adoptions can significantly relieve this heavy burden.

Although babies born out-of-wedlock have always been a worldwide problem, the care for these babies has changed in recent decades. Most industrial nations are now providing some type of support for these children. There are many factors that have contributed to this change, but the threat of socialism and communism has probably contributed to this the most. The early and mid 1900’s were a very violent and unstable period of time for the world and many governments were overthrown by socialist movements promising social relief for the working man. As a result, many governments feared that if they did not implement their own social programs, they too would be replaced. In essence, self-preservation brought about many social reforms.

In addition, the original ideology behind these socialist movements (the idea that the government truly cares for the welfare of its people), pricked the conscience of many people. Even though the communist movement itself is terribly flawed right

down to its core, it caused many governments to realize they needed to do a better job caring for their own people. As a result, many governments started their own social programs, such as the welfare and social security system we have here in the United States.

Although many of these services were long overdue, some have created their own set of problems. Welfare is an example of this. It was poorly implemented in most states and has evolved from being a temporary safety net for those in true need to a lifestyle for those who choose not to work. In addition, welfare has become generational. Welfare parents raised welfare children who, in turn, grew up and raised their own welfare children. Welfare had mushroomed into a tremendous financial burden for most states. Don’t get me wrong, I am not against the proper use of this safety net. There are many people who have a legitimate need for this temporary service; they use this helping hand to get themselves back on their feet. Unfortunately, there are many more people who choose to abuse the system.

Pro-abortion groups used the overburdened welfare system as a major selling point in their efforts to get abortion legalized. They thought that legal abortions would reduce the number of out-of-wedlock babies, thus reducing the number of people who end up on welfare. Much to their surprise, this didn’t happen. Instead, it appears that legalizing abortion has done just the opposite; it has greatly reduced the stigma of premarital sex and premarital births. As a result, the number of unwed mothers has increased significantly; increasing the welfare burden.

As most people know, abortion became legal in the U.S. in 1973. In 1965, 24 percent of black infants and 3.1 percent of white infants were born to single mothers in

the United States. By 1990, the rates had risen to 64 percent for blacks, 18 percent for whites.^{*1} In 2005, the numbers have risen to 69 percent for blacks, 32 percent for whites,^{*2} and 45 percent for Hispanics.^{*3} In 2004, almost four out of ten babies (36%)^{*4} were born out-of-wedlock compared to 11% in 1970.^{*5} This means that more than 1.5 million American babies are born every year to unwed mothers.^{*6} Keep in mind that we are only talking about the number of babies born out of wedlock; the number of babies conceived out of wedlock is over 2 million a year. This shouldn't be too surprising considering the number of unmarried couples living together. Between 1960 and 2000, the number of unmarried couples living together has increased tenfold.^{*7}

More babies are now conceived out of wedlock than are conceived in wedlock. The percentage of first births conceived out of wedlock to women ages 15 to 29 has soared from 18 percent (1930-1934) to 53 percent (1990-1994). This has become even more of a problem with girls between the ages of 15 and 19. For white women, the numbers have increased from 25 percent to 85 percent and for black women the numbers have increased from 47 percent to 98 percent.^{*8}

Abortion should never be considered an option; life begins at conception and terminating this pre-born life is the same as murder. The baby's right to life is far more sacred than the supposed woman's right of choice and, contrary to what pro-choice groups say, there is nothing in the U.S. Constitution about "female reproductive rights."

When you think of it, killing unborn children simply for the purpose of easing the welfare burden is rather appalling. In reality, though, this is no different from what Hitler did during his infamous T4

program. Many people are unaware of the fact that before German went to war (September 1939), and a couple of years before Germany began systematically killing people in concentration camps (June 1941); Hitler began killing a large number of Germany citizens who were mentally and physically handicapped. He started out first killing babies and later worked his way up to adults. Hitler called these people "useless eaters" (or "life unworthy of life"), because he felt they contributed nothing to society and were an intolerable drain on Germany's limited resources. These were not racially motivated killings; most of the victims were Arians. Rather, Hitler killed about 70,000 fellow Germans because he wanted to reduce the burden on the welfare system.^{*9}

Some people try to sooth their conscience by hiding behind the fact that abortions were legal when they had their abortion. It is important to point out that just because something is legal does not mean it is right. Slavery was legal in the United States, death camps were legal in Nazi Germany, wholesale murder of American POWs was legal in WWII Japan, and genocide was legal in pre-invasion Iraq and is still legal in certain parts of Africa. Don't think that God will turn a blind eye just because abortion happened to be "legal" when you had yours performed.

Abortion is murder and it can profoundly affect a person psychologically. Abortion produces a great deal of guilt and remorse and it is not uncommon for a woman who has had an abortion to be plagued with guilt for the rest of her life. As with every other sin, the person has a choice as to how they will deal with the guilt. Either the person will repent and turn their heart toward God or they will rebel and harden their heart toward God. You cannot maintain a close walk with God and continually ignore the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Did you know that over 150,000 abortions are performed worldwide every day? How does this compare to the other causes of deaths? If we were to take all of the causes of deaths in the world (excluding abortions) and add them together, we would have about 158,000 deaths a day. That means abortions kills almost as many people as all of the other causes of deaths combined. The following chapter provides some more interesting information about abortions, including the documentation.

Abortion does more than scar the emotions; it can also scar the girl physically. This is one thing that most abortion clinics are reluctant to tell you. The abortion process can scar the uterus or fallopian tubes, resulting in permanent sterilization. Thousands of girls have died from the complications of legal abortions. According to the Elliot Institute, “The leading causes of abortion related deaths are hemorrhage, infection, embolism, anesthesia, and undiagnosed ectopic pregnancies. Legal abortion is reported as the fifth leading cause of maternal death in the United States, though in fact it is recognized that most abortion related deaths are not officially reported as such.”^{*10} Later in the report it says, “Approximately 10% of women undergoing elective abortion will suffer immediate complications, of which approximately one-fifth (2%) are considered life-threatening.”^{*11}

Furthermore, those who have had an abortion have an increased risk for breast and cervical cancer. When a girl becomes pregnant, her body goes through a specialized sequence of chemical and hormonal changes. This complicated sequence is important because a large number of events need to take place on a precise timetable. In a sense, this sequence is similar to the launch sequence of a spaceship. In order to safely launch a

spaceship into outer space, hundreds of events need to take place in a precise order.

When a spaceship launch is interrupted, the launch sequence is thrown out of whack and it needs to be carefully recalibrate by the flight engineers. Likewise, when the girl’s hormonal launch sequence for a pregnancy is interrupted, certain parts of the girl’s body chemistry are thrown out of whack.

The body is a marvelous machine and it has a variety of self-correcting procedures that get the body back into proper alignment. For example, when a girl has a miscarriage, the body has a natural rebooting process to put everything back into normal operation. There isn’t, however, a natural process for an unnatural abortion. Instead, the body deals with this abnormality the same way it deals with any other injury. Usually, this healing process is sufficient to bring the body back to normal operations. Unfortunately, the bodies of some girls do not correctly recover from this terminated launch sequence and the chemical and hormone levels do not return to their normal levels in a timely manner. This results in them having an increased risk for breast and cervical cancers.

The Elliot Institute reports that, “Women with one abortion face a 2.3 relative risk of cervical cancer, compared to non-aborted women, and women with two or more abortions face a 4.92 relative risk. Similar elevated risks of ovarian and liver cancer have also been linked to single and multiple abortions. These increased cancer rates for post-aborted women are apparently linked to the unnatural disruption of the hormonal changes which accompany pregnancy and untreated cervical damage.”^{*12} A study by H. L. Howe using data from the New York State Health Department concluded that women who aborted their first pregnancy increased their risk of breast cancer by a

factor of 1.7. Those who went on to abort their second or third pregnancy increased their risk by a factor of 4.^{*13}

Not surprisingly, pro-abortion groups deny there are any links between cancer and abortions and they too have statistics to back up their claims. So, what are the actual numbers for abortion-related cancers, abortion-related sterilizations, and premature deaths resulting from abortions? We really don't know because there is tremendous opposition to a nationwide database of abortion-related problems. For obvious self-serving reasons, it would be counter-productive for abortion clinics to collect and share this type of data. Instead, statistics have to draw from the medical records of cities, counties, or states that maintain this type of information.

The problem with this approach is that data pools are usually small and isolated compared to large national data pools; meaning the statistics may not truly represent the nation as a whole. As a result, the statistics derived from these small data pools are not as accurate and reliable as they would have been if they had been derived from a large national data pool. More problematic, however, is a person wishing to present a distorted view can usually find an isolated and unique data pool to support his or her position.

Another thing missing are large clinical studies seeking to explain *why* there is a link between abortion and cancer. We have a rudimentary understanding of this subject, but there is still much we don't know. Unfortunately, there won't be any large studies done on this subject anytime in the near future. Pro-abortion groups are opposed to studies like these because they are totally against anything that has the potential of linking abortions with medical problems.

As most of you know, there is a great deal of controversy over anything relating to abortions. Businesses know that there are some powerful pro-choice proponents and most medical establishments realize they stand much to lose if they were to alienate these groups. As a result, most medical groups are staying away from these types of studies.

Although adoption is often advantageous for both the unmarried parents and child, many girls think that raising the child themselves is the only reasonable choice. In fact, many of them believe they are doing a noble thing by "standing by my child against all odds." They feel that the biological mother is always the better choice. Although this sounds noble, it is not usually the primary reason most of these girls decide to keep their child. Many girls think it will be "fun" to have a baby. In fact, in certain circles, it is even vogue for the single girl to have a baby.

In addition, many girls desire a baby because they want someone who will love them unconditionally. They also believe a baby will make them feel complete and help fill the pervasive emptiness that they are experiencing. On top of all this, many girls feel that being able to love a baby would satisfy their built-in need to love and nurture. They feel that guys are too unreliable to be the object of their affection, whereas babies will never leave them.

The problem, of course, is these babies don't stay babies; they grow up. They stop being adorable bundles of joy and start becoming selfish and independent creatures as they move into the terrible twos and threes. Eventually, they grow up into little people who want to live their own lives. Unfortunately, many of these "noble" mothers end up hating their children.

Raising a child is a big responsibility and keeping the child will bring your single life to an abrupt end. Your dating life will change dramatically since you can no longer take off whenever you want. The financial strains can also be tremendous.

Finding a good marriage partner is a difficult process by itself, but finding a *quality* guy willing to take on a “pre-made” family is even more difficult. Most guys prefer being married for a couple of years before having children; they prefer to devote their whole attention to their new bride.

Child support is another problem that results from premarital pregnancies. Child support, which is usually paid by the guy, can cripple a person financially; making it almost impossible for the person to pay for college. A co-worker of mine got his girlfriend pregnant about ten years ago. Although they both agreed not to set up any formal child support, he paid for most of the child’s expenses. Last year the birthmother decided to get the child support formalized and he was hit with a large bill. As a result, he was drained financially and lost his home.

I have another example that demonstrates the burden of child support. A few years ago my neighbor’s wife divorced him and he took the breakup hard. One night he went out drinking and ended up having a one-night stand with a girl he met at a bar. Although she became pregnant after this encounter, she decided to hide the information from him. She moved out of state and started a new life. Five years later she decided to come back home to sue him for child support. The judge ruled that not only did he have to pay about a thousand dollars a month for child support; he also had to make a back payment of about \$50,000.

You may think it is unfair that he had to make such a substantial back-payment when the birthmother deliberately deprived him of his child’s first five years. Unfortunately, this demonstrates a sad fact of life: life is not fair. My friend has grown to love his child, but the child support has put him under a tremendous financial burden. The bottom line is this: don’t engage in any activity unless you are willing to pay the full price.

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Chapter: 1.18

Interesting Facts about Abortion

Visual aids are powerful tools that can help you communicate your message in a quick and precise manner. To help you share some unique facts about abortion, I've created three posters. These posters are interesting and attractive and many people use them as conversation starters. You can download these posters at:

biblehelp.org/downloads.html

Comparing Abortion and Slavery



- It's legal.
- It's "Constitutional."
- It's been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.
- People still protest it despite its obvious legality.
- The media has instituted a self-imposed "blackout" of the opposition.
- The U.S. Mail has banned the mailing of certain opposition literature.
- Compared to other controversial "free speech" issues, Congress and the courts have greatly stifled the voices of opposition.
- It's an issue of "choice."
- It's a "privacy issue" that concerns no one else.
- It's not human life protected by the law (thus it can be terminated).
- Those who oppose it are "troublemaking intolerant bigots."
- I have a right to do this. I would be deprived of my Constitutional rights of "liberty and justice" if I am restricted in this area.

Sound familiar? It should; it's talking about American slavery. These are the things people have said about slavery before it was finally abolished. Slaveholders actually felt that their Constitutional rights to "liberty and justice" would be violated if they were told they couldn't violate the liberty and justice of a black person.

Now, 150 years later, we wonder how these people couldn't see the obvious contradictions of such statements. Yet, we are doing the exact same thing with abortion. We are told that the unborn child is the personal property of the woman and she has the right to do whatever she wants with it.

Treating human life as property is wrong in any century. America's treatment of the unborn child is just as deplorable and despicable as America's past treatment of slaves. There is no difference. If you feel slavery is wrong, you have to say abortion is wrong. The parallels between abortion and slavery are too great to ignore. Either our Constitution supports both or opposes both. Either we abolish abortion or we have to legalize slavery. Americans need to decide, once and for all, if human life can be treated as property.

Go to BibleHelp.org/prochoice.htm for more information

“Tragic Loss of Life”

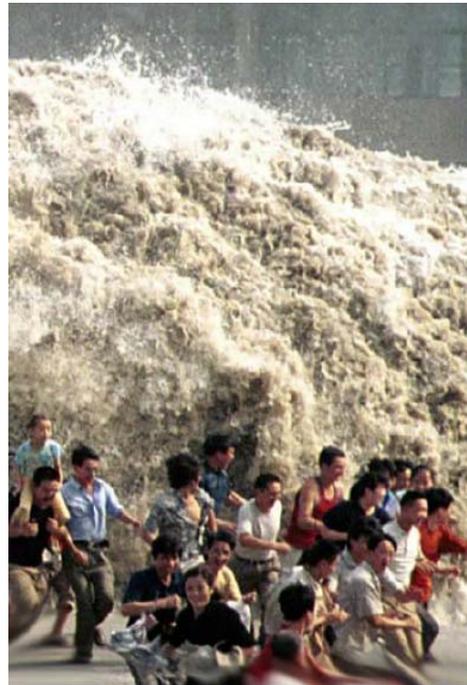


Tsunami Death Toll Passes 150,000

The world was shocked when it heard that a Tsunami ripped through the coasts of Asia (Dec. 26, 2004). Over 150,000 people were killed by this massive wave. People said that this tragedy was "horrible", "dreadful," and a "tragic loss of life." The world responded to this disaster with almost \$10 billion in aid.

YET, the world performs more than 150,000 abortions every day. This death toll, however, is not a one-time occurrence. It occurs every day. What is the world's response to this tragedy: Almost total silence. Human life is still human life regardless of the cause of death.

Footnote: The death toll has risen since the creation of this poster. As of March 2005, the death toll stands at about 175,000 confirmed dead plus an unknown number washed out to sea.



Go to BibleHelp.org/didknow.htm for more information

Did You Know ...?

- 1 out of every 67 deaths in the WORLD is an American abortion^{*1}
- 1 out of every 4 deaths in America is an American Abortion^{*2}
- Half of the deaths in the world are from abortions^{*3}
- Abortion is the leading cause of death in the world. It kills as many people as ALL of the other causes of death combined.^{*4}
- We have lost more Americans through abortions (64 times more) than we did in all of our wars (12 wars) combined^{*5}
- The world kills more people through abortion than all of the deaths in the America combined (22 times as many)^{*6}
- The D-Day invasion of France (WWII) was the bloodiest in history. There were 53,714 allied soldiers killed in the "Battle of Normandy." Yet, our world kills more people than that in just 9 hours through abortions.^{*7}
- America has lost 589 soldiers in its first year of fighting in the Iraq War. The world, however, kills more people than that in just 6 minutes through abortions.^{*8}



Footnotes: Go to BibleHelp.org/didknow.htm for the supporting documentation

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(FREE distribution is encouraged)

Footnotes for the previous poster (*Did You Know ... ?*)

1. About 56 million people (worldwide) will die this year. These statistics, however, do not include the number of American abortions. Since there will be around 850,000 American abortions this year, this puts the total deaths at 56.8 million. This means that one out of every 67 deaths ($850,000 / 56,850,000 \times 100 = 1.49\%$, which equals 1 out of 66.9) will be from American abortions.
(Source: <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>)
2. As of May 2007, America's population is around 301 million. The death rate in America is .834%. This means that 2.51 million Americans will die this year ($301 \text{ million} \times .00834 = 2,510,000$). These deaths do not include American abortions. If we include the 850,000 American abortion deaths, the total number of deaths in America will be 3.36 million. This means that one out of every 4 deaths in America will be from American abortions ($850,000 / 3.36 \text{ million} = 25.25\%$, which is 1 out of 3.88).
(source: <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/us.htm>)
3. About 56 million people (worldwide) will die this year. These statistics, however, do not include the number of American abortions. There are about 53 million abortions performed every year in the world. That means that half of the world's deaths are from abortions.
(Source: *United Nations Population Fund* <http://www.unfpa.org>.)
4. If you add up the deaths from all of the other causes in the world, it almost equals the number of deaths from abortions.
5. In all twelve American wars, we lost 651,543 American soldiers ("battlefield"

deaths). Yet, in the past thirty-three years, we have lost over 44 million Americans to abortions. That means we lost 68 times more Americans through abortion than we have in all of our wars combined ($44,377,000 / 651,543 = 68$).
(Source: *Time Almanac 2002*)

6. There are (on average), 2,447,600 deaths per year in America. There are about 53 million abortions in the world every year. Therefore, the global deaths from abortions are 22 times the deaths in America ($53,000,000 / 2,447,600 = 21.65$). Actually, many sources say there are 55 million abortions a year, and other sources put the numbers as high as 60 million. However, to stay on the conservative side, I chose to use the smaller number of 53 million.
(Source: <http://www.unfpa.org/intercenter/hopes/reprod.htm>, <http://www.apologeticspress.org/docsdis/2001/dc-01-09.htm>, <http://www.thefword.org.uk/features/nac.liv/e?skin=textonly>, <http://www.newint.org/issue303/abortion.html>, <http://www.tftw.org/Articles/abortion.html>, <http://perso.infonie.be/le.feu/ms/introdag/q2ag.htm>, <http://courses.washington.edu/hserv531/wo mh.htm>, <http://www.efc.org.uk/safety.html>, <http://www.globalization101.org/issue/woman/5.asp>)
7. There are, on average, 1.68 abortions performed every second in the world. Therefore, it would take just 8.9 hours to accumulate 53,714 deaths ($53,714 / 1.68 / 60 \text{ seconds} / 60 \text{ minutes} = 8.88 \text{ hours}$).
(Source: <http://www.ddaymuseum.co.uk/faq.htm>)
8. There are, on average, 1.68 abortions performed every second in the world. Therefore, it would take just 5.84 minutes to accumulate 589 deaths ($589 / 1.68 / 60 \text{ seconds} = 5.84 \text{ minutes}$).

Chapter: 1.19

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

A previous chapter talks about how pregnancies are a common problem resulting from premarital sex; sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), are another common problem. STDs are no longer a “ghetto” problem that affects only the poor and uneducated. Half of everyone under twenty-five who is sexually active will eventually be infected by a STD^{*1} and every year at least one in four teens will contract a STD.^{*2} In the United States alone, over 52,000 people are infected each day with a STD.^{*3} The U.S. has the highest rate of STDs of any country in the industrialized world, yet only 14 percent of men and 8 percent of women think they are at risk of becoming infected.^{*4}

Those are staggering statistics. What it boils down to is this, if you are sexually active, you will probably become infected with a STD. You do not have to be sleeping with a “slut” to become infected. Even if your partner has slept with only one person, your partner could realistically be infected. This is because that one person may have been very sexually active.

Although we don’t like to think of it this way, we are sleeping with every person our partner(s) has slept with for the past several years. In fact, we are sleeping with every person our partner’s partner has slept with in the past several years. Let’s look at a realistic scenario. Let’s say that the only person you have slept with has only slept with eight people and these partners have only slept with eight people. Let’s also say that these partners have only slept with eight

people and these partners have only slept with eight people. In this situation, you would have been exposed to the diseases of 4,096 people (8x8x8x8). If any of these 4,096 people were infected with a STD, it could easily have been passed on to you. This is the reason why sexually transmitted diseases are at epidemic proportions. In the above scenario, we have only gone back four generations from your partner. In reality, we would have to go back much further.

STDs has even become a major problem among the elderly. In fact, it has become so bad that in 2008 the government resorted to airing commercials warning the elderly of this problem. There are several reasons why the elderly are so susceptible to contracting a STD. First, many elderly people have lost their mates and, as a result, are no longer confined to monogamous relationships. This sleeping around has greatly increased their exposure to STDs.

Second, since STDs are usually considered a “teen” problem, most elderly people do not take special precautions when having sex nor do they see the need to be tested regularly for STDs. Third, since pregnancy is not a concern, condoms are seldom worn. Fourth, many of these lonely men have used the services of prostitutes and this has greatly increased the pool of STDs being introduced into the elderly population. Fifth, incurable STDs have an accumulative affect; the longer a person lives, the more chance he or she has of contracting one of these diseases. Therefore, a large number of the elderly have contracted a permanent STD. For example, in the U.S. nearly one third of the people with HIV/AIDS are 50 plus years old.^{*5}

Herpes is another permanent STD. There is a joke, “What is the difference between herpes and love?” The answer, “Herpes

lasts for a lifetime, whereas love usually doesn't." With herpes being so rampant in our society, you could easily take home a permanent reminder of a temporary tryst. More than 50 million Americans (one in five adults) have genital herpes.^{*6} This year alone there will be about one million new cases of herpes. The main reason why herpes spreads so quickly is because 90% of the infected people are unaware they have this disease when they pass it on. Unfortunately, once the symptoms actually set in, they can be quite a problem. It causes burning, blistering, and lesions in the genital area that can last several weeks at a time. It can cause infertility and it can also kill the fetus if it flares up during pregnancy.

Since herpes is permanent, you have become "damaged goods" if you have this disease. This will make it difficult for you to find a steady date, let alone a quality marriage partner. If you are honest with your new date and tell them you have herpes, they will probably run off and you'll never see them again. However, if you keep quiet, you will have built a relationship on dishonesty. Of course, you will have an angry partner once you finally disclose your infection to them; especially if you have given them the disease. You will really have trouble if your relationship leads to marriage and you still haven't told your partner. At some point your mate will eventually find out, not to mention will probably have contracted the disease.

While most sexually transmitted diseases are not permanent, they are becoming more difficult to cure. Our current arsenal of penicillin is no longer able to control some of these diseases. For example, 16.4% of the cases of gonorrhea are resistant to penicillin, tetracycline, or both.^{*7} Despite stronger antibiotics, STD infections are causing long-term damage, such as chronic ill health, sterility, and tubule pregnancies.

At least 15 % of all American women who are infertile can attribute it to tubal damage caused by pelvic inflammatory disease (PID); the result of an untreated STD.^{*8}

Another danger of premarital sex is that a sexually active girl is at a greater risk of developing cervical cancer; this is because she is increasing her chances of getting a cancer causing STD called HPV (Human Pappilloma Virus). Doctors don't fully understand the connection between HPV and cervical cancer, but they know that when they examine the cancer tissue, over 99% of the samples contain the virus called high-risk HPV.^{*9}

It is important to point out that not every girl who has the HPV virus will get cervical cancer. In fact, most girls who get the HPV virus will not end up with cervical cancer. This is because there are several different types of viruses that are classified as HPV. While some of these viruses only cause warts on the hands, feet, and genitals, others cause abnormal cell changes in the cervix, which often results in cancer. Since there usually are no symptoms of HPV for a long period of time, the disease is usually transmitted unknowingly. This is why at any given time, there are about 20 million people in the U.S. who are currently infected with HPV and about 6.2 million new cases will be added this year. About 80 percent of all sexually active people will be infected with HPV at some point in their lives.^{*10}

It also appears there is a cervical cancer connection between women with HPV and the use of oral contraceptives. According to the *International Family Planning Perspectives*, "Use of oral contraceptives for five years or more appears to raise the risk of cervical cancer among women infected with human papillomavirus (HPV). The odds of developing cervical cancer are nearly tripled among women who use the

pill for 5-9 years and quadrupled among those who rely on the pill for 10 years or more.”¹¹

Most of you have seen commercials on television advertising a vaccine for cervical cancer. They emphasize the benefits of protecting our daughters from this cancer. What they have conveniently failed to mention is the fact that this cancer is brought on by a sexually transmitted disease and can be easily avoided if the girl does not become sexually active. Of course, providing this helpful piece of information would cut into their profit margin.

The list of STD side effects goes on and on; there is no safe sex outside the monogamous marriage relationship. Besides the physical scars of sexually transmitted diseases, you may also have emotional scars when others find out about your immoral behavior. Remember King David’s sin of adultery and murder? Besides loosing his kingdom, God recorded his sins so that everyone will be able to read about it for eternity. If God were to write another book for the Bible and part of it was going to be about your life, what would He write?

Footnote

1 American Social Health Association (ashastd.org). *Fast Facts and Sexually Transmitter Diseases*. Cates JR, Herndon NL, Schulz S L, Darroch JE. (2004). *Our voices, our lives, our futures: Youth and sexually transmitted diseases*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

2 American Social Health Association (ashastd.org) *Fast Facts*. Alan Guttmacher Institute. (1994). *Sex*

and America's Teenagers. New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute.

3 Abortionfacts.com “*Is a Sexual Experience Worth ...*”, Prgnancy Center of Southern Maryland (Carenetsomd.org)

4 American Social Health Association (ashastd.org). *Sexually Transmitter Diseases*.

5 American Association of Retired Persons (aarp.org), *HIV/AIDS Prevention Pushed for the 50+*.

6 American Social Health Association, *Herpes fact sheet* (ashastd.org).

7 Center for Disease Control (cdc.gov)

8 American Social Health Association (ashastd.org) *Fast Facts*. Ness RB et al. (2004). *American Journal of Public Health*, 2004, 94:1327-1329. *Condom use and the risk of recurrent pelvic inflammatory disease, chronic pelvic pain, or infertility following an episode of pelvic inflammatory disease*.

9 American Social Health Association, *HPV fact sheet* (ashastd.org).

10 American Social Health Association, *HPV fact sheet* (ashastd.org).

11 International Family Planning Perspectives, Volume 28, Number 3, September 2002.

Chapter: 1.20

**Sexual Attraction: Differences
Between Males and Females**

A popular book, *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*, highlights the profound differences in the way males and females think. Many fights and divorces could be avoided if people only understood that our brains are wired differently. We obviously see the same facts, but we process the information differently and we approach resolutions differently. Our perspectives and priorities are often different and this usually causes us to place different values of importance on things. It isn't that either gender is trying to be difficult, at least in regards to this, they are simply responding in the way God created them.

These differences, of course, bleed over into the way we communicate. When females communicate, they tend to share more from the heart, which means they often share more of their feelings. Males, on the other hand, tend to share more from the head, which means they focus more on details and less on feelings. It isn't that males are deliberately trying to hide their feelings; they simply don't see a need to share their feelings in normal communications. Since sharing from the heart is not their normal form of communication, males are selective as to when and where they let their feelings show.

Sometimes it appears that the communication between males and females is as cumbersome as trying to get an IBM-based computer to communicate with a Mac computer. Sure, they are exchanging

information, but each side is getting garbled and conflicting signals.

For example, when a wife is telling her husband about her difficult day, he foolishly thinks she is seeking his help and advice. Since males are designed by God to "fix" things, he tries to provide her with some solutions to her problem. This irritates the wife because she feels he should inherently know that she is not seeking his advice; she is simply telling him about her day. She feels he should instinctively know that if she wanted his advice she would specifically ask for it. The guy gets irritated because he has no clue, whatsoever, as to why his wife is irritated with him. He can't figure out why she would tell him about her problems if she didn't want his help.

Males and females are also wired differently in regards to sexual attraction and sexual arousal. It is important to understand these differences for two reasons. First, it will be difficult to fully satisfy your mate sexually if you assume he or she is aroused in the same manner as you. Unfortunately, males seem to be blinder to this problem than females. Second, it is important to understand that the things which entice (tempt) males and females to sexual immorality are quite different. Unfortunately, females seem to be blinder to this problem. This issue will be discussed later on in this chapter.

When it comes to sexual attraction and arousal, males are more visually based than females. Males derive most of their sexual excitement from seeing and touching the female body. In contrast, females do not find the male body, especially the genitals, nearly as exciting. This is the reason why pornography of male bodies is not nearly as prevalent as pornography of female bodies. Instead, females are more sexual aroused when physical intimacy is coupled with romance and emotional intimacy. This is

the reason why glamour type magazines, chick flicks, and romance novels are so popular among females.

Sexual arousal, of course, is the increased desire to experience sexual intimacy. Besides coming from sexually related sources, sexual arousal also comes from non-sexually related sources. There are numerous books written on this phenomenon, such as Kevin Leman's book, *Sex Begins in the Kitchen*. For example, if you want to have sex that evening, you would be wise to initiate it in the morning at breakfast. This initiation, however, is not the stereotypical sexual gestures or overtures. Rather, it should be a thoughtful act or gesture that shows your mate that you have been thinking of them. It is something that shows that you are more concerned about their needs than your own; this makes them feel special. It is an attitude of giving, not getting, that ultimately makes your mate more receptive to your advances later.

This expression of thoughtfulness can come in numerous forms. It may be something as simple as a thoughtful touch on your mate's shoulder or a kind word. It may even be something as practical as doing one of your mate's chores, such as taking out the garbage, washing the dishes, mowing the lawn, or changing the baby's diapers. Any action that shows you are thinking of their welfare will make your mate more desirous of you and more receptive of your wishes. Although most people don't think of it this way, our largest sex organ is our brain. Our minds have to be properly prepared before the rest of our body will fully cooperate. You can have all of the key physical ingredients for a successful sexual encounter, but if your partner is not in the mood, he or she will not enjoy it. This, in turn, means the sexual encounter will be less enjoyable for you. As you can see, sexual

arousal does not need to come from a sexual source.

As a general rule, sexual arousal usually comes from three main sources. For the purpose of this chapter, we will call these sources A, B, and C.

Source A: The sexual attributes of the person's body

Source B: The outer attractiveness of the person

Source C: The inner attractiveness of the person

The sexual attributes of the person's body includes things such as the genitals of the male and female body and the breasts of the female body. It also includes, to a lesser extent, the buttock and thighs. These are the things people normally associate with sexual arousal.

The outer attractiveness of the person involves things such as the person's overall build, facial features, etc. These are the thousands of minute differences in our physical appearance that give us our unique physical identity.

The inner attractiveness of the person involves inner qualities such as the person's personality, outlook on life, goals, values, etc. Although it usually takes a fair amount of time to really get to know someone, a careful observer can quickly ascertain certain inner qualities by paying attention to the person's outer appearance and conduct.

For example, the way a person walks and carries him or herself can tell you much about the person's self-image. The person's speech can tell you much about the person's intelligence. The way the person treats others can tell you much about their

character. The person's eyes and smile can tell you much about the person's mental state and their past. This is why the eyes are often called the "windows to the soul." The person's grooming habits, wardrobe, and overall physical fitness can tell you much about the person's personal discipline and values.

Although both males and females derive sexual arousal from all three sources (A, B, and C), the percentages derived from each source are different. As a general rule, males derive much of their sexual arousal from A, a fair amount from B, and a smaller amount from C. In contrast, females derived much of their sexual arousal from C, a fair amount from B, and a smaller amount from A. Obviously, the mix will vary from person to person and some people don't even come close to this rule of thumb.

In two of the upcoming chapters (*Desires Out Of Control* and *Wet Dream, Sex Dream, and Nocturnal Orgasms*) we will take a closer look at sexual attraction and temptations. It is important for you to understand that males and females are attracted and tempted in different ways. Males have the burden of being easily drawn into sexual immorality through visual temptations. Females, on the other hand, have the burden of having a hidden vulnerability to sexual immorality. Females are often lured into the false sense of security because visual temptations are not usually a significant factor in their lives. Many females don't realize that sources B and C (outer and inner attractiveness), are just as potent and dangerous to them as visual temptations are for males. As a result, they fail to guard themselves from these sources of entrapment.

Wars can provide us an excellent example of obvious and non-obvious dangers. Many people have a misperception about the

dangers of war. They usually think that most war deaths are the deaths of soldiers killed in direct combat (situations where soldiers on both sides of a conflict are directly engaging each other in hostility). Yes, it is true that direct combat is very dangerous. Percentage wise (the number of soldiers killed compared to the number of soldier fighting), direct combat is the most dangerous place to be in a war.

Yet, most war deaths are not deaths of soldiers killed in direct combat. In WWII, for example, 65% (47 million) of the 72 million war deaths were civilian deaths. Several million civilians were deliberately murdered (through roaming death squads, concentration camps, etc.), while most of the remaining civilians were killed when armies clashed in populated areas (resulting in carnage, famine, and disease). Even our current war in Iraq has a high number of civilian deaths (revenge killings, suicide attacks, and collateral damage). When you look at the number of American soldiers killed, few are actually killed in direct combat; most are killed by sniper action or roadside bombs.

As we saw from the above examples of war deaths, some dangers are obvious while others are not. We are not surprised by those who are killed from the obvious dangers of war, but most of us are surprised by the large number of people who have been killed from the hidden dangers of war. Likewise, most of us are not surprised by the large number of guys who falter because of visual temptations, but most of us are surprised to find out how many women have faltered because of the hidden temptations.

Chapter: 1.21

Desires Out of Control

Two F-14s streaked across the sky in pursuit of an enemy aircraft. After engaging their enemy, the jets maneuvered through many dangerous twists and turns in order to position themselves for the kill. Suddenly, one of the F-14s was in distress; the pilot had lost control of his craft. When his F-14 flew through the jet wash of the jet ahead of him, it forced his F-14 into a flat spin. The disruption of airflow to the starboard engine caused it to shut down. Moments later the other engine failed. Without power, the disabled craft could not pull out of the spin.

As the jet plummeted toward the ground, the pilot, Maverick, tried desperately to reach the ejection handle. After what seemed like an eternity, his RIO (Radar Intercept Officer), was finally able to pull the release. The exploding bolts discharged and the Plexiglas canopy above the pilots separated from the jet. Moments later, the propulsion system in the crew's seats shot them up and away from the doomed craft.

Since the jet was dropping almost straight down, there was not enough wind to pull the canopy back and away. As a result, the RIO's ejection seat rammed him into the canopy. In the movie *Top Gun*, the RIO was killed, leaving behind a wife and son.

We can draw two lessons from the disaster portrayed in this movie. First, problems can compound quickly when we are dealing with high speeds and great power. Second, even a highly skilled pilot and a properly functioning aircraft can tumble out of control when pushed to their limits. Although Maverick was part of the elite 1%

of American naval aviators, he was unable to save his jet or crew.

We can apply these principles to our dating lives. First, the heat of passion can cause a person to quickly lose control of his or her sexual desires. The power of our sexual desires is tremendous and should not be treated lightly; a small slip can quickly bring about devastating results.

Second, even strong, dynamic Christians are not immune to moral decay. Maverick was one of the best pilots in the world, yet he lost control when he pushed his aircraft to its limit. His skills could not help him regain control. When it comes to physical intimacy, it is unwise to push the limits and try to get away with as much as possible. It does not matter if you are a strong Christian and have been victorious over numerous battles; if you do not respect the powers of your sexual desires, you may find yourself spinning out of control. We need to ensure that our sexual desires are kept under control at all times.

To receive the greatest benefits from our sexual capacities, we must use them in the way in which they were intended. Eating provides us a good example of this. Although eating is an essential and exciting part of our lives, the misuse of this desire can make us either obese or anorexic. We must control our eating habits or they will control us. We must understand the purpose of our sexual desires and learn how to respond to them properly.

Maintaining sexual self-control is not only important before marriage, it is also important during marriage. There may be times in your marriage when you will not always be able to have your sexual desires fulfilled. For example, there may be times when your mate is sick, on a trip, or has a perpetual "headache." There may be times

when your marriage is having some serious problems and sex is not going to happen. Regardless of the reason, if you don't have control over your sexual desires, you will become frustrated and vulnerable.

Even if your marriage is doing great and you are not being deprived of sex, it is still important to maintain sexual self-control. You never know when you will be hit with an incredibly powerful temptation. It is likely that at some point in your life you will meet someone who stirs your passions in a profound and surprising way. In situations such as these, it doesn't matter if your marriage is healthy, you can still be drawn into infidelity by the allure of this "special person." Infidelity is a growing problem in today's society. Frank Pittman in his book *Grow Up* observed that infidelity is involved in 90% of first time divorces. A 1997 study with Kristina Gordon found that "more than half of the marriages that experience infidelity ended in divorce."

We are painfully aware of the many respected people who have suffered moral deterioration through sexual indiscretion. Their failures have destroyed their marriages, reputation, and lives' work. The fallen evangelists of the 80's, the fallen Christian singers of the 90's, and the fallen Christian politicians of the 00's are good examples of this. Since the limited pleasures they received from their extramarital encounters were not worth the losses they sustained, we have to wonder why they made these choices. Obviously, there are no rational answers.

Most of us look at the extramarital encounter as the "big" sin, but this isn't really the big sin. Usually a person has suffered numerous small, hidden failures before it becomes obvious to others that he or she has a significant moral problem. Usually, the obvious big moral failure is just

the tip of the iceberg. The true big sin is what's hidden underneath; it is the numerous small, secret sins that has eroded away the person's sexual self-control.

A person does not become morally bankrupt overnight; it is a gradual process. Often moral bankruptcy seems sudden to others (and even to the person involved), but it is usually a slow process involving many small steps that build upon each other. There are five basic steps that lead to moral bankruptcy. As with most stairway systems, taking a single step does not mean you have to go all the way (or, as in this case, become morally bankrupt). In contrast, however, if you don't get on the stairway, it is highly unlikely you will finish the final steps (and become morally bankrupt). Following are the five steps that lead to moral bankruptcy:

Step 1: Engaging in sexual fantasies

Step 2: Engaging in visual stimulation

Step 3: Engaging in reckless behavior

Step 4: Basic violations of God's principles.

Step 5: Blatant violations of God's principles

Step 1: Engaging in sexual fantasies.

Basically this is where a person engages in sexual fantasies to stimulate their sexual arousal. Sexual fantasies are so common and prevalent that they are almost universally accepted as part of the norm. Since sexual fantasies are so deeply ingrained as part of our makeup, most people do not even view them as something that needs to be resisted. Even those who actually see them as sin still find them difficult to resist. This is because most of these people view these fantasies as harmless, in-and-of themselves, and have decided to conserve their energy for the

really big temptations. Unfortunately, most people don't realize that if they would control this first step they could avoid many of the big temptations later on.

Step 2: Engaging in visual stimulation.

Instead of simply fantasizing about someone to stimulate sexual arousal, the person also uses visual stimulations (looking at others), to stimulate their sexual arousal. The reason people add visual stimulations is because it increases the intensity of their sexual arousal. It is similar to blowing air on a fire; it greatly increases the fire's heat. Likewise, sexual arousal is greatly increased when visual stimulation is used.

Although both males and females use visual stimulation to obtain sexual arousal, they use it in different ways. Before I discuss female visual stimulation, I'll first discuss male visual stimulation. As discussed in the previous chapter, guys focus most of their attention on the outer physical characteristics of the girl's body to obtain sexual arousal. A girl does not need to be dressed in a provocative manner in order to provide guys sexual arousal; it is the general attractiveness of the girl that causes this arousal. Of course, the arousal is greatly increased if the girl is dressed in a provocative manner.

Surprisingly, a girl who is completely naked is not necessarily more sexually stimulating than a girl who is partially naked. It is sometimes more sexually stimulating when there is something left for the mind to undress. Whenever there is a mystery, the mind automatically tries to solve the mystery by filling in the missing pieces. The mind uses its imaginary process to try to visualize the things that are missing. Since the guy's imagination is already being used to solve the mystery, his mind often continues on by imagining himself having a relationship with the girl. Basically, leaving

something for the imagination is often the catalyst for sexual fantasies.

Up until the past two hundred years, people obtained most of their visual stimulation from looking at the people they saw on a day-to-day basis. Statues and paintings were used occasionally, but they were not widespread enough to be used much by the majority of the world's population. The advent of photography, however, has added a new source of temptation; it provides guys with a rich source of visual stimulation. I'm not just talking about the obvious use of pornographic material; non-sensuous photography is also causing a problem.

Photographs allow guys to be able to quickly see a large number of attractive girls in a short period of time. Through photography, a guy can see more attractive women in ten minutes that what he would normally see on the streets in two months. Don't get me wrong, I am not condemning photography nor I am not saying there is anything wrong with looking at attractive women, in-and-of itself. My point is this: the potential for a guy becoming sexually aroused unintentionally from seeing an attractive woman has greatly increased.

This increase in unintentional stimulation causes guys to struggle even more in their efforts to maintain sexual self-control. Moreover, a person who is seeking to become sexually aroused from visual stimulation does not need to put forth much effort to find good material. Of course, the advent of the Internet has greatly compounded this problem. A guy seeking visual stimulation no longer needs to go outside the home to obtain photographs of girls; he is just a few clicks away. This ease of access has removed many of the barriers that used to keep people out of pornography. Now, people who never would have dreamed of buying a pornographic magazine

from a store are downloading pornographic photographs directly into their home.

A guy recently told me about his past addiction to pornographic magazines. He said that even though he had purchased several hundred pornographic magazines in the past, he was still embarrassed every time he had to purchase new ones. As a result, his reluctance often kept him from buying as many magazines as he would have liked. He said that most guys addicted to pornography also had this same reluctance, but the Internet has changed all that. He said this instant access is similar to having a large collection of pornographic magazines stored in the person's house. The person can now view anything he wants without any delay in time and he can do all of this without the embarrassment of standing in front of a cashier. He said that in the past, both inconvenience and embarrassment were two powerful factors that often kept him and other people addicted to pornography under partial control. Now, these barriers are gone and addiction to pornography is becoming much more rampant.

There are many ways for guys to overcome their addiction to pornography, but the buddy system has proven to be quite effective. The buddy system is basically an agreement between two people to hold each other accountable in regards to certain goals. In this situation, the goal is to help each other stay away from pornographic material. Internet accountability software programs, such as *Covenant Eyes* (covenanteyes.com), have proven to be powerful tools in helping buddy partners maintain sexual self-control.

These programs monitor the Internet activity of both people in the buddy system and then send the opposite member a report on a daily or weekly basis. This email report provides a list of all of the websites they have visited and highlights the ones that contain

pornographic material. Most programs will even identify questionable websites: non-pornographic sites that still could be used for sexual arousal. As a result of this detailed report, both people are much more reluctant to visit pornographic or questionable websites. If a person happens to stumble and visits a pornographic website, their buddy will be there to help get him back on track.

Not only are these programs a good tool in pulling people out of pornography, it is also a good tool for preventing people from becoming addicted in the first place. Let's take a look at the destructive cycle of Internet pornography addiction. Usually, it starts out with a guy stumbling onto a non-pornographic website containing photographs of attractive girls; they may, or may not, be dressed provocatively. These photographs produce some sexual arousal in the guy; stimulating his sexual curiosity. As a result, he has a strong desire to obtain more visual stimulation.

Since he knows it would be wrong to go to an actual pornographic website, he seeks this visual stimulation from "innocent" sources, such as websites containing photographs of girls in bathing suits, etc. Of course, this new exposure increases his sexual arousal even further. This process is repeated numerous times over the following weeks and months. Each time his exploration takes him a little bit closer to pornographic material; each time he loses more and more of his resolve. As he loses his resolve, he develops stronger desires to view pornographic material. Eventually, these desires become compulsive and obsessive, and he is driven deeper and deeper into pornography.

The buddy system usually nips this destructive cycle in the bud. A person is much less likely to explore questionable

websites if he knows he is being watched by a good friend. If a person is reluctant to even explore the bathing suit websites, he is less likely to go any further. Therefore, even if you are not addicted to pornography, it is still a good idea to have an accountability partner to help prevent you from becoming accidentally ensnared in this tenacious addiction.

Girls also seek sexual arousal from visual stimulation, but they derive their arousal differently. Although girls get some sexual arousal directly from observing the male body, they get more of it from visualizing themselves having a relationship with the guy. Although this fantasy relationship is sexual in nature, it is coupled with more romance and emotion than the fantasies of guys.

This emphasis on romance and emotions has drawn many girls into using glamour type magazines, romance novels, and chick flicks to enhance their sexual arousal. These items are often used to stimulate the girl's imagination about relationships. They use these romantic stories the same way guys use photographs of women.

Just as guys can become sexually aroused by looking at photographs of fully-clothed women, girls can become sexually aroused by reading or watching stories of non-sexual romantic encounters. Of course, the sexual arousal is increased even more when the theme becomes more romantic. It is interesting to note that the word pornography originally meant stories of prostitutes and their exploits. The Greek word *porne* means "harlot" and the word *pornographos* means "writing about harlots." It wasn't until the nineteenth century that our English word pornography developed its current meaning.

Just as it is not wrong, in and of itself, for guys to look at non-sexual photographs of women, it is not wrong for girls to read non-sexual romance novels, etc. Yet, there are inherent dangers for these girls when they flirt with these types of temptations. First, it is an addictive behavior; girls can develop obsessive and compulsive desires to obtain sexual arousal from these sources. Second, it is progressive in nature; these girls are often drawn into stories that are more sexually explicit.

Third, it can distort the girl's perspective of love. This compulsive, obsessive behavior has caused many girls to become "in-love with the idea of being in-love." In other words, the focus of their attention has shifted from guys to romance and love. Instead of desiring to find a guy to love, these girls desire to find love itself. As strange as it sounds, the guy has become secondary in the girl's search for love; he is basically the means to the end.

As mentioned earlier, women are more interested in the inner qualities of the person as opposed to the person's outward appearance. This is one of the main reasons why women are more willing than guys to become involved with someone who is two decades older than themselves. These women are attracted to the maturity, depth, and sophistication of these older men. Obviously, they still have to be physically attracted to their partner, but the outer appearance of the partner is not nearly as important to girls as it is to guys.

When girls are actually looking at guys for visual stimulation, they look for guys with both outer and inner beauty. The inner beauty of the person is important because people who are beautiful on the inside tend to make better partners, which increases the sexual arousal.

Since inner beauty is more important for girls than for guys, girls tend to seek visual stimulation more from the guys they already know than from total strangers. This is because guys they already know are less of a mystery than total strangers and their inner beauty is more evident. Nevertheless, as discussed in the previous chapter, even a total stranger is not a complete mystery. A careful observation of a stranger's outer appearance and conduct can quickly tell a girl much about the guy's inner beauty.

Of course, it should be noted that fantasies are, well ... just that: fantasies. This means that fantasies are often unrealistic and based on embellishments. For example, a guy fantasizing about a girl he has recently met at a store may visualize himself being more successful, wealthier, and attractive than what he really is and he may visualize her in equally unrealistic ways. Girls, of course, also use embellishments in their fantasies. When a girl is fantasizing about a guy, whether she knows him or not, it would not be uncommon for her to embellish his inner beauty to make him even more sexually appealing.

Step 3: Engaging in reckless behavior. As a person loses self-control, they usually become more careless and reckless in their behavior. They engage in activities that appear to be innocent, in-and-of themselves, but have the potential of quickly escalating into a problem. "Innocent" flirtation of a married person with a neighbor or co-worker is a common form of this reckless behavior. Although the married person could easily rationalize this behavior as simply being friendly, he or she is a step closer to having an extramarital affair. They may even go out to dinner and use the rationalization that they are celebrating a new contract, etc. In reality, the only reason they went out to dinner was because they wanted to be alone

with this person in a more intimate environment.

Step 4: Basic violations of God's principles.

This is where the person has actually crossed the line and has violated one or more of God's absolute standards. In the above scenario, the couple goes out on an actual date; there is no longer any false pretense about their relationship. Despite the obvious sin, these people will often rationalize their behavior by saying that they are not sinning because they have not engaged in sexual intercourse; they are only kissing. These people have digressed to the point where they feel that only sexual intercourse itself is sin.

Step 5: Blatant violations of God's principles.

Now, the person throws all caution to the wind and proceeds in reckless abandonment. In the above scenario, the couple has continued on and has engaged in sexual intercourse. Remarkably, these people are still able to rationalize their actions. They will often blame their situation on their mates; saying their mate's emotional coolness and inattention has driven them to find comfort from someone else.

The extramarital affair of two Christians I know can provide us a good example of this. Although they were committing adultery (both were married to someone else), they were still able to rationalize their sin. Apart from the normal romantic encounters, the guy would often send her love letters. He would write about a large variety of subjects, including victorious Christian living. She was so impressed by his deep wisdom and insights that she said his letters were "like the ones written by the Apostle Paul." She considered him a spiritual giant even though they were both living in unrepentant sin.

As we have seen from the five steps listed above, moral deterioration is usually a slow process that sneaks up on you. We are usually unaware of the problem until substantial damage has been done. The discoloration of leaves during the season of fall provides us a good example of this subtleness. The sap in trees stops flowing to the leaves weeks before the leaves start turning colors. It takes a while for the decay to appear on the surface.

Once you have lost control of your sexual desires, it takes a lot of effort to regain it. In fact, a major house cleaning is required; a few spiritual band-aids will not resolve the problem. Trying to bring these rampant desires under control is like trying to stop a large locomotive once it is moving.

An outdoor security light provides us a good example of this; it does not gradually turn on as it gradually gets dark outdoors. The light is either totally on or totally off. Sexual self-control is similar to this security light. You may be able to entertain sexual fantasies for an extended period of time without it appearing to affect your ability to resist temptations. In other words, your thought life may be a total wreck, but you still have the ability to resist the temptation of engaging in overt sexual immorality. This often produces a false sense of security, a feeling of invincibility.

This appearance of sexual control is only an illusion; your moral stability is not built upon a solid foundation. At some point you will suddenly lose control and you will wonder what happened; you will be surprised that the control you once had is no longer there. Most people have no idea how quickly our sexual desires can take over once they have been given a foothold in our lives. If these desires could bring down spiritual giants, such as King David, don't

think that this beast won't devour you if given a chance.

The levies that failed in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina (2005), provide us a good example of the dangers of hidden erosion. Usually, levies fail because water rises too high and pushes on the tops of the levies. However, in the New Orleans disaster, water seeped under the faulty levies, which eroded away the earth under the levies' foundation. After a certain amount of earth was washed away, the levies simply sank down, resulting in their collapse.

Let's go back to our illustration of the security light. This device has another important lesson for us. Once the bulb has turned on, it will stay on even when it starts getting lighter outside. In fact, it has to become fairly light outside before the security light will turn off. This phenomenon is called a hysteresis. This feature keeps the security bulb from continually turning on and off when the light intensity increases and decreases because of clouds, car lights, etc.

This phenomenon is similar to our battle of regaining control over our sexual desires once we have lost it. After control has been lost, a little extra Bible reading and praying will not solve the problem or bring back our sexual control. In order to regain control over our sexual desires, we will need a major spiritual house cleaning.

It all started with two boys rough-housing and one of them breaking a leg. The fracture was rather complicated and required surgery. Infection set in and two more emergency surgeries were performed. Gangrene was an ever-present danger and the possibility of amputating his leg became all too real.

A fever of 105° raged and the loss of his leg was no longer the main concern; just keeping the boy alive was the primary objective. The boy, Jim, was a diabetic and this greatly hindered his body's ability to fight the infection. When the body is in normal working condition, the trauma of a broken bone is easily overcome. Infections seldom result in a loss of life or limb. When the body chemistry is in balance and everything is working correctly, it takes a great deal to make it defenseless. However, in Jim's case, it did not take much to push him over the edge.

Likewise, our spiritual chemistry must be in balance if we want to successfully ward off sexual temptations. When our spiritual life is out of balance, even minor sexual problems can snowball. It would behoove us to do everything possible to strengthen our spiritual body.

Chapter: 1.22

The Positive Verses the Negative

Lotto fever was evident everywhere; people were lined up in hopes of buying the winning ticket to the \$30 million jackpot. Eric devised the "perfect" plan to win all of that money. His plan was to take out a short-term loan and buy a ticket for every possible number. With this plan, he felt he would be guaranteed to win the Lotto; an \$18 million investment would reap millions of dollars of profit.

Although, on the surface, this appears to be a perfect plan, it actually has two major

problems. First, it is highly improbable he would find a bank willing to finance this type of scheme. Second, it would be a logistical nightmare obtaining a terminal capable of purchasing 18 million tickets in two days. There is, however, another problem that Eric had not considered; if another person also picks the winning numbers, the \$30 million jackpot would have to be split and Eric would only end up with \$15 million. His \$18 million investment would outweigh his \$15 million winning. The negative would outweigh the positive.

Everything we do contains a certain amount of risk, danger, and liability. Even driving a car is a calculated risk; in 2007 there were over 43,000 highway deaths in the United States. However, since the benefits of driving a car far outweigh the potential danger, most of us continue to drive. Regardless of our activities, we must evaluate all of the variables; the benefits must be compared with the liabilities to see if the activity is actually profitable. As we saw with Eric's plan, the benefits were great, but the potential liabilities were even greater.

This principle also applies to physical intimacy. Physical intimacy is not only pleasurable, it is essential for the development of healthy relationships. As we increase the physical intimacy, we increase the potential for benefits and the potential for problems.

In the past few chapters, we discussed how too much physical intimacy can cause problems. Yet, it is important to understand that not all physical intimacy is bad nor should all physical intimacy be avoided. A certain amount of physical intimacy is healthy and beneficial for the relationship. In fact, non-erotic touching, such as holding hands and facial caressing, are important

ways of fulfilling some of the emotional needs of the relationship. I realize some Christians reading this book will disagree with me on this subject. In fact, I went to school with a couple that had their first kiss at the conclusion of their wedding. Obviously, I am not in a position to dictate what is right or wrong for every couple, but I personally believe that a certain amount of physical intimacy is important in the relationship.

Some people are surprised to hear me say that certain types of physical intimacy are important to various stages of a relationship. Let me try to explain. The soft, subtle touch of the finger on the neck, ear lobe, chin, etc., is an important expression of affection. We are creatures with an inherent need to be loved and touched. Many studies suggest that child development is severely hampered when a baby is deprived of being touched. Likewise, there are certain emotional needs in adults that require simple non-sensuous touching.

Unfortunately, this art is usually pushed aside in lieu of sensual touching and stimulation. When a person is involved in heavy sexual exploration, he or she may be distracted from developing the art of non-sexual intimacy. As a result many people never see the need or importance of non-sensuous touching. However, when a person avoids sexual exploration, this major source of distraction is removed and the art of non-sexual intimacy can be developed.

Don't make the mistake of thinking this art of non-sensual touching is just a substitution until you get married and can have the "real thing." There is a tremendous need for non-sexual contact in marriage; there are times when all a mate wants is to be held and touched without it leading to sex. If a couple has never fully developed the art of non-sensuous touching, they will have a

hard time developing it in marriage when they are preoccupied with the full sexual experience.

Both men and women need to know that they are loved for themselves; they need to know that their partner is spending time with them because of who they are on the inside, not just because of their body. They need to know that sex is not what's keeping their partner around. If we are continuously touching the erotic areas of our partner's bodies, they may begin to wonder if you are more interested in their bodies than in them as a person. Non-sensuous touching, on the other hand, requires us to be more of a giver than a taker. Non-sensuous touching forces us to think about our partner's needs; it requires an unselfish motivation.

How do we know which areas can be touched and which areas cannot be touched? Pinpointing these areas may be difficult and frustrating. We often ask ourselves, "How can it be okay to touch one area of the body, but not an area that is only an inch away?"

It is difficult to logically understand what makes these areas off limit. We ask ourselves, "Is there something holy or sacred about these areas?" The thing that makes this subject even more difficult is the fact that these off-limits areas can be viewed either as sensuous or just another part of the human anatomy. For example, an unmarried gynecologist can touch his patient's breasts or genitals during an exam, but can't touch his girlfriend's breasts or genitals later on that day when he's on a date.

The main reason that certain parts of the body should be avoided is not because they are sacred or holy, but because touching these areas will have a negative impact on your relationship. Following are some guidelines that should help you understand

which areas should be avoided. The parts of the body to be avoided are:

- Areas that can arouse you to the point where it would be difficult to maintain sexual self-control.
- Areas that would stir the emotions to the point of producing the *feelings* of love. These types of feelings are superficial and, as a result, give the person a false sense of security in the relationship.
- Areas that would make you feel guilty or ashamed if others were to learn that they are part of your romantic encounters.
- Areas that would cause you to feel distant from God.
- Areas that would quickly drain you of your sexual energy; depriving your relationship of this much-needed energy for growth and bonding.

As stated earlier, all forms of physical intimacy have both a positive and negative impact on our lives and relationships. We must compare the positives and negatives for any given act of physical intimacy to determine if it will be beneficial for our relationships. At some level of physical intimacy, the negative will begin to outweigh the positive. You should establish your “cut off” point somewhere before this level of physical intimacy. Going any further would significantly damage your relationship.

Keep in mind that if you want to get the most out of your relationship, you must do better than just break even with the negatives and positives. The positive should greatly outweigh the negative. Ideally, your cut-off point should be at the point where the net gain is at a maximum. Think of a person who is investing money. An

investor’s goal is not to simply break even; he wants to fine-tune his investments so he can get the most profit from each dollar.

During times of intense physical intimacy, it is difficult to see that sensuous touching or premarital sex is not beneficial for the relationship. We become so blinded by the intense pleasure that the liabilities of these activities seem small compared to the benefits. The pleasure is so strong that it even masks the guilt that accompanies excessive physical intimacy. However, after the pleasure subsides, the guilt remains. This is the reason why unmarried couples feel a tremendous amount of guilt after sex, but seldom during sex.

It is not always easy to see how the negative outweighs the positive. A drug addict is a good example of this. Although a person using cocaine will see tremendous “benefits” from using drugs; he will have little comprehension of how these drugs are destroying his life. He is only focusing on one side of the equation. Likewise, most people enjoying the “benefits” of sex are only seeing one side of the equation; they don’t see how they are harming their relationships.

Chapter: 1.23

Is It Wrong to Touch Your Girlfriend’s Breasts?

Many Christians feel that premarital caressing of the breasts is not, in-and-of itself, morally wrong. They feel that this is a legitimate display of affection in the later stages of a relationship. This chapter will take a closer look at this subject.

The Bible, of course, does not directly condemn or condone premarital caressing of the breasts. It does, however, clearly condemn fornication. Fornication is any sexual activity done outside of marriage. The million-dollar question, of course, is what is the definition of “sexual activity.”

Sexual intercourse, by its very definition, is considered a sexual activity. This view is pretty much universally accepted. Caressing the genitals is also considered a sexual activity by most people (although slightly less than the above group), because the genitals are sexual organs. Caressing the breasts, however, is a gray area that isn't as easy to define and there isn't a universal consensus on the subject.

There are many who say caressing the breasts is a sexual activity because “nature” itself tells us it's a sexual organ. They point to the following items as proof:

- When girls reach puberty, they have an inherent desire to keep their breasts covered. They also inherently feel it is wrong to let others touch their breasts.
- Guys have a natural sexual attraction to look at and to touch breasts.
- Girls have a natural desire to be touched there by that *special* guy in their life. Girls may allow other guys to touch their breasts because they don't dare to say no, because it advances their relationship, or because it is sexually stimulating. However, when that special guy comes along, they have a natural desire to share this intimacy with him.
- Guys become sexually aroused when they think about breasts and this often results in them having an erection.

- When a couple becomes sexually aroused, the guy has an increased desire to touch the breasts and the girl has an increased desire to be touched there.
- The nipples become hard when the girl is sexually aroused.
- The nipples have a large concentration of nerve endings that can produce intense sensual pleasure, including a full orgasm. It is reasoned, by some people, that since the climax of sexual intercourse is the orgasm, any body part that can produce an orgasm is clearly a sexual organ.

Obviously, the above arguments don't prove that the breasts are sexual organs. In fact, some of these arguments can also be applied to other parts of the body (i.e. the lips, neck, inner thigh, etc.) In addition, there may be alternate explanations for some of these arguments. For example, just because a guy can get an erection simply by thinking about breasts does not necessarily prove anything. A guy can also have an erection when he is thinking about kissing a girl. Although I think the above arguments present a substantial case against premarital caressing of the breasts, I don't believe a person can definitively say the Bible directly condemns it.

Nevertheless, even if the Bible does not directly condemn this activity, there are still many reasons why it may be wise to avoid it. For the sake of argument, let's assume that caressing the breasts outside of marriage is not fornication. Even if this were true, this activity can still have a negative impact on your relationship. Listed below are several reasons why it may be unwise to engage in premarital caressing of the breast:

- Your testimony could be hindered if this activity becomes public knowledge.

Even if this activity is not wrong in the eyes of God, many people still believe it is wrong. You will have to determine if exercising your “freedom” is worth the potential damage to your testimony.

- It creates a great deal of sexual excitement and this high level of sexual passion makes it more difficult to maintain sexual control during romantic encounters.
- It produces the superficial “feelings” of love.
- It produces a false sense of security in the relationship; it provides a feeling that there is more commitment to the relationship than what truly exists.
- Girls sometimes use it as a tool of control and manipulation.
- Many girls place their breasts being caressed on the same level as genital petting. If a guy starts caressing a girl’s breasts, she may think he is giving her permission to touch his genitals.
- It signals that the relationship has moved to a higher level of commitment. This makes breaking up much more difficult if it becomes necessary.
- Let’s say, for the sake of argument, that it is not a sin to caress the breasts during the last few months just before marriage. It is still wise to avoid this activity because it is important to have a buffer zone. You are the most vulnerable to sexual impurity during the last couple of months before your wedding.
- Let’s say, for the sake of argument, that it is not a sin to caress the breasts during the last few months just before marriage. Once you have exposed yourself to this

pleasure, you will not want to give it up. If you were to break up and start dating someone else, it will be very difficult for you to abstain from this pleasure at the beginning stages of your next relationship. Most people will confirm that once you have engaged in this activity with one partner, it continues on with most future partners, even in the beginning stages of the relationship.

I have personally come to the conclusion that it would be much better for the dating relationship if the couple abstain from this activity (caressing of the breasts) until they are married. Even if a person can successfully argue that this activity is not fornication, I believe it produces too many problems; too many temptations.

I fully dedicated my life to God when I was sixteen and I got married when I was thirty-five. During those twenty years I dated a large number of girls and of all of these girls I’ve only caressed the breasts of six of them. Of the six girls, it was only a one-time occurrence with three of them. I would have liked to be able to say I was perfect with all of the girls I’ve dated, but I wasn’t. There are things I wish I could have done differently. I was, however, more successful than most people, especially those who have married later in life. More important, my wife and I were both virgins when we got married.

Since this subject is such a gray area, it is important for you to clearly determine where you stand on this issue. Simply put, if you do not determine your stance on this issue before you start dating, it is likely you will become involved with this activity.

**Part II:
Gaining Control of Your Sexual Desires**

Chapter: 2.01

How to Set Your Standard

In previous chapters, we saw the importance of maintaining sexual self-control in order to protect yourself and your relationship. This chapter will provide you some tools to help you accomplish this task. Following are three things that will help you control your sexual desires:

- Establish your absolute limits.
- Establish your progressive limits.
- Establish guidelines to help you maintain these limits.

Establishing your absolute limits. Absolute limits are the upper boundaries that dictate how far your physical intimacy can progress. These are boundaries that will never change until you are married. There are two things you should consider as you determine your absolute limits: written and unwritten boundaries.

Written boundaries are the boundaries that are clearly spelled out in the Bible. Unwritten boundaries are boundaries that are not directly addressed in the Bible, but can be derived indirectly from basic biblical principles and common sense. Obviously, some of these boundaries involve gray areas and may be difficult to determine. To assist you with these gray areas, I am providing you a tool that will give you a ball-park idea as to where you should set your boundaries. The way you answer the following questions should help you better understand your values:

- “What would happen if other people were to find out about my romantic encounters? Would this knowledge damage my Christian testimony; would this exposure cause me to feel guilt and shame?” Remember, as discussed in another chapter, there is a difference between the feelings of guilt and embarrassment. Guilt is the feeling of conviction that results from violating a moral code, whereas embarrassment is the awkward feeling a person gets when a private, personal matter is publically disclosed. For example, a young teenage girl would feel embarrassed, not guilty, if others knew she was menstruating.
- “What are the standards I feel others should follow?” For example, how would you want other guys to treat your sisters, future mate, and future daughters? At the very least, you should follow the same standards that you impose on others.
- “If I knew for certain that my life was going to become an open book, would I make any adjustments to my romantic encounters?” Let’s say that God was going to write a special book about your life and this book would be on display in Heaven for all eternity. Would the story of your life be an example of a life well-spent, such as the lives of Joshua and Samuel, or would it be an example of a life poorly-spent, such as the lives of King David, Samson, and King Solomon?
- “If I were to die during my romantic encounter, would I be pleased or saddened by my final actions here on earth?” Considering the above scenario of God writing a book about your life, would the final chapter end on a positive note or on a negative note?

Establishing your progressive limits.

Progressive limits are the limits that will move as your relationship progresses. These limits are based on the stage of the relationship and the maturity of the people involved. It is not wise to begin any new relationship at your absolute limit; rather, you should start out slow and increase your physical intimacy as your relationship progresses. Eventually, the progressive limits will line up with the absolute limits and you should not increase your physical intimacy any more until you get married. Ideally, you will adjust your progressive limits to produce the maximum benefit for your relationship. Depending on the stage of your relationship, too much or too little physical intimacy can be harmful to your relationship.

Establishing guidelines to help you maintain these limits. Once you have established your absolute and progressive limits, you are faced with the daunting task of maintaining them. Listed below are some tools that can help you maintain your limits:

- Be systematic in your prayer life.
- Control your thoughts (avoid sexual daydreams).
- Create a buffer zone.
- Avoid dangerous and highly tempting situations.
- Never violate your limits.

Systematic prayer is obviously important and will provide you with the helpful hand of God. Proverbs 21:31 says, “A horse is prepared for battle, but safety is from the Lord.” Although we are required to do our part, our ultimate strength and protection comes from God.

Everyone has their own system of prayer, and I use one that has helped me a great deal. Apart from my regular prayer time, I have a “Quick Prayer List” (QPL). My QPL is a list of the ten most important issues that I am facing at the time; it is similar to the FBI’s *10 Most Wanted* list. I keep this list short so it does not become a burden. Every hour, usually on the hour, I pray through the list. This type of prayer is helpful as you try to maintain your boundaries. You cannot continually ask God to help you with your sexual desires without something happening; either you will start taking your responsibility seriously or the conviction of God will cause you to stop praying for protection.

Controlling your thoughts is extremely important in maintaining your sexual self-control. It will be difficult for you to maintain sexual self-control if you continually have sexual daydreams. Every time you imagine yourself engaging in a sexual encounter, you are doing two things. First, the fact you allowed yourself to think about these sexual activities means you have mentally condoned them; you have accepted them as being appropriate behavior. You can verbally say something is wrong all you want, but if you have mentally condoned it, you will usually end up doing it. It is similar to a father telling his son that drugs are bad, despite the fact that his son sees him smoking crack every day. The chances of this boy eventually becoming addicted to drugs are much higher when compared to children raised in homes that are drug-free.

Second, you create negative mental reinforcement every time you daydream about a sexual encounter. As discussed in a previous chapter, this mental reinforcement is similar to the mental reinforcement used by martial arts students. These students mentally visualize themselves doing a particular move over and over again until it

becomes second nature. As a result, these moves come naturally when the students get into a fight. Likewise, when you continually visualize yourself engaging in sexual activities, you are programming yourself to behave this way. Therefore, when you are in a romantic encounter, it will be easy for you to slip into this pre-rehearsed behavior. The more times you mentally rehearse a behavior, the more automatic the behavior becomes. Since most people fantasize while masturbating, most people are engaging in a tremendous amount of negative mental reinforcement. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you reduce or eliminate masturbation altogether.

Buffer zones are an important line of defense because they provide you an extra amount of protection. After you have established your absolute limits, you should back them up a little bit to provide you a margin of error. Having this buffer zone is similar to having a safety net; if you happen to go a little too far in the heat of passion, you will still be within your absolute limits.

The jets screamed by as the spectators cheered. The Italian Jet Team was about to perform their famous *An Arrow Thru the Heart*. The audience stood in awe as the jets flew toward each other at Mach speeds. Flying from three different directions, the jets converged head-on at one location. However, instead of barely missing each other, two of the jets collided. The tragedy was compounded even further when the fiery wreckage tumbled through the spectators' section.

The *Arrow Thru the Heart* is a complicated performance that has little tolerance for error; even a small deviation can produce catastrophic results. As a result, a small miscalculation by one of the pilots ended up killing forty-seven people.^{*1} This principle also applies to romantic encounters. When

you establish your boundaries, it is important that you allow room for error.

As much as possible, we should *avoid dangerous and highly tempting situations*. We are not invincible and we should never expose ourselves to undue temptations. Besides being extra alert during times of emotional vulnerability, we should never take unreasonable chances.

Never violate your limits. Our sexual desires are strong, but they get even stronger every time you feed them. Once you have increased your level of intimacy, it will be difficult to be satisfied with anything less; you will always desire to go back to that level of intimacy. When it comes to physical intimacy, life is less frustrating if you don't know what you are missing. Sometimes this is enough reason to never start.

Footnote

1. Video: *Italian Jet Team, Hell in the Sky*

Chapter: 2.02

Thirteen Steps Toward Obtaining Sexual Control

Everyone at church was thrilled when Jack and Terrie started dating. Jack, a seminary graduate, was a rising star at the church. He was bright, witty, and had a tremendous passion for the welfare of others. Terrie came from a strong Christian family and

everyone loved her parents; they were two of the founding members of the church and were involved in numerous worthy causes.

As Jack and Terrie became more romantically involved, they found themselves having difficulty maintaining sexual control. Each romantic encounter decreased their resolve to remain morally pure. Eventually, they faltered and engaged in sexual intercourse.

Jack was confused and frustrated; he was certain this relationship would be different from his past relationships. He had been sexually active with the last girl he dated and had been riddled with guilt. After they broke up, he swore it would never happen again. He vowed to abstain from sex until he was married. Jack assumed God would honor his good intentions and help him maintain his sexual control, but things only got worse.

Jack was confused and frustrated; he could not understand the reasons for this moral failure. What Jack did not realize was that simply being a strong Christian and desiring to be morally pure was not enough to bring a person's sexual desires under control. There are preventive steps that must be taken if a person is to regain sexual control.

A gradual step-by-step approach is necessary in overcoming an enormous obstacle like this. Trains are good examples of the need for a gradual approach. Most commercial trains are not capable of climbing steep slopes; they are only capable of climbing an incline of one or two degrees. In order to reach the top of a large incline, the trains have to gradually work their way up.

Climbing stairs is also a gradual process. A person must gradually work his way up to the top. It is usually impossible to reach the

top of the stairs in one giant leap. Likewise, obtaining sexual control is a gradual step by step process; it is not something that can be done in one large jump. This is the reason why Jack was unable to regain sexual control right away; he had gone too far in his past relationships to regain control all at once. He failed because he did not incorporate the proper safeguards before he started dating Terry.

These steps for obtaining sexual control are not only important for those who have been sexually active in the past; they are also a powerful tool for those who are currently struggling to maintain their sexual control. You may not be at the bottom of the stair step, but if you are not at the top, it is only a matter of time before you will lose control and become sexually active.

Like all other singles, I struggle with maintaining sexual control. I knew if I did not find some solid solutions, I would eventually lose control. As a result of my struggles, I have discovered some practical steps that can help you systematically build up your sexual control.

At the end of the chapter you will find a list of the thirteen steps that'll help you obtain sexual control. These thirteen steps build upon each other; if you skip some of the steps, you will find it difficult or impossible to reach the top. It is important to understand that since this is a gradual process no one should expect to gain complete sexual control overnight. Of course, it should go without saying, until you gain sexual control, you should never allow yourself to be in a situation where the temptation can be overwhelming.

Gaining sexual control, especially if you are sexually active, is going to require all of your resources. If you are not committed, you will never make it. Controlling your

thought life is essential; this is where most people fail in their efforts to regain sexual control. It is almost impossible to continually fantasize about engaging in sexual encounters without eventually doing it. This is why reducing or eliminating masturbation is so important; the fantasizing involved in masturbation is extremely erosive. Although controlling the thought life plays the largest role in obtaining sexual control, you still must exercise common sense; you need to avoid unnecessary risks and temptations.

Kerry was a Christian who worked at a Christian summer camp. Although he was a virgin, he was struggling with maintaining his sexual control. One day as he was driving to his girlfriend's house, he prayed and asked God to keep him from having sex with his girlfriend. About a half hour later, he asked his girlfriend if she wanted to fool around (engage in kissing and light petting). As predicted, one thing led to another and they engaged in sexual intercourse. The thing that amazed me was the fact that he was totally baffled as to why God didn't answer his prayers. He felt he had done his part by committing it to God and God basically dropped the ball by letting him slip into sin. He failed to realize that his actions were the cause of his failure.

To avoid having your sexual desires dominate and possibly destroy your relationship, you should establish a standard that will guide and protect you. The time to establish your standard is *before* you start a relationship. Sincerity and good intentions alone will not give you the necessary strength when you are in the heat of passion. I have found that we can justify just about anything when we are in a passionate encounter. All of the good reasons to save yourself for marriage seem to vanish immediately. Going all the way and having sexual intercourse no longer seems to be morally wrong, especially if you are "in love." There have been many times where I had to use every reason I could muster to keep myself under control.

If you look closely at the following thirteen steps, you will probably notice that they fall into four general groups or themes. The first three steps deal with your commitment to addressing the problem. The next three steps deal with "spiritual" issues. The next four steps deal with controlling your thought life. The final three steps deal with the practical aspect of avoiding risks.

Thirteen Steps Toward Gaining Sexual Control

Step 13: Maintain a buffer zone.

Step 12: Avoid activities that are closely related to past failures.

Step 11: Avoid tempting or compromising situations.

Step 10: Greatly reduce or eliminate masturbation.

Step 9: Stop fantasizing about sexual encounters.

Step 8: Stop looking at provocative or pornographic material.

Step 7: Control your eyes when looking at the opposite gender.

Step 6: Saturate yourself with Christian music, books, and sermons.

Step 5: Saturate yourself with the Bible, especially verses dealing with morality.

Step 4: Pray about the situation daily, preferably on an hourly basis.

Step 3: Commit the situation to God.

Step 2: Count the cost and be willing to pay the price.

Step 1: Make the decision to stay morally pure.

Chapter: 2.03

The Tablecloth (Leaving Our Past Sins Behind Us)

Focusing on our past sins and failures can overwhelm us. This is one of the most destructive tools of Satan. With it, he steals our joy and spiritual strength. Many Christians find it hard to “forgive and forget” their own sins and shortcomings. Whether it is a single major failure, or an accumulation of many small failures, the result is still the same. We find it difficult to resist future sins when we have had such an unsuccessful past.

We must learn to completely clean our slate with God and feel fully forgiven after each sin. Visualize yourself having some special guests over for dinner and your put out your best china and tablecloth. As the dinner starts, everyone is very careful not to spill anything on the beautiful tablecloth. Inevitably, though, someone makes the first spill. This person, of course, feels bad and great effort is made not to do it again. As the meal continues and more stains appear, the guests are less cautious about being sloppy. By the end of the week, the tablecloth is so soiled that no one really cares if they are the next one to make a spill. The consensus has become, “What difference does one more stain make?”

We do the same thing in our Christian lives. When we first dedicate our lives to God, we are very careful to resist temptation. Even after our first failure, we are still resolved to resist temptation. However, after a few more failures, our resolve starts to weaken. After many failures, we start thinking, “What’s the use of resisting, I’m going to fail in the near future anyhow. What difference will one more sin make?” Eventually, we become

overwhelmed. We still try to “resist,” but our efforts are feeble and superficial.

Many Christians have failed so many times they just don’t see the point in trying anymore. They have failed so many times they feel there’s no benefit in resisting their current temptation. As a result, they throw up their hands and go with the flow.

If, on the other hand, a Christian has been victorious for a period of time, he is much more resolved to resist his temptations. If a Christian has a clean slate, he is much more motivated to keep the slate clean. He doesn’t want to ruin a good record. A basketball team that has won the last 100 games will try harder than a team that has lost the last 100 games.

Since having a “clean slate” is obviously important, how do sinners maintain a clean slate? How do people with a fallen sin nature maintain a winning streak? The answer is we can’t. We are sinners, which means we will sin. The answer to our dilemma is not an absence of sin. Rather, the answer is in the way you view your past sins.

Simply asking God to forgive you does not automatically mean you have been able to put your failures behind you. The fact that God views your failures as being completely resolved doesn’t mean you automatically see it that way. It is your frame of mind that is causing you the problem in this area.

When you sin, you are the author and owner of the sin. However, when you confess your sin to God, it now belongs to Him.

Unfortunately, you often try to hang on to the ownership. Every sin you “own” gets added to your running count. As a result, these sins accumulate. Even though these sins have been forgiven, they still remain on your list of failures. You will never be

completely free of these sins as long as you maintain ownership.

This list of failures is what overwhelms you. The larger the list, the more you view yourself as a “failure.” The larger the list, the less motivated you are to resist temptations. The thing to do is give God full ownership of your past failures. If God owns your past failures, you literally have no right to bring them up again. You have no right to maintain a list of failures. The only person who has a right to bring them up is the owner (God). Since He considers the matter settled, you have a clean slate.

In summary, commit all of your failures to God and give Him full ownership over them. Once God becomes the owner, these failures no longer belong to you. You literally have no right to hold these failures against yourself. Basically, holding on to these sins is the same as stealing from God. As a result of all this, you now have a clean slate with God.

Chapter: 2.04

Help for Those Who Are or Were Sexually Active

The night’s silence is shattered as the garage doors open and four fire trucks rush out. Faulty wiring had set an old house on fire and the closely packed neighboring homes are also going up in flames. By the time the fire fighters arrive, eleven homes are burning.

High winds and three years of draught has set the stage for a major catastrophe. Several square miles of old wooden houses are in danger of being destroyed. Unless the fire is quickly brought under control, thousands of families will lose their homes. More fire stations are brought in and the police are called to orchestrate the evacuation.

Over a hundred firemen responded to the fires and after eighteen harrowing hours they get the fire under control. All said and done, seventy-three homes were destroyed, four people were killed, and thirty-eight were hospitalized. Although the total was high, it was small compared to the potential damage. In contrast, the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 killed 120, destroyed 18,000 buildings, and cost \$200 million (\$3.2 billion in 2008’s dollar).

From time to time, we are faced with perilous situations that seem to tax all of our resources. Sometimes they are external calamities, but other times they are internal, personal problems. Once these problems besiege us, the damage can spread rapidly unless we deal with them effectively and quickly. This requires intense, deliberate, and sacrificial counter-measures. Our success in bringing problems under control will determine our future and the number of scars that will be left behind.

This principle is especially true when it comes to controlling our sexual desires. It is difficult enough to maintain sexual control when you have never been sexually active, but if you have been sexually active in the past, controlling your sexual desires is far more difficult. Some of you reading this book are married and you may be thinking that this chapter doesn’t apply to you. Unfortunately, death and divorce can quickly make it relevant. Whatever the reason, the results are still the same. Your

previous exposure to sexual encounters will make it difficult for you to keep your sexual desires under control.

Even if you are married, it is important to keep your sexual desires under control; you are far more likely to commit adultery if your sexual desires are out of control. Regardless of whether you are single or married, you need to keep your sexual desires under control.

As stated earlier, once you have lost control of your sexual desires, it is very difficult to bring them back under control. Deliberate and strategic planning is required to bring about and maintain sexual control. This battle must be approached on two fronts: reducing the opportunities of temptations and controlling your thoughts.

The most obvious way to reduce your chances of slipping into sexual impurity is to reduce the opportunities for temptation. Common sense tells us that if you want to reduce your chances of getting mugged, you avoid walking through the roughest parts of town at night. Unfortunately, most of us don't use this same logic when it comes to sexual temptations. Activities and situations that increase sexual temptations must be avoided. In fact, you should completely avoid all vulnerable situations when you first attempt to bring your sexual desires under control.

When a couple is trying to regain control, they should avoid being alone with each other as much as possible. They should go out with other couples and attend group events. Most important, they should not allow themselves to become romantic in isolated spots. They should only become romantic when others are nearby and where there is the realistic possibility of being interrupted. This will cause them to be more reserved in their romantic aggressiveness.

Success largely depends on the cooperation of both parties involved. If one person in the relationship is not committed to abstaining from sexual activities, it will be hard for the other person to maintain sexual control. I have come to the conclusion that if both parties don't have the same goal in this area, it would be better to terminate the relationship. I haven't always felt this way, but a couple of my relationships have convinced me of the importance of mutual agreement.

As I mentioned elsewhere in the book, I had dated three girls who initiated sexual advances. Since they were girls that I really liked, I didn't want to break up with them. I figured that since I had kept myself under control for all of these years, keeping my future relationships under control would not be a problem. I also felt that since I was not initiating any sexual advances myself, the relationships would not head in that direction.

I was wrong in my assumptions. One girl put my hand on her breasts and then encouraged me to take off her bra. Since I was not expecting this, I succumbed to this temptation. Although I broke off this encounter after a few minutes, I was exposed to a new level of physical intimacy. Another girl continually put her hand on my genitals and conflicts over this eventually led to our breakup. The third girl had asked me to give her a breast massage. Although I only touched her breasts that one time, it was enough to cause me future problems with temptation.

Unfortunately, from that point on, I had a strong desire to have these activities in all of my future relationships. This exposure increased my sexual frustration in all of my future relationships by at least ten-fold; it made it far more difficult for me to maintain sexual control. I can honestly say that if I

had known about this future frustration, I would have terminated those three relationships as soon as I realized our goals in this area were different.

Communication is important; you must be willing to talk openly about this subject. You need to tell your partner exactly where you would like your boundaries to be and then find out your partner's feelings about this subject. Encourage your partner to be open and honest with you and ask them to speak up if you go ever past their desired boundaries.

I once dated a girl who would reach her limit quickly. It would only take about five minutes of kissing before she would say, "I need to cool off." These encounters only involved kissing; there was never any petting. I would like to think that it was my romantic charm or suaveness that revved up her engine, but I am sure it was simply her emotional and biological makeup.

Although it was difficult, I respected her desire to stop before she lost control. Even though it was frustrating having to pull back so often, it was well worth it. I would rather be frustrated for a short period of time than to be upset for the rest of my life because I went too far.

Mutual cooperation is extremely important in situations like this; if I had not been willing to respect her wishes, her vulnerability could have been easily exploited. One time after she asked to stop, she said, "The way I feel right now, I wouldn't mind it if you were to touch me wherever you wanted." I was already frustrated from having to stop so often and this invitation was almost overwhelming. Fortunately, I was able to keep a cool head; I never touched her breast or genitals.

After we broke up, she started dating another guy and he was not nearly as understanding and supportive of her need to cool down. It was not long before they became sexually active and within a couple of months she got pregnant and had to get married.

Another reason for being open about this subject is it helps you avoid misunderstandings in your relationship. If you reduce the physical contact without explaining your reasons, your partner will view this lack of physical intimacy as an indication that something is wrong. Instead of being grateful you are trying to do the right thing, they will interpret your withdrawal as coldness or a partial rejection. They may start wondering if they have done something wrong or if you are planning on breaking up soon.

Prayer obviously plays an important role in regaining control. When a couple prays together for self-control, it becomes a mutual project. At the beginning of your date, you should specifically commit to God your moral conduct for that evening. Doing so will make you more conscience of your actions. It is difficult to *honestly* ask God to help you control your sexual activities when you have no intentions of maintaining sexual control.

I talked about a quick prayer list in another book of mine (biblehelp.org/unsung.htm). This is a list of the top ten things going on in my life at the time. I would pray for the items on the list every hour. Putting sexual control on this list would be a good idea. Not only will God provide you with spiritual strength, you will also be more committed to staying in control. You are unlikely to consistently ask God to help you with a problem unless you are willing to put forth an honest effort. More important, God will correct you if you continually pray about

something and are unwilling to deal with it properly. God will force you to make a decision; either deal with the problem or stop praying about it. The conviction of the Holy Spirit will make you too uncomfortable with this double standard.

Although reducing the opportunities for temptation may be the most obvious way of controlling excessive physical intimacy. Controlling your thoughts and pre-conditioning your mind are essential tools in gaining control over your sexual desires. We are what we think and we perform in a way consistent with our meditation; mental discipline will take you a long way.

“Attention! About face! Left face! Forward, march!” The ex-Marine drill Sergeant yelled at us. Actually, I should not say yelled; mumbled loudly is a more accurate description. If any of you have had the pleasure of going through Marine boot camp, you will understand that Drill Sergeants always talk as though they have a mouth full of marbles.

I was selected to be in the elite Honor Guards for the Department of Correction and had to complete a week of concentrated training. The Honor Guard, a crack drill squad, was created to enhance the department’s image. Great care is given to grooming every aspect of our appearance so the Department will shine when we represented them at parades, funerals, and social events. Even our uniforms, which cost over \$1,500 per officer, were custom tailored for each person.

Our training was intense and tiresome; about every five seconds a new drill order was given. All our movements had to be precise, crisp, and in unison. Any deviation or hesitation was readily apparent. Phrases like, “I’m going to rip off some thumbs if you don’t tuck them in,” became excellent

motivation. What made matters worse was the fact we could barely understand his mumbled commands; we had to carefully listen to every sound he made.

It is one thing having to concentrate intensely for five or even thirty minutes, but having to concentrate for a solid eight hours for five days was really draining.

Obviously, this is nothing compared to the boot camp that the Marines have to endure, but it was still mentally draining. It was not until I completed the Honor Guard training that I realized how lax and sloppy I had become regarding my mental discipline. Although I was not lax in my actual work, I had allowed my mind to become relaxed. The training paid off, we became a crack squad and we looked sharp. I tapped into a source of energy that had laid dormant inside me for many years.

To regain sexual control, you must regain control of your thought life. This means pooling all your resources, digging deep and focusing all of your will power to bring your thoughts under control. You must use this intense mental concentration to keep you from slipping into the same old habits. You also must use it to keep you from fantasizing about sexual encounters.

Every time you are tempted to think about a sexual fantasy, you must say to yourself, “No, this is wrong. This is something I will not do until I am married!” This mental discipline is extremely important in overcoming old habits. Since masturbation usually involves fantasizing, it is highly recommended that you greatly reduce it or abstain from it altogether. See the section on masturbation for more information.

Fantasizing about sexual activities re-enforces habits that are contrary to what you want to accomplish. When you stop these sexual fantasies, you stop making bad habits

stronger. Once we have stopped making bad habits stronger, we must work on making them weaker. The best way to do this is to saturate your mind with the Word of God, especially reading passages that deal with morality. Psalms 119:11 says, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Another good way to weaken the old habit is positive visualization. This is a process through which you visualize yourself being tempted and then saying no to this temptation. It is critical that you practice having sexual control in your mind. In fact, every time an impure thought enters your mind, use it as an opportunity to practice positive control. Instead of visualizing yourself having a sexual encounter, you should visualize yourself saying no.

Habits are made by repeating an activity over a long period of time. It is similar to a rut made in a field by a motorcycle. Every time the tire rides over the path, it digs a little deeper into the rut. Eventually the rut becomes so deep that whenever the motorcycle even gets near, the tires slide in. It is the same way with bad habits; if you get close to a bad habit, you can easily fall into it. A couple who has been sexually active in the past can be easily drawn into their old habits. It does not take a lot of kissing and hugging to pull the couple into the "rut" of sexual immorality.

Going back to the illustration of the tire, the only way we can reduce the size of the old rut is by avoiding it altogether. To help us avoid the old rut, we need to create a new rut in a different location. Eventually, wind and rain will partially fill in the old rut. Likewise, the only way we can overcome the rut of bad habits is to avoid it and make a new good habit rut. A couple must set a pattern of being able to be romantic without giving into sexual temptation. After many

successful encounters, this couple will start to find it easier to maintain sexual control. Once some time has past and new habits have developed, we will be able to ease up on the intense mental concentration.

I want to make one final comment about old ruts that have been filled in. You would think that once a rut has been filled in, it will never be a problem again. This is not true; even if a rut has been completely filled in by the wind, it will never be as solid as the ground next to it. Most of the soil brought in by the wind and rain is usually light soil that is easily moved; such as sand and silt. The absence of heavier soils, such as gravel, makes the old rut unstable for heavy traffic. It does not take a whole lot of traffic to bring the old rut down to its original depth. In fact, if the old rut is full of nothing but sand, the first person riding across could quickly sink in. As you can see, a rut filled in with light soil can provide a false sense of security.

Likewise, the old ruts of bad habits will always be a source of danger. You may not slip into the old habits as quickly as you have in the past, but you will still slip into them quicker than if you never had them in the first place. This is one of the reasons I strongly encourage people not to give in to these temptations in the first place. Once you have been exposed, you will have to deal with those temptations the rest of our lives.

Speaking of false security, something happened to me at work today that ties directly into this subject. Obviously, the prison environment is very security conscious; everything needs to be locked up. A couple of weeks ago, a cabinet was installed in a hallway about twenty feet from where I work. To keep the contents safe, the maintenance crew put a pad lock on its doors. As I was walking by the cabinet

today, I noticed a hinge on the top of the cabinet. Upon further inquiry, I found that the cabinet had a lid on the top that could open up. As it turned out, this door didn't have to lock. All a person has to do is lift the lid and take anything they wanted. The presence of the lock made the cabinet appear safe, but it was not.

Chapter: 2.05

The Single's Syndrome

Being single produces many more problems than just sexual temptations. As I mentioned earlier in the book, I didn't get married until I was thirty-five years old. Since I waited such a long time to get married, I experienced a large variety of other problems. Following is an account of some of my experiences.

Single people are often pressured by others to get married and this pressure increases as they get older. Friends and relatives feel it is their God given duty to fix you up with Mr. or Miss Right. So, to get them off your back, you go out on the blind dates they have set up for you. Personally, I think everyone should have to endure a few blind dates so they think twice before they set someone up on a blind date.

I must admit that a couple of the blind dates were actually quite nice, but the majority of them were not enjoyable. I am not totally against blind dates, per se, because they actually increase your chances of meeting someone nice. In fact, some great marriages

have resulted from blind dates. Yet, as a general rule, they can be an unpleasant experience; this is why television sitcoms often make fun of them.

Surprisingly, it is even possible to go out on a blind date without even knowing you are on one; that's what happened to me. I got a call from one of my parent's friends who said their daughter was being harassed by a guy from school. She asked me if I could take her daughter to an upcoming football game in order to send this guy a message. Taking her request at face value, I agreed. As it turned out the whole thing was an elaborate setup to fix me up with her daughter.

Random encounters via phone calls are another way of meeting someone. Although it is not the same as a blind date, it still has the potential for disaster. For example, several years ago I received a phone call from a telemarketer making a sales pitch for a local company. After the girl made her sales pitch, we started talking and had a pleasant conversation. The next day she made a "follow-up" call. We talked for quite a while and we ended up talking several more times. She had an incredibly attractive telephone voice and sounded interesting. After several calls we decided it was time to meet, so we set up a meeting at a local park. This may sound cruel and shallow, but she was one of the most unattractive and unkempt girl I have ever met. That experience taught me a valuable lesson; there isn't always a direct correlation between a person's voice and their appearance.

Most people who make inquiries about my dating life are genuinely interested and concerned about me. There are some people, however, who are simply busy bodies who seem to interfere more than they help. They would say things like, "Have

you met that nice girl who just started coming to church?” or “A guy needs to have a good woman to make his life complete.” Sometimes, as the single person gets older, friends become more blunt and say things like, “Why aren’t you married yet? Were you injured in the war or aren’t you attracted to women?” The fact that I was still a virgin often inflamed people’s curiosity about my desire for women. They feel it was highly improbable and wholly unnatural for a healthy male in his mid-thirties to still be a virgin.

Someone at church once said to me, “It’s not normal for a person to stay single; I really have to wonder about a person who never gets married. There must be something wrong with an older person who remains single. Mike, you’re attractive and healthy man; find yourself a good Christian girl and get married.”

Although I found this tasteless conversation rude and insulting, I can relate to this person’s suspicions. A couple of years ago I met a very attractive MRI technician at a hospital who had a great personality. Although she was thirty-five, she looked like she was about twenty-three years old. I have often wondered why she never got married. She talked about getting married someday, but when I asked her why she hadn’t, she quickly changed the subject. I wondered if she was gay, but she and her co-workers often talk about the guys she dates. I realize her marital status is none of my business, but I am still puzzled by her singleness.

People are quick to label a person gay if he or she does not fit neatly into their stereotyped mold. Recently I overheard two nurses talking about their trip to California. On the plane, they met two guys who were “ideal” looking. They described these guys as having handsome faces, beautifully

straight teeth, and muscular builds. What struck me as being rather presumptuous was a comment the nurses made. They said these guys had to be gay since they were not traveling with girls. They reasoned that straight guys this attractive would always have girlfriends.

The gay culture is creating even more problems for today’s singles. First, as I already mentioned, there is the skeptical eye if you are not married or, at least, sexually active. Second, there are the come-ons by the homosexuals themselves. Not everyone has had the displeasure of being propositioned by a homosexual, but on two occasions I had been approached by them. Who knows why they thought I would be interested in this lifestyle. The most disturbing part of these incidents was the fact that both of these guys were Christian leaders.

The first incident happened when a pastor invited me to visit him and his family; I was twenty-three years old at the time. During the night he came down to the basement where I was sleeping and laid next to me. When I asked him if it was time to get up, he said, “No” and started rubbing my stomach. Surprised and angered, I quickly left the house without saying a word.

The second incident happened when I was twenty-six years old and it involved a guy who had been a missionary for twenty years. He knew I was trying to raise some financial support for a Christian project I was working on, so he invited me to Chicago to meet some “influential and generous Christian businessmen.” As it turned out, the only reason he invited me to Chicago was so he could make his sexual advances. I had to set him straight (no pun intended). Later on, I found out that the reason he got a divorce and left missionary service was

because his wife caught him in bed with another man.

As a side note, I learned something practical from this second experience. When I was leaving Chicago, I was incredibly angry with him and God. Since I wasn't from Chicago, I didn't try to hide my anger; I was burning holes in the walls with my glares. On the train ride back to my home town, the lady next to me kept looking over at me. As I was trying to think of something clever and rude to say to her, she said, "Aren't you Mike Bronson?" As it turned out, I had dated her daughter several years earlier. The reason she recognized me after so many years was because the day before her trip she just happened to have looked at her photo album and saw photos of me. This experience taught me that I need to be on my best behavior everywhere I go; you never know who you will meet.

The longer a person waits to get married, the more speculation he or she will encounter. Some people may get carried away with their speculations and actually investigate you and your "situation." They feel it is their responsibility to find out why an older person has never married.

My sister married my best friend, Steve, and before they started dating Steve and I were always together. Ours was the type of friendship that you often read about, but seldom see or experience. It was a friendship similar to that of David and Jonathan as described in 2 Samuel 1:26. Even though we both dated girls, some people still held our friendship in suspect. In fact, the mother of one of the girls we knew had her pastor and elders investigate us.

As with most homegrown investigations, their methodology was highly flawed. Interestingly, the pastor and his elders

concluded that Steve and I were gay. This shows how absurd these rumors can become; it also shows the type of things that go on without our knowledge. Steve and I would never have known about this investigation except for the fact that someone tipped us off. Steve confronted the girl's mother about the investigation and after initially denying it for a couple of minutes; she admitted there was an investigation. She also admitted that the conclusion of the investigation was that Steve and I were gay.

Several years later, I started to date a girl whose brother was a pastor. He too was curious why I wasn't already married, so he conducted his own investigation on me. He contacted my former Bible school, my church, my friends, my previous employer, and even interviewed me. I found this to be rather insulting, intrusive, and rude.

Nevertheless, I must admit that I too would wonder why a healthy guy in his thirties had never been married. If my sister or daughter were dating a guy in my situation, I would want to know more about him. I don't think I would carry out an investigation, but I would be curious.

There are two lessons we can learn from the things I have shared. First, as a single person, we need to accept the fact that this meddling is just a part of life and we need to accept it. Second, if you are involved in this type of meddling, please be a little more thoughtful and tactful. It's hard enough as it is being single; we really don't need any more hassles.

Chapter: 2.06

In Sickness and In Health

A couple of months before our wedding, Janet's doctor discovered a lump in her breast and scheduled a mammogram for her. The earliest opening was a week and a half later, and since it usually takes a week or two to get the results, we would have to be in suspense for a few more weeks.

Statistically, one out of eight women (12.5%) will get breast cancer. Although Janet was only twenty-four at the time, the fact that her mother had breast cancer meant she was at a higher risk. Also, the fact her mom had it before menopause meant Janet was at an even greater risk. My heart went out to Janet when she told me what the doctor had said. The fear, anxiety, and suspense had to be weighing heavily on her mind. Not only did she face the possible loss of her breast, she faced the possible loss of her life. Janet handled it like a soldier; she went on with her life and waited patiently for the test results. She is more patient than I.

Adversities have a way of causing us to evaluate things we often take for granted. Janet and I both did a great deal of soul-searching. Our love for each other and for God was taking on new meaning. Our upcoming wedding vows, "For better and for worse, in sickness and in health," were already being challenged.

Cancer is always serious business, but the timing of this news made it even more difficult. Janet and I have saved ourselves for marriage; we were both virgins and were looking forward to our honeymoon night to consummate the love we held for each other.

Now, even this was being threatened. Surgery and chemotherapy could postpone our wedding and consummation.

Also threatened was the greatly anticipated "first time." Everyone wonders what their first time will be like and I too gave it a great deal of thought. If Janet had a radical mastectomy, I wondered how it would affect us; what would that do to the "magic?" Although I was concerned for myself, I was even more concerned for Janet. I loved Janet and I wondered how this potential cancer would affect her physically and emotionally.

I have to admit that, similar to all sinners, I had some disgustingly selfish thoughts. During the next two weeks, I asked myself many questions such as, "What would my inner feelings be if Janet had breast cancer?" and "Was I truly willing to marry someone with cancer?" It is one thing to already be married and then have your mate become ill, but it is another thing to marry someone knowing they are sick. Was I willing to marry someone who was no longer "complete?" Could I be satisfied if my wife never had breasts during our marriage? Yet, the greatest question I faced was: "Would I regret having waited until marriage to have sex; would I feel cheated having waited when I could have had the whole thing earlier?"

As shallow and selfish as all of these questions sound, they expose a sad part of our human nature. We are all fallen creatures and if we are honest with ourselves, we will admit we are concerned about how events will affect us. Being a mature, growing Christian does not exempt you from being frustrated, confused, and tempted. I loved Janet very much and it hurt me a great deal to see her sick. My greatest concern was for her, but being a "union" means tragedies affect both of us.

Although my head was flooded with impure thoughts, there was never any doubt as to how I would respond. The example Christ gave us had already taught me everything I needed to know. Ephesians 5:25 says we are to love our wives the same way Christ loved the church. Although we were blemished with sin, Christ still gave Himself for us (Romans 5:8). Jesus wanted us to be His bride even though we were imperfect. My commitment to Janet was well grounded and I could genuinely say I still wanted to marry her, regardless of the outcome.

It is important to understand that the engagement period is not a trial period to determine if you should get married. These doubts should have been dealt with during the courtship; those doubts should be gone before you propose (or accept). You should be fully committed once you become engaged; changes in a person's health should not change that commitment.

As I write this chapter I still do not know the result of Janet's test, but I have made the decision to wait until marriage to have sex. You may ask, "If it is cancer and Janet loses her breasts, will you feel cheated?" No, I won't. I decided to take the same stance as Moses in that I would rather do what is right in the eyes of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short season (Hebrews 11:25).

[Author's note: A lumpectomy was performed and Janet did not have cancer. This experience has taught me a great deal and although I never want to go through it again, I am glad it happened. I have a new appreciation of our health. More important, though, I was able to demonstrate my deep commitment and love for Janet; she is now more secure in our relationship.]

[Author's second note: This security turned out to be important, because several years

later Janet was diagnosed with Stage III breast cancer and a tumor the size of a tangerine. She had to endure five surgeries, chemotherapy, radiation treatments, and hormone depletion therapy; not to mention at least twenty hot flashes a day because of her total hysterectomy. When she first lost her hair I wrote her a note reminding her of my commitment to her. I wanted her to know that regardless of what happens; I will stay committed to her.

I also put together a collection of love songs for her to let her know that I will always love her and will be by her side regardless of the outcome. Some of the songs in this collection were *You Can Count on Me*, *My World is Empty Without You*, and *You Take My Breath Away*. During her time of sickness, Janet mentioned she felt lucky I was her husband. So, when I burned the CD for her, I added a song from Tom Petty (*You Got Lucky*) as a spoof. Parts of the lyrics say, "You got lucky girl –that I found you." She chuckled when she heard it and said, "Yes Dear, *you* were lucky that I found you."]

Chapter: 2.07

A Happy Ending

My heart was pounding as we drove into the restaurant's parking lot. Janet had no idea that today was going to be one of the greatest days in my life, and hopefully hers too. Several months of planning had led up to this event. I was nervous; wondering if all of my plans would turn out okay. Janet

was completely oblivious to the conspiracy plotted against her. As we ordered our meal, the waitress gave me a knowing smile.

Later in the meal, Janet noticed some gold speckles on her plate. She quickly scrapped aside the remaining food and read the message “Janet, will you marry me? Mike.” Before she could say anything, I pulled a candle out of my jacket and lit it. Holding her hand I got on my knee and made the traditional marriage proposal. The plates, specially made for the occasion, are now on display in our china cabinet.

Being a single person in a “couple’s world” is difficult. Being sexually pure in a sexually active world is not only difficult, but is extremely frustrating and stressful. I was single when I started writing this book and finished writing it shortly before I got married. My marriage to Janet is a beautiful end to this difficult chapter of my life.

Having to wait until I was thirty-five years old to get married was no easy task. It was difficult in so many ways. First, there was the obvious stress brought on by sexual temptations; abstaining from premarital sex was a tremendous struggle for me. Second, I had to deal with people who could not understand why I wasn’t married. Finally, people found it difficult to believe that a person could be a virgin at thirty-five and still be “normal.” They figured I must either be gay or have some type of physical problem that was preventing me from having sex or getting married. Frankly, I can understand this suspicion too. It was hard enough remaining sexually pure when I was twenty-five, but it was much harder when I was thirty-five. Some people wonder if I am telling the truth when I say I have not had sex before I got married, however, talking to my past girlfriends will verify this claim.

I do not want to give you the impression that since I was a virgin when I got married, I have been perfect in everything I have done. I was continually frustrated by the conflict of wanting to be sexually active and knowing it is wrong. I was also plagued by the confusion and guilt of having slipped into petting a few times. The previous chapters describe some of my shortcomings in this area.

Just because I was a virgin when I got married, does not mean my thoughts were always pure. Like everyone else, I have often wondered what it would be like to have sexual intercourse. There is nothing wrong, in and of itself, to wonder about this mysterious experience, but it is difficult to dwell on these thoughts for too long without being drawn into sexual fantasies. There is a fine line between having a healthy desire and curiosity about the sexual experience and being controlled and consumed by its lust. I have stumbled in this area numerous times.

I was raised by solid Christian parents and accepted Christ as my personal Savior when I was five. My parents made sure I had a good understanding of the message of the gospel. They prayed for me, explained the Bible to me, and led by example. It was this upbringing that helped protect me as I got older.

Like many Christians, I went through a period of rebellion. At the age of twelve, I wanted to live my life for myself. I told God that when I reach my mid-thirties I would settle down and live a dignified Christian life, but until then, I was going to live my life for myself. Ironically, even though I was in open rebellion against God, I still made a personal vow to Him that I would not take drugs or have premarital sex. I felt that these activities were dangerous and could cause me great harm. Even in my

rebellious state, I realized that drugs and premarital sex had too many negative consequences.

During this time of rebellion (ages twelve to sixteen), I hung out with various girls at recreational centers, parks, and beaches. During romantic encounters, I touched the breasts of a few of these girls, fully clothed, but did not go any further. During this same time, many of my friends started taking drugs and engaging in premarital sex.

At first, they were just sniffing gasoline from the gas tanks of boats. On one occasion, while we were on Lake Michigan in a large speedboat, a big wave hit the boat and one of the girls swallowed a mouthful of gasoline. She had to induce vomiting to get rid of the gas and then had to quit smoking for a week because her burps had a gasoline odor. Eventually, they progressed from gasoline to marijuana and then moved onto harder drugs, such as LSD. Although I often hung around them, I never sniffed gas nor took any drugs.

When I was sixteen, I realized that this “great fun” I was seeking never materialized; I was very unhappy. Instead of waiting until my mid-thirties, I decided to give my life back to God right then and there. It was a good thing I let God back into my life when I did because peer pressure was mounting. I am now convinced that if I had gone on a couple of more years, I probably would have started taking drugs and engaging in pre-marital sex.

Many things changed when I committed my life to God. For example, I stopped treating girls as objects; I became more concerned about their needs instead of focusing on fulfilling my needs. It was at this time that I started seeking God’s will concerning physical intimacy. Many of the principles in

this book are a product of this intense time of soul searching.

I dated many girls over the next twenty years and each relationship taught me something new. Some relationships were great successes and others were dismal failures. Fortunately, God had a watchful eye on me and kept me from making major blunders that I would have regretted later. Although I worked hard at maintaining sexual control, God was the preserving factor.

As I mentioned earlier, I did not get married until I was thirty-five. The reason I remained single so long was not for a lack of opportunities. Of the last eight girls I dated, six of them wanted to marry me. Although they were nice girls, they were not someone I wanted to marry.

Many people are careless in their use of the words “I love you.” To many people, these words have no more meaning than the words “I like you.” Yet, other people, usually girls, read much more into those words. To them, the words convey commitment, devotion, and security. As a result, I decided that I would not tell any girl that I loved her until I had the emotional commitment to back it up. I also decided that I would not say “I love you” until I was ready and willing to marry the girl. I am not saying this is the correct way of doing this nor is it something I am even advocating; it is simply the approach I chose to follow.

I wanted those words to be very special to my girl; I wanted those words to produce the security of my emotional commitment. As a result, Janet was the first girl to hear those special words from me. This is not to say that I had not developed some love for a few of the other girls I had dated. I had love for them, but I was not “in-love” with them; there is a difference.

It is important to point out that if you are thinking about taking this approach, you should communicate to your partner the reason why you are not using those words. All of the girls I dated knew why I refrained from saying the words, "I love you." I did, however, use phrases such as "I care for you," "you are special" and, "you mean a great deal to me."

I wanted the first time I told Janet that I loved her to be special so I arranged for her to read my first "I love you" in a fortune cookie at a Chinese restaurant. Since I did not burn up most of my sexual energy with excessive physical intimacy, I had a lot of energy left for creativity. For example, she found my topaz promise ring inside a sealed Cracker Jacks box and her engagement ring was found inside an egg. I also did something unique when I asked her dad for her hand in marriage. You can read about this in the next chapter, *Johnny Lingo's Eight Cow Wife*.

When I gave my life to God twenty years earlier, I started praying for my future wife. I saved myself for her and after all these years, I can truly say it was worth the wait. It was great to be able to sit down on the end of the bed on our wedding night, let out a sigh of relief, and say "Whew, we finally made it!"

It was great to have been able to fulfill God's will in this area; we were able to consummate our love for each other without guilt. God designed the sexual relationship for marriage and it was wonderful to have been able to experience this facet of His creation within His limits. Our sexual union was pure before the Lord; we were able to express our love without reservation, guilt, or limitation. Although the sexual experience is great, I can truly say it was worth the wait; it is well worth doing it God's way.

Chapter: 2.08

Johnny Lingo Eight-Cow Wife

My trip to the Kiniwata Island in the Pacific was a memorable one. Although the island was beautiful and I had an enjoyable time, the thing I remember most about my trip was the fact "Johnny Lingo gave eight cows for his wife." I'm reminded of it every time I see a woman belittle her husband or a wife wither under her husband's scorn. I want to say to them, "You should know why Johnny Lingo gave eight cows for his wife."

Johnny Lingo is known throughout the islands for his skills, intelligence, and savvy. If you hire him as a guide, he will show you the best fishing spots and the best places to get pearls. Johnny is also one of the sharpest traders in the islands. He can get you the best possible deals. The people of Kiniwata all speak highly of Johnny Lingo. Yet, when they speak of him, they always smile just a little mockingly.

A couple days after my arrival to Kiniwata, I went to the manager of the guesthouse to see who he thought would be a good fishing guide. "Johnny Lingo," said the manager. "He's the best around. When you go shopping, let him do the bargaining. Johnny knows how to make a deal."

"Johnny Lingo!" hooted a nearby boy. The boy rocked with laughter as he said, "Yea, Johnny can make a deal alright!"

"What's going on?" I demanded.

"Everybody tells me to get in touch with Johnny Lingo and then they start laughing. Please, let me in on the joke."

“Oh, the people like to laugh,” the manager said, shrugging. “Johnny’s the brightest and strongest young man in the islands. He’s also the richest for his age.”

“But ...” I protested. “... if he’s all you say he is, why does everyone laugh at him behind his back?”

“Well, there is one thing. Five months ago, at fall festival, Johnny came to Kiniwata and found himself a wife. He gave her father eight cows!”

I knew enough about island customs to be impressed. A dowry of two or three cows would net a fair wife and four or five cows would net a very nice wife.

“Wow!” I said. “Eight cows! She must have beauty that takes your breath away.”

“She’s not ugly, ...” he conceded with a little smile, “... but calling her ‘plain’ would definitely be a compliment. Sam Karoo, her father, was afraid he wouldn’t be able to marry her off. Instead of being stuck with her, he got eight cows for her. Isn’t that extraordinary? This price has never been paid before.”

“Yet, you called Johnny’s wife ‘plain?’”

“I said it would be a compliment to call her plain. She was skinny and she walked with her shoulders hunched and her head ducked. She was scared of her own shadow.”

“Well,” I said, “I guess there’s just no accounting for love.”

“True enough.” agreed the man. “That’s why the villagers grin when they talk about Johnny. They get special satisfaction from the fact the sharpest trader in the islands was bested by dull old Sam Karoo.”

“But how?”

“No one knows and everyone wonders. All of the cousins urged Sam to ask for three cows and hold out for two until he was sure Johnny would pay only one. To their surprise Johnny came to Sam Karoo and said, ‘Father of Sarita, I offer eight cows for your daughter.’”

“Eight cows.” I murmured. “I’d like to meet this Johnny Lingo.”

I wanted fish and pearls, so the next afternoon I went to the island of Nurabandi. As I asked directions to Johnny’s house, I noticed Johnny’s neighbors were also amused at the mention of his name. When I met the slim, serious young man I could see immediately why everyone respected his skills. However, this only reinforced my confusion over him.

As we sat in his house, he asked me, “You come here from Kiniwata?”

“Yes.”

“They speak of me on that island?”

“Yes. They say you can provide me anything I need. They say you’re intelligent, resourceful, and the sharpest trader in the islands.”

He smiled gently. “My wife is from Kiniwata.”

“Yes, I know.”

“They speak of her?”

“A little.”

“What do they say?”

“Why, just” The question caught me off balance. “They told me you were married at festival time.”

“Nothing more?” The curve of his eyebrows told me he knew there had to be more.

“They also say the marriage settlement was eight cows.” I paused. “They wonder why.”

“They ask that?” His eyes lighted with pleasure. “Everyone in Kiniwata knows about the eight cows?”

I nodded.

“And in Nurabandi, everyone knows it too?” His chest expanded with satisfaction. “Always and forever, when they speak of marriage settlements, it will be remembered that Johnny Lingo paid eight cows for Sarita.”

So that’s the answer, I thought: Vanity.

Just then Sarita entered the room to place flowers on the table. She stood still for a moment to smile at her husband and then left. She was the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. The lift of her shoulders, the tilt of her chin, and the sparkle in her eyes all spelled self-confidence and pride. Not an arrogant and haughty pride, but a confident inner beauty that radiated in her every movement.

I turned back to Johnny and found him looking at me.

“You admire her?” he murmured.

“She ... she’s gorgeous.” I said. “Obviously, this is not the one everyone is talking about. She can’t be the Sarita you married on Kiniwata.”

“There’s only one Sarita. Perhaps, she doesn’t look the way you expected.”

“She doesn’t. I heard she was homely. They all make fun of you because you let yourself be cheated by Sam Karoo.”

“You think eight cows was too many?” A smile slid over his lips.

“No, but how can she be so different from the way they described her?”

Johnny said, “Think about how it must make a girl feel to know her husband paid a very low dowry for her? It must be insulting to her to know he places such little value on her. Think about how she must feel when the other women boast about the high prices their husbands paid for them. It must be embarrassing for her. I would not let this happen to my Sarita.”

“So, you paid eight cows just to make your wife happy?”

“Well, of course I wanted Sarita to be happy, but there’s more to it than that. You say she is different from what you expected. This is true. Many things can change a woman. There are things that happen on the inside and things that happen on the outside. However, the thing that matters most is how she views herself. In Kiniwata, Sarita believed she was worth nothing. As a result, that’s the value she projected. Now, she knows she is worth more than any other woman in the islands. It shows, doesn’t it?”

“Then you wanted ...”

“I wanted to marry Sarita. She is the only woman I love.”

“But ...” I was close to understanding.

“But,” he finished softly, “I wanted an eight-cow wife.”

The above story was based partially on an article found in Reader’s Digest (*Johnny Lingo Eight-Cow Wife*, February, 1988,). The original work was copyrighted by

Patricia McGerr in 1965.

After I read the above story, I knew that I wanted to make my future wife feel very special. So, before I proposed to Janet, I asked her father for permission to marry her. After he said yes, told him the story about Johnny Lingo's 8-cow wife. Afterwards, I presented him 10 ceramic cows, which I had made for the occasion. I wanted Janet to know that I valued her higher than any other women around.

The reason I included this chapter in my book is because many marital problems could be eliminated if we followed the principles described in the story. If you are having marital problems, you should reevaluate your treatment of your mate. Think about your words and actions (both public and private). Do your words and actions make your mate feel he/she is worth eight cows or just one cow? Don't make the mistake of causing your spouse to feel like he/she is worth only one cow. If you do, they will probably start acting like a one cow wife/husband.

This principle can also be applied to the way you treat others. Many problems can be eliminated at work and church if we only treated others with more respect. Think about the value you put on people. As a general rule, people respond according to the value you place on them.

Following are some interesting side notes about our engagement

My promise ring to Janet

I wanted to do something special for Janet as our relationship grew more serious. So, I did a spoof on the old adage "he gave her a ring from a Cracker Jacks box." For those

not familiar with this adage, years ago one of the prizes that came in the Cracker Jacks box was an inexpensive plastic rings that people often gave as gag gifts. As a result, when a cheapskate guy would give his girlfriend an inexpensive ring as her actual ring, people would say he got it from a Cracker Jacks box. Therefore, I decided to do the inverse and give Janet an expensive ring from a Cracker Jacks box. One day when Janet came to visit, I tossed her a sealed box of Cracker Jacks. When she got to the prize, she found an expensive topaz ring along with a note that read, "Janet, will you be my steady girl? Mike." As it turned out, Janet wasn't much hungry for Cracker Jacks that day so she almost didn't open the box.

The first "I love you"

The first time I told Janet I loved her was in a fortune cookie at a Chinese restaurant. I inserted the note in a fortune cookie and made arrangements with the manager to have it delivered it at the end of the meal. Janet was pleasantly surprised by her good "fortune." This special event almost didn't work. The waitress apparently forgot about the special cookies and brought the wrong set of fortune cookies. Fortunately, the manager realized what happened and corrected the problem.

Asking permission for Janet's hand

I asked Janet's father for permission to marry his daughter. After I was given permission, I gave him 10 ceramic cows. The first part of this chapter explains the significance of this gift.

The proposal

Janet and I were eating a meal at a fancy restaurant when Janet noticed some gold writing on her plate. As she cleared the plate

with her fork, she saw the words, “Janet, will you marry me?” (I had the plates custom made a couple of weeks earlier.) As a side note, Janet almost missed this proposal. She lived two hours away and she almost canceled her visit because of a major snowstorm. The plate now sit in our china cabinet.

Janet’s engagement ring

Since I love chocolate, I asked Janet if she would make me some brownies. When she broke open one of the eggs, out came her engagement ring. It took me ten hours of experimenting to figure out a way to successfully get the ring inside the egg. Needless to say, Janet was a bit surprised.

Part III: Masturbation

Chapter: 3.01

Is Masturbation a Sin?

Throughout the ages, Christians and church leaders have expressed different views concerning the morality of masturbation. While some views seem to be based on Biblical principles, other views seem to have come straight out of the mystical dark ages and resemble folklore. Contrary to what some people teach, masturbation does not cause blindness in young boys.

Masturbation, the sexual stimulation of oneself, often causes a considerable amount of confusion, frustration, and guilt. Since masturbation involves our sexual organs, many Christians view it as fornication, which is prohibited in the Bible. Some people who are struggling with masturbation believe they are doing it because they must have some type of hidden homosexual tendencies. They feel this way because they believe obtaining sexual gratification from your own genitals would be the same as obtaining sexual gratification from someone else of the same gender. This, of course, is not true.

Is masturbation a sin? I think a person would be hard pressed to find anything in the Bible that *directly* condemns masturbation. In fact, the Bible never talks about masturbation at all. Since the Bible is silent about the subject of masturbation, people should be careful about how dogmatic they become with their opinions. I don't think a person can honestly say the Bible directly condemns masturbation. On the other hand, Biblical silence does not necessarily mean a certain action is advisable or even permitted.

There are many things that are wrong or inadvisable, even though they are not directly addressed in the Bible. For example, the subject of speeding is not mentioned in the Bible. Does this mean it is permissible to speed since the Bible never directly condemns speeding? No, the Bible indirectly addresses the issue by saying we are to obey the laws of the land. Romans 13:1 says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."

Let me give you another example. When a Christian is looking to buy a new car, he will not find anything in the Bible that would directly help him. The Bible does not make a moral distinction between a Buick and a Ford. Apart from asking God for wisdom and guidance, a Christian needs to look at the merits of each car. He needs to determine how dependable each car would be and how it would affect him financially, logistically, and socially. The subject of masturbation should be approached the same way; we need to look at how it will affect us.

I personally don't believe that masturbation, in-and-of itself, is a sin. This doesn't mean, however, that I necessarily believe we should engage in masturbation. Certain things can still be unsafe and harmful even though they are not "sin." Let me give you an example. There are some daring people who enjoy tight rope walking on wires stretched out between tall buildings. Since they do this without safety nets and harnesses, they would be killed if they were to fall. Is this type of extreme living a sin? No, I don't believe we can directly call it a sin. Nevertheless, there are many people who would view this dangerous activity as a potential waste of the valuable resources God has given us.

I would like to point out that not all Christian leaders agree with my views on masturbation. Many believe masturbation is sin and some of them will even say I am sinning by not calling masturbation a sin. Trust me, I would have preferred leaving these chapters out of this book; it would have been easy to avoid discussing this controversial and embarrassing subject. Unfortunately, since most Christians avoid talking about masturbation, many people are left in bondage, guilt, and desperation.

Although I do not condemn masturbation, I certainly do not condone it. There are many issues involved in this practice that need to be considered. Hopefully, the following chapters will reveal some of the problems and consequences of this often misunderstood subject.

Chapter: 3.02

The Guilt of Masturbation

Although Mike was nineteen years old, he had never masturbated before. In fact, he had never even heard of masturbation. Since Mike didn't know about masturbation, he had no desire to experiment with it. Yet, late one night, Mike suddenly woke up with a strong desire to masturbate. Although he had never done it before, it came naturally. Afterward, he felt incredibly guilty and confused. He did not know why he did it in the first place, but he knew he never wanted to do it again. He confessed his "sin" to God and went back to sleep.

The next night the same thing happened again and he felt even guiltier. Night after night the scenario repeated itself, and night after night his guilt grew. He continually went to God asking for help, but he felt abandoned. He even increased his Bible reading, prayer time, and scripture memorization, but nothing helped. Although he was in Bible school studying to be a missionary, he was utterly defeated in this area.

Several months elapsed and Mike was still plagued by this unrelenting habit. Every night he was awoken by this tenacious monster who sought to devour his soul. The condemnation was tremendous and Mike felt utterly defeated because he could not control this desire. He had never engaged in premarital sex because he wanted to save himself for marriage; yet he was now addicted to this mysterious "sexual" practice.

The thing that made the situation even worse was the fact he felt so isolated. He felt totally alone because he didn't dare tell anyone else about his "extreme moral depravity." He was afraid of what others would think. He was sure they would say he was masturbating because he had some significant moral failure in his life or because he was a sexual "freak." Worse yet, he was afraid they would think he was unfit for missionary service.

A year went by and it was still happening every night. Out of desperation, he finally went to a friend to share his greatest burden and defeat. After sharing his darkest secret, his friend said, "I don't see it as a problem; I masturbate too." It was such a relief for Mike to know he was not alone. He still wasn't convinced it wasn't a sin, but he no longer felt alone.

After talking to many other guys, Mike found that most guys were doing it. The reason he had never heard of it before was because masturbation is one of those unspeakable topics in which most people, especially Christians, are ashamed. Later on, Mike discovered there was a large number of young people who were living in isolated guilt. The refusal of Christian leaders to openly talk about this subject has left many young people feeling desperate and alone.

The reason I know so much about Mike's secret shame is because this story is actually about me. The reason I am sharing this embarrassing chapter of my life is because the story needs to be told; we Christians have kept silent too long. Trust me, I would have preferred not telling you about my embarrassing secret. This part of my life has caused me a great deal of shame, guilt, and pain and I would have preferred not to have to relive it again. Yet, I know there are many other people out there who are currently experiencing the same guilt and shame.

Too many Christians are silent about this important subject. They are living lives of lies and hypocrisies; they tell young people one thing while they do the opposite. It is not uncommon for a father to punish his son for masturbating even though he too masturbated when he was young. Worse yet, this father may still be masturbating on a regular basis.

Someone asked me recently if I thought that 99% of guys struggle with masturbation. I said, "No. I believe the number is 100%." He was surprised until I clarified my answer. I said, "Although I believe a high percentage of guys masturbate on a regular basis, I don't believe all guys masturbate. Nevertheless, I believe all guys struggle with it." Of course, the age in which a

person starts his struggle may differ from person to person, but eventually all guys, if they live long enough, will be confronted with this temptation.

When I became engaged, I decided not to masturbate anymore. Although it was not easy, I didn't masturbate during the twenty-one weeks between my engagement and wedding. I did this for three reasons. First, I wanted to get out of the habit because I didn't want to bring this addictive activity into my marriage. Several studies have shown that about 60 -70% of married people still masturbate.

Second, I wanted to gain control of my sexual desires. Once a person becomes engaged, the temptation to become sexually active increases tremendously. It is much easier to rationalize sexual intercourse once you are engaged, so I felt it was important to solidify my resolve to remain morally pure. Therefore, I decided to eliminate masturbation and its fantasizing. This effort paid off because both my wife and I were virgins when we got married.

Finally, I wanted to stop for testimony sake. I wanted to demonstrate that masturbation does not have to control you. I was quite surprised and pleased by the results. I was able to stop an addictive habit that had controlled me for sixteen years. Eliminating masturbation helped me gain greater control of my thought life. Since my thought life was more consistent, my sexual control became more consistent.

I have one more comment I would like to make about the guilt of masturbation. Does the feeling of guilt mean something is actually wrong? No, of course not. Sometimes cultural taboos make a person feel guilty about innocent things. For example, some remote tribes in Papua, New Guinea consider it wrong to eat bread with

certain types of meat. Even though this practice is not truly a sin in the eyes of God, a native in this culture would still feel guilty for doing this. This shows us that the presence of guilt does not necessarily mean something is a sin. Nevertheless, since guilt from masturbation seems to be fairly universal, it makes me wonder if it's more of a moral issue as opposed to a religious and cultural taboo.

Chapter: 3.03

The Problems and Dangers of Masturbation

In the previous chapter, I said I do not believe masturbation is a sin, but I also said that just because something is not a "sin" doesn't mean it is safe and harmless. Masturbation may not be a sin, but it can cause you significant problems. The purpose of this chapter is to show you the problems that can result from masturbation. There are eight main problems associated with masturbation and the first three are probably the most destructive. Following are the eight main problems associated with masturbation:

1. Masturbation is an addictive behavior and it can easily become a controlling factor in your life. You can become addicted to it in a way similar to most other addictive behavior.
2. Masturbation drains you of the essential sexual energy that is needed to help you develop a deep emotional relationship with your partner.
3. The fantasizing involved in masturbation greatly diminishes your ability to control your sexual desires.
4. Fantasizing about a person when masturbating causes you to develop strong feelings of attachment for the person with whom you are fantasizing.
5. Masturbation produces an increased desire for genital contact and stimulation. This increased desire increases the likelihood of you and your partner moving on to this level of physical intimacy.
6. Masturbation causes you to be dissatisfied with normal non-sexual physical intimacy. This non-sexual physical intimacy is essential for the proper development of a dating relationship.
7. Masturbation can cause problems in your marital sex life.
8. If you are fantasizing sexual encounters when you are masturbating, you are committing adultery.

Problem 1: Masturbation is addictive.

Since masturbation is highly addictive, it can quickly become a controlling force in our lives. This is probably one of the most dangerous parts of masturbation. Having strong sexual desires is normal and there is no reason to feel guilty about them. These powerful desires, however, can make it difficult to maintain self-control. Similar to all of our other desires, we need to keep our sexual desires under control. Masturbation does not have to become a controlling factor

in our lives, but it is difficult keeping it from becoming one.

In a sense, masturbation is similar to smoking. There are some people who can smoke occasionally and not become addicted. However, most people who “occasionally” smoke eventually end up becoming addicted. I have a friend at work who tried to get his wife to quit smoking by taking some of her cigarettes and blowing smoke in her face. Instead of her quitting, he became addicted. It’s been a few years since his misguided intervention and he is still smoking. On a sad note, my friend was recently diagnosed with bone cancer and they are only giving him about a year to live.

You know you are addicted to masturbation if you masturbate on a regular basis. Don’t fool yourself by saying you can quit any time you like. It’s the same as a smoking addiction; many smokers say they can quit anytime they wish, but they are only fooling themselves.

Problem 2: Masturbation depletes your sexual energy.

Another chapter (*The Beneficial Energy Of Our Sexual Desires*), illustrates how our sexual attraction provides us with the extra energy needed to develop the different levels of bonding in a relationship. It’s like the April showers that provide the needed water for spring’s growth. If you have a dry spring, the plant’s growth and development is severely retarded.

Likewise, a lack of sexual energy in the dating relationship can hinder or damage many important foundational developments. Masturbation consumes a large amount of this needed energy. Even if a person is not dating, this sexual energy is important in their search for a quality date. Finding someone who has depth and spiritual

substance usually does not come easily; it requires careful observation and plenty of hard work.

Problem 3: Masturbation reduces your sexual self-control.

Fantasizing, a dominant part of masturbation, produces negative reinforcement. When fantasizing, you usually visualize yourself being involved in heavy petting or sexual intercourse with someone else. Although it is not impossible, it is difficult to masturbate without fantasizing. Fantasizing sexual encounters on a continual basis produces substantial negative reinforcement and will eventually erode away your sexual self-control.

By allowing yourself to mentally perform these sexual acts, you are subconsciously telling yourself that these activities are appropriate and acceptable outside of marriage. Our meditations strongly influence our actions. The martial arts use imaging and meditation in their training. The student slowly visualizes himself doing a particular move over and over until it becomes second nature. As a result, the pre-rehearsed behavior becomes automatic when he is in an actual fight. When you continually visualize yourself having a sexual encounter with your date, you can easily slip into this pre-rehearsed behavior when you have a romantic encounter.

Problem 4: Masturbation can cause strong feelings of attachment to develop toward the person with whom you are fantasizing.

Fantasizing about a specific person when you are masturbating causes you to develop strong feelings of attachment with that person. This can be a problem if the person you are fantasizing about is not the type of person you would normally date. Sometimes people fantasize about the “bad

girl” (or “bad boy”) because it tends to be more sexually exciting. Unfortunately, many people have found that this increased attraction has resulted in them actually going out with this person or someone similar to them.

Problem 5: Masturbation increases your desire for genital stimulation.

The genital stimulation involved in masturbation produces the desire to be touched in the genital area. You may find it difficult to say no to your partner if they try to touch you in this area. The desire may become so strong that you will actually encourage your partner to touch you in this area during romantic encounters.

Problem 6: Masturbation causes you to be dissatisfied with non-sexual intimacy.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, once you have become sexually active, it is difficult to be satisfied with anything less. Masturbation causes a similar problem. The orgasm you experience with masturbation is enjoyable and once you have been exposed to this pleasure you will find it difficult to be satisfied with romantic encounters that do not include climatic orgasms.

Problem 7: Masturbation can cause problems in your marital sex life.

Sex therapist and marriage counselors have found that pre-marital masturbation often causes some minor sexual incompatibility problems within marriage. Occasionally, it can cause some substantial marital problems. This is because the types of stimulations used in masturbation and intercourse are quite different. With self-stimulation, you know exactly how and where to touch yourself, but having someone else stimulate you, as in marriage, is often hit or miss. In fact, some married

people prefer masturbation over sexual intercourse because they are unable to duplicate the same intensity of stimulation found in masturbation.

Problem 8: Fantasizing is the same as committing adultery.

Although it is possible to masturbate without fantasizing about sexual encounters, it usually doesn't happen. A large portion of the erotic excitement comes from fantasizing about sexual encounters. In Matthew 5:27-28, Jesus says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” As you can see, Jesus made it clear that thinking about an immoral act is a much of a sin as actually doing it.

Chapter: 3.04

Wet Dreams, Sex Dreams, and Nocturnal Orgasms

What are wet dreams, sex dreams, and nocturnal orgasms? Although these items are closely related to each other, they are all distinctly different. The first thing we will study is wet dreams (clinically referred to as nocturnal emissions). Every day the male body produces seminal fluid, which consists of sperm and semen. Although the body is able to absorb some of the unused seminal fluid, the remainder causes a buildup in pressure and needs to be periodically released. Romantic encounters that don't

end with ejaculation will increase this pressure even further. If this pressure is not reduced through sexual intercourse or masturbation, the body has an alternate method of reducing this pressure. After the pressure has reached a certain point, the body will cause an ejaculation to occur while the man is sleeping; this is called a wet dream.

Although, in theory, a guy could go his whole life without having a wet dream, most guys will eventually have at least one at some point in their lives. In fact, it would not be uncommon for a guy to have numerous or even dozens of wet dreams throughout his life. Obviously, frequent masturbation or sexual encounters will greatly diminish the body's need to reduce this pressure. Teenagers are far more likely to have wet dreams than any other age group. This is because of their sudden increase of hormones and limited exposures to sexual encounters or masturbation. How often do these wet dreams occur? There are many factors that influence the frequency of wet dreams, but for a teenage boy who is not sexually active or masturbating, it may be a few weeks to a couple of months between wet dreams.

Wet dreams are perfectly normal and natural and you should never feel guilty about having them. Many guys feel guilty after a wet dream because they think they have sinned by committing a disdainful sexual act. This is not true; wet dreams are not sin. Wet dreams are a release mechanism designed by God to protect the body. If it were not for wet dreams, the buildup of pressure in the seminal fluid could cause prostate problems.

Although wet dreams are strictly a male phenomenon, some people contend that girls also have wet dreams because they occasionally wake up sexually aroused and

moist in the genital area. This is not a wet dream, but is something called a nocturnal orgasm. This subject will be covered later on in this chapter.

Deuteronomy 23: 9-11 is the only place in the Bible that talks about nocturnal emissions. It says, "When you are encamped against your enemies, keep away from everything impure. If one of your men is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, he is to go outside the camp and stay there. But as evening approaches he is to wash himself, and at sunset he may return to the camp."

On the surface it would appear the Bible is condemning wet dreams as sin. However, the meaning becomes more obvious when you look at this passage in context of the other Levitical Laws. The purpose of this instruction has everything to do with hygiene and the prevention of diseases and has nothing to do with morality. The Bible gives similar statements about menstruation and childbirth. Even a man who has had normal sexual intercourse with his wife is considered ceremonially unclean and is required to bathe in a mikveh in order to become ceremonially clean. As you can see, it appears the uncleanness talked about here is ceremonially uncleanness and not moral uncleanness.

Another reason guys feel guilty about wet dreams is because they usually occur during sexually orientated or erotic dreams (often referred to as "sex dreams"). Most sex dreams do not result in wet dreams, but most wet dreams occur during sex dreams.

Statistically, girls have sex dreams about as often as guys. As discussed elsewhere in this book, guys derive most of their sexual excitement from seeing and touching the female body. In contrast, girls do not find the male body, especially the genitals, nearly

as exciting. This is the reason why pornography of men is not nearly as prevalent as pornography of women. Instead, girls derive more sexual excitement when their physical intimacy is coupled with romance and emotional intimacy. Therefore, the sex dreams of girls contain more romance and emotional intimacy than the sex dreams of guys. Girls still visualize sexual encounters, but the things that bring them pleasure are different from the things that bring guys pleasure.

This brings up a point that needs to be addressed. The daytime sexual fantasies (daydreaming) of men are different from the daytime sexual fantasies of women. As already discussed, since guys derive pleasure more directly from the actual physical encounters, their sexual fantasies usually contain less emotional intimacy and more physical intimacy. The sexual fantasies of girls, on the other hand, involve more emotional intimacy and less physical intimacy. They still visualize sexual encounters, but romance plays a larger role and these daydreams often have more of a relationship flavor to them.

Since the central theme of male daydreaming is usually the sexual encounter itself, it is more obvious that they are sinning. However, since the central theme of female sexual daydreaming involves more romance and relationships, the sin is not as obvious. In fact, many girls adamantly deny they are doing anything wrong; they feel they are not sinning since sex is not the primary focus of their daydreams. In their rationalization, they feel that the sexual daydreams of guys are pure smut, but their own sexual daydreams are beautiful, wholesome, and natural. They feel this way because their sexual daydreams are focused more on “relationships” instead of sex. They say they are daydreaming about fulfilled relationships that culminated

in their natural conclusion instead of the distorted and smutty daydreams of men. Nevertheless, despite their rationalizations, sexual daydreams are still wrong. Matthew 5:27-28 applies to girls as much as it does to guys. As discussed in other chapters, this verse says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” You can try to rationalize this behavior as much as you would like, but if your daydreams involve fornication of any kind, you are sinning.

Keep in mind that our minds are capable of rationalizing just about anything. Last night, I saw a video of a guy in a high speed chase with the police. He had just kidnapped his baby boy and was speeding toward the Mexican border. After dangerously swerving around numerous cars, he was forced to stop a dozen yards from the Mexican border. As he got out of his car, he grabbed a knife and his baby. Using his baby as a human shield, he ran toward the border. When it became clear that he could fight his way to the border while holding the baby, he let go of the baby. Fortunately, a nearby officer was able to grab the baby before it hit the ground. The man was arrested shortly after this. Later, in a television interview, the father denied he ever put his baby in danger during this incident. He said he loved his baby and would never do anything to harm it. As this incident shows, our minds can rationalize just about anything. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

Daydreaming about relationships is even more of an issue when the girl is married. As already discussed, I believe the girl is sinning if she is daydreaming about a relationship that involves a sexual encounter. Let’s now look at a situation

where a married woman is daydreaming about a relationship that does not include a sexual encounter. Is this a sin? Well, in my opinion, if the person she is daydreaming about is not her husband, she is still sinning.

Many married women adamantly deny they are doing anything wrong when they have non-sexual daydreams about other men. They feel they are not committing mental adultery as long as their daydreams don't involve sex. Although it might be technically true that they have not committed mental adultery, they are still being mentally unfaithful to their husbands. Whenever you fantasize about a relationship outside of your marriage, you are being unfaithful to your mate.

I believe that the principle laid out in Matthew 5:27-28 (the verse talking about mental adultery), is this: thinking about doing something wrong is as much a sin as actually doing it. I don't think this principle is limited to daydreaming about adultery. I think it applies to all other sins, such as daydreaming about murder, theft, selfishness, unfaithfulness, etc. I believe this verse is saying we are just as accountable for our thoughts as we are for the actions; thinking about it is just as bad as actually doing it. Therefore, if it is a sin to have a non-sexual extra-marital affair in real life, it is also a sin to daydream about it. Obviously, daydreaming does not have all of the same earthly consequences as actually doing it. For example, pregnancies and STDs are not a consequence of sexual daydreams.

In addition to the mental unfaithfulness, there is another problem with married women having these non-sexual daydreams. Continually visualizing yourself having extramarital relationships makes you much more vulnerable to actually having one. This longing for someone other than your

mate will make you even more unsatisfied with your mate and marriage. This principle of mental unfaithfulness, of course, also applies to men. If a married man is having non-sexual daydreams about women other than his wife, he too is being mentally unfaithful to his mate.

Let's go back to our discussion about sex dreams. Is it wrong to have dreams about sexual encounters while you are sleeping? Once again, there are differences of opinions in the Christian community on this question, but I personally do not believe sex dreams are sin. Once a dream starts, you have little or no direct control over the direction it takes. Since you can't control a dream that is in progress, you are not responsible for the direction it takes.

That being said, I would like to point out that we have some control over our dreams *before* they start. I believe our dreams are a reflection of the status of our thoughts and they are greatly influenced by the things in which we dwell. If we have numerous sexual daydreams; we will increase the frequency of our sex dreams. Conversely, if we have few sexual daydreams; we will reduce the frequency of our sex dreams.

So, in a sense, we are indirectly responsible for our sex dreams. Nevertheless, I do not believe that sex dreams themselves are sin; it is the sexual daydreams that lead up to the sex dreams that are the sins. Having numerous sex dreams is an indicator that you may have a problem with your thought life. Numerous sex dreams are a symptom of a larger problem; they are a telltale sign that your thought life may have some serious problems.

A symptom is a warning sign of a hidden problem. A fever, for example, is not the actual sickness; it is a symptom of a larger problem, such as an infection. Our long-

term concern should not be for the fever, but for the underlying problem causing the fever. Likewise, numerous sex dreams should not be the primary focus of our concerns; our primary focus should be on why they are occurring so often.

Does the occasional sex dream mean a person's thought life is in shambles? No, of course not. Since we are all sinners and will continue to sin, it is safe to assume we will have some impure thoughts. This, in turn, could result in an occasional sex dream.

As I mentioned elsewhere in this book, I wrote the majority of this book when I was single. However, some of the material was added after I was married and the next few paragraphs are part of this addition.

A few years ago my wife had a complete hysterectomy and we hadn't had sex for a couple of months. Since it had been several years since I masturbated, I had no alternate release for my seminal fluid. After the seminal fluid had built up pressure for a couple of months, I had a wet dream. The interesting thing about this wet dream was the fact it didn't occur during a romantic or sexual dream; I was not sexually aroused when I had the wet dream. The absence of the sex dream is very significant in that it is an example of the fact that we don't need to be sexually aroused to have wet dreams. Although it doesn't happen too often, it is well documented that wet dreams can occur without sex dreams.

One of the most important steps of overcoming the addictive behavior of masturbation is bringing our thought lives under control. After I started controlling my thought life, I was able to stop masturbating. After I stopped masturbating, I had even more control over my thought life because I was not fantasizing nearly as much. I'm not saying my thought life is perfect, but it is

much better than what it was. As a result, I don't have the same number of sex dreams as I have had in the past.

I do not want you to come away thinking that I am a remarkable Christian who "has his act together." I don't want you to think that my newfound mental control means I don't have any vile thoughts. I still have some very sinful thoughts. In fact, I see myself more of a sinner now as I move closer to God. The reason I see myself as more of a sinner is because many of my hidden sins are exposed as I draw closer to the brilliant light of God's perfection. This is one reason I find it impossible to believe in the doctrine of sinless perfection. It is important to note, however, that along with this increased knowledge of my sinfulness, there is a profound understanding of the forgiveness and acceptance through Jesus. Seeing my utter depravity does not weigh me down with guilt and despair. Rather, it reminds me of the freedom and deliverance I have through Jesus Christ.

Contrary to what some people think, I do not believe wet dreams are a by-product of Adam and Eve's fall to sin. I believe the ability to have wet dreams was there even before the fall. The reason I believe this is because there still would have been the need to release the seminal pressure for the unmarried men. I don't believe, however, that the original trigger for wet dreams would have been sex dreams. I believe it would have been a non-sexual trigger. I believe the non-sexual trigger is still within all guys, but it is seldom used because our impure thoughts usually cause the sexual trigger to happen first.

Sex dreams can result in something called a nocturnal orgasm. This is when the dream becomes so intense that the person actually has an orgasm while they are sleeping. Both male and females can have nocturnal

orgasms and this is the reason why females wake up sexually aroused and moist in the genital area. Although nocturnal orgasms seem almost identical to the wet dream for guys, there is a subtle difference. They are similar in the aspect that they both end with an orgasm but are different in that they are caused by different triggers.

A true wet dream is triggered by the natural process of the body reducing the seminal fluid pressure. The nocturnal orgasm, on the other hand, is triggered by the status of the person's thoughts; it is a reflection of the person's daydreams. The more sexual daydreams a person has, the more likely he or she will have a nocturnal orgasm. Obviously, the triggering mechanism for nocturnal orgasms is far more complex than what I have described, but there is a direct correlation between the frequency of nocturnal orgasms and the person's thoughts.

I am not willing to say that all nocturnal orgasms are the result of a person having had numerous sexual daydreams. It is possible that some of them are caused by other reasons. There is the possibility that some of the nocturnal orgasms are a natural process and were part of the human race before Adam and Eve's fall to sin. It is possible that there is a psychological or physiological reason for the non-sexually active person to have orgasms. If this is true, it is possible that the pre-fall person could have had these nocturnal orgasms without a sex-dream trigger. Since virtually no objective research has been done on this subject, we really have no idea. I do, however, stand by my earlier contention that numerous sex dreams are a symptom of a larger problem.

Just for clarification, I would like to point out that there is a difference between sex dreams and romantic dreams. Sex dreams

involve sexual encounters whereas romantic dreams involve non-sexual encounters. In my opinion, there is nothing wrong with having romantic dreams; it is not an indication you have a problem with your thought life. It simply shows that you are attracted to the opposite gender.

There might be a problem, however, if a married person is having numerous romantic dreams of people other than his or her mate. This may be an indication that this person is spending a lot of time having romantic thoughts of people other than his or her mate. Once again, the romantic dream is not the sin, but it could be a symptom of a more serious problem.

Another thing that has caused many single guys guilt is having an erection at night (sometimes referred to as a *nocturnal REM erection* or *nocturnal penile erection*). These guys feel that the only reason they are having these erections every night is because they must be overly obsessed with sex. Rest assured, having an erection while you are sleeping is normal and has nothing to do with sexual arousal. In fact, if you do not have erections at night, you may actually have a medical problem.

Let me explain. There are times when a husband becomes impotent and is unable to obtain an erection for sex. The first thing the doctor needs to do is determine if the problem is physiological (a physical dysfunction) or psychological (a mental inability brought on by stress or exhaustion). Going to a clinic and having a sleep study will help the doctors determine which of the two problems is causing his impotence. When a guy goes into a deep sleep and starts to dream, he enters a condition called REM (Rapid Eye Movement). During this time of REM, he will have an erection. This does not mean he is sexually aroused; it simply

means a large amount of blood has gone to his penis.

If the impotent man has an erection during REM, his problem is psychological (mental). However, not having an erection during REM means he has an actual physiological (physical) problem. I don't know why we are designed this way, but we are. Nevertheless, there is no reason to feel guilty about having an erection while you sleep.

Although there is not a lot of definitive research on the subject, women also have something similar to the male nocturnal penile erection, sometimes referred to as a nocturnal clitoral erection. With the nocturnal clitoral erection, the clitoris (and sometimes the labia and vagina) swells with blood, causing a partial increase in size.

This similarity to the male erection is not surprising considering the similarities between the male and female genitals. During the first few weeks of fetal development, the baby's internal and external genital structures are the same, regardless of whether the baby is a boy or a girl. As the fetus develops, the gonads will become either ovaries or testicles, the phallus will become either a clitoris or a penis, and the genital folds will become either a labia or scrotum. It is the presence of testosterone in the early fetal development that makes the difference. If testosterone is introduced, the genital structure will become male and if there is no testosterone, the genital structure, by default, becomes female. As you can see, the male and female genitals share some similarities.

Why do girls have nocturnal clitoral erections? We really don't know; it is possible that girls have them for the same reason guys have nocturnal penile erections. However, since we don't know why guys

have them, we obviously don't know why girls have them. There are various speculations as to why the body goes through this unusual change, but the reason is still unknown.

One possible explanation for these nocturnal erections is procreation (i.e. populating the world by increasing our sexual desires). When God first created mankind, He commanded our founding parents to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 9:7). To encourage this procreation, He hardwired into each of us a variety of systems that would increase our sexual arousal. I believe one of these systems is something called Unintentional Sensual Stimulation (USS). Usually, sensuous stimulation is deliberately brought on by a person who is trying to bring their partner to sexual arousal; foreplay is an example of this. USS, on the other hand, is stimulation that occurs naturally and is not done by someone else trying to initiate a sexual encounter.

There are several spots on our body that have large bundles of nerve endings that are capable of producing sensual arousal. Obviously, when a partner touches these areas, the person will become sexually aroused. These nerve endings, however, can still cause arousal even when they are not being stimulated by another person. For example, before the advent of the modern bra, women had to bind their breasts by wrapping cloth tightly around their chests. Since this was often uncomfortable and inconvenient, many women didn't bother with it, especially women with small and medium sized breasts. Since these breasts were not secured in place, they would bounce around freely. As the nipples moved up and down against the clothing, the woman became sexually aroused. Even today, some women go braless simply for the purpose of sexual stimulation.

Another example of USS is the penis. The tip (head), of the penis is full of nerve endings and this is where the majority of the sensuous stimulation comes from during intercourse. The shaft itself has very few sensuous nerve endings. If a guy is not wearing underwear under his clothing, his penis will bounce around and rub against the clothing. This, in turn, will produce some sensual stimulation. Obviously, this was more of an issue before the advent of the modern underwear. Once again, some guys don't wear underwear simply for the purpose of sexual stimulation.

There is another situation where the penis will receive USS. When the penis is filled full of blood, it becomes larger and stiffer and the head become more sensitive. When the penis is hard, the head of the penis is usually pressed firmly against the person's clothing. Even if the person is not moving, the pressure usually is enough to cause some sensual stimulation. Any movement, of course, increases the stimulation.

Besides being hard during a sexual encounter, the penis can become erect for several other reasons. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the penis is erect during REM. It can also become erect when the person sees or think of something sexually appealing. The penis can also become erect when a guy needs to urinate. There may be some biological reasons why guys have erections when they need to urinate, but I've never seen any studies dealing with it. Contrary to what many people think, these erections (including nocturnal erections) are not nature's way of blocking accidental urination.

Was it God's intention to use USS to increase the world's population? We don't know, but this might be a partial explanation why we have nocturnal penile and clitoral erections.

Chapter: 3.05

Girls and Masturbation

Conventional wisdom dictates that masturbation is a male problem and girls, as a general rule, don't masturbate. This, of course, is not true; a large percentage of girls masturbate. One study says that half of the teenage girls masturbate regularly and 75 percent will do so before their eighteenth birthday. There are many reasons for the misperception that girls do not masturbate. Many people feel guys "have to masturbate" because of the biological need to release the buildup of seminal fluid. Girls, on the other hand, don't have this biological need, so there's no compulsion to masturbate. Although this biological need often exposes young boys to masturbation at a younger age than girls, there is much more to this issue than just this biological need.

There are many factors that can expose a young person to masturbation and once a person experiments with it, he or she often become addicted to it. Before the sexual revolution of the 1960's, people were much less open about sexual experimentation. As a result, a girl's exposure to masturbation usually came later on in life. Guys, on the other hand, had the biological need; which often resulted in them stumbling onto masturbation on their own. This is the reason why, in the past, young teenage boys were more likely to be engaged in masturbations than young teenage girls.

After the sexual revolution, however, people openly talked about sexual experimentation and this exposed both boys and girls to masturbation. Yes, guys still have the biological need, but this influence is now

much less significant. Guys are now drawn to masturbation more through social influences than by their biological needs. The bottom line is this: Yes, young teenage boys still masturbate more than young teenage girls, but when they get older the numbers are about the same.

Many people would be surprised to learn that female orgasms (during sexual intercourse) were not too common in the U.S. until the past few decades. In fact, many married women were not even aware they could have orgasms. There were two reasons for this. First, in the past many men were insensitive to the needs of their wives. In fact, women were often viewed as second class citizens. Remember, women were not given the right to vote in the United States until 1920 (the Nineteenth Amendment).

Second, there was a thorough misunderstanding of the female orgasm itself. During an orgasm, the nerves are excited and eventually explode into a grand finale. With the male, this happens at the same time as ejaculation. For a long time, guys simply assumed that the female was experiencing the same sexual excitement at the same time they were. They didn't realize that the female orgasm was completely independent of theirs; that it usually needed a different type of stimulation than what was being given. More important, they didn't realize that the female orgasm usually took much longer to arrive than the male orgasm.

When it comes to sexual intercourse, the orgasm is not the icing on the cake; it is the cake. Without it, sexual intercourse loses much its pleasure. After a few years of unfulfilled sex, sexual intercourse becomes just another one of the many chores of marriage. In fact, getting close to an orgasm and not achieving it is often worse than not trying at all; it leaves the person

feeling frustrated. This is why wives who didn't have orgasms often equated sex to "eating oatmeal three times a day." In other words, it became a burdensome, monotonous routine.

Around thirty years ago a divorced woman was talking to her friend about her sexual frustrations. Her friend asked, "Why don't you masturbate to relieve the frustration?" The divorced woman had no idea what her friend was talking about; she had never heard of it before. Since she had never had an orgasm during sexual intercourse, she didn't even know orgasms existed.

Please don't misinterpret what I am saying when I say that orgasms is the cake, I am only referring to sexual intercourse and not the marriage relationship itself. Although sex adds a special dimension to the marriage relationship, it isn't the heart of the relationship. A good relationship has far more depth and fulfillment than that. There is much more to "romance" than sexual intercourse itself.

Chapter: 3.06

Masturbation within Marriage

At first glance you wouldn't think it would even be necessary to have a chapter about masturbation within marriage. Yet, masturbation does occur in marriages and it is quite prevalent. Surprisingly, research groups have not been able to accurately determine how many married people masturbate. Researchers have found that

even on confidential surveys, many married people are still too embarrassed to admit that they are engaging in this cultural taboo. As a result, the numbers vary from study to study. Nevertheless, many researchers put the number at around 60 to 70 percent.

When I was in the final stages of writing this book, just before I got married, I had several people review the manuscript. One person was a professional editor and he said, "Your section on masturbation is worth the price of admission by itself. I would buy this book based on this section alone. It is very good; it really gets to the heart of the issue."

He then suggested that I address the issue of masturbation within marriage. This request really surprised me because up to this point I had not even considered masturbation being an issue within marriage. I couldn't even imagine why married people would even want to masturbate when they had the real thing? To me it was similar to wanting to drink powered milk when you had a fresh gallon of cool whole milk in the refrigerator.

I went back and addressed the issue and basically wrote something like "You shouldn't masturbate if you are married." Obviously, it was more detailed and elegant than that, but I really had no idea how to address it. In reality, I had no idea *why* it needed to be addressed in the first place. Now that I've been married for a while and have researched it further, I understand why it needs to be addressed. In fact, I believe the editor probably requested the additional information because he was struggling with it himself.

I found that there are several reasons why a married person would be tempted to masturbate. For example, a married person could be deprived of sex for a period of time. Contrary to what many people think, being married does not mean a person will

have sex whenever he or she desires it. Following are some of the reasons why married people may be deprived of sex:

- Life has grown into a rut and it has become difficult for both partners to find the time and energy for sex.
- The mate is suffering from a prolonged illness.
- The mate is on an extended vacation.
- The mate has a perpetual "headache."
- Medication has reduced the mate's ability to have sex.
- The marriage is going through some rough times.

As you can see, there are many reasons why a person may not be able to have their sexual needs met within marriage. The question, therefore, is this: is it okay for a married person to masturbate in order to relieve his or her sexual tension if this person is not able to have sex as often as he or she would like? Would a married person be justified in saying, "I am being deprived of sex through no fault of my own; I am being short changed. Therefore, it is okay for me to masturbate." Although some people will say this is a valid reason, I disagree. I have come to the conclusion that there are no valid reasons to masturbate within the marriage. Masturbation is highly addictive and a person is flirting with danger when he or she masturbates during these difficult times.

Another reason why married people may masturbate is because sexual intercourse does not fully satisfy them. This is one of the great dangers of masturbation. When you masturbate, you develop a certain feel, rhythm, and intensity. Usually, this style is

unique and cannot be duplicated with sexual intercourse. If you have spent many years getting used to this alternate form of sexual gratification, you will find that sexual intercourse “just doesn’t feel right.”

To compound this problem even further, the person knows exactly how to please him or herself. They know exactly where to touch and can make minute adjustments to maximize the experience. There is no way to duplicate this micromanagement in sexual intercourse.

The “selfish factor” is another reason why people masturbate within marriage. Actually, that label is more brutal and condemning than what it really is. Although sexual intercourse can be enjoyable and fulfilling, it takes a fair amount of work. You are not simply satisfying yourself; you must satisfy your mate. This takes time, attention, and patience. As a result, it is easier to get your sexual gratification through masturbation than to invest time and energy with your partner.

Although some people masturbate because they have been deprived of sex, the most common reason why people masturbate in marriage is they have become addicted to it. The addictive nature of masturbation is overpowering and is one of the greatest dangers of masturbation.

Let’s go back to our original question: “Is it okay for a married person to masturbate?” I personally don’t think they should. They shouldn’t masturbate for the same reason a single person shouldn’t masturbate. I’m not saying that masturbation within marriage is necessarily a sin; I simply believe it is unwise and can cause a person some serious problems.

The sexual fantasies involved in masturbation will reduce your self-control

and will make you more vulnerable to having an affair. You cannot continually fantasize sexual encounters with people other than your mate without weakening your resolve to resist doing it in real life. On top of all this, the Bible seems to be saying that fantasizing about fornication is as much of a sin as actually engaging in it. Jesus said in Matthew 5:26-27 says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

As discussed in another chapter, guilt resulting from masturbation is almost universal. Apart from this universal feeling of guilt, there are two other sources of guilt for the married person who masturbates. First, the person feels guilty because they are not meeting the sexual needs of their mate. Second, a person feels guilty because they are hiding something from their mate. This person is living the life of a lie and he or she is always afraid of getting caught. Although some married people are totally open about their masturbation, most go to great lengths to hide it from their mates. Keeping secrets from your mate is unhealthy and people often feel guilty because of this.

Another problem with married people masturbating is the impact this knowledge would have on the mate. Think about how your mate would feel if he or she were to find out that you were masturbating. Would it make your mate feel inadequate; like he or she was unable to meet your sexual needs? Would it make your mate feel like you are excluding him or her from part of your life? Even if circumstances didn’t allow you to have sex as often as you would like, this knowledge would probably still be difficult on your mate.

Sex was designed by God to provide the married couple with a level of emotional

intimacy that is not obtainable otherwise. It is something a couple does together to strengthen the emotional bonds of their marriage. When a married person masturbates, he or she is depriving their relationship of this enhancement. In addition, masturbation consumes sexual energy and a person who masturbates on a regular basis consumes a great deal of sexual energy. If a married person is getting their sexual needs met through masturbation, he or she will probably not desire sexual intercourse as often as their mate would like.

As I stated in another chapter, I too was addicted to masturbation before I got married. Several months before I got married, I made a commitment to stop masturbating; I didn't want masturbation to be part of my marriage. I was successful, but for some reason I started masturbating again after I got married. I honestly don't know when or why this happened; all I know is I started doing it again. It had nothing to do with my wife not meeting my sexual needs. All I know is I started doing it again because of its addictive nature. This is one of the reasons why we should never allow masturbation to enter our lives in the first place. Once we start, it is difficult to stop.

Finally, I gained control over masturbation and it's been many years since I've masturbated. Like all people who have stopped, I still struggle with the temptation. The following chapter, (*Gaining control over Masturbation*) explains how I finally gained control over this tenacious addiction.

Chapter: 3.07

Gaining Control Over Masturbation

In the previous chapters I talked about the addictive control masturbation has over people and how it is similar to experimenting with recreational drugs. Some of these drugs, such as crack cocaine, are so addictive that it only takes a couple of uses before a person become addicted. Likewise, masturbation can quickly gain control over you and it is very difficult to stop the practice once you have started.

I also talked about how I was addicted to masturbation before I was married and how it came back after I was married. I didn't want to masturbate while I was married, but I found it difficult to stop. I tried quitting dozens of times, but failed miserably. Attempt, after attempt, was met with total frustration and failure.

As with any addiction, such as overeating, smoking, drinking, and drugs, you have to really want to quit in order to be successful. You need to dig down deep and draw upon all of your resolve in order to succeed. Masturbation is similar to other addictions in that it is enjoyable and provides you some temporary relief from stress. Masturbation helps you feel better when you are discouraged, frustrated, or depressed. I have found that many people don't want to give up masturbation simply because they don't want to give up "the tool that helps me cope."

Although I failed dozens of times, I finally succeeded and it has been several years since I have masturbated. The thing that finally brought me success was bringing my thoughts under better control; bringing them

into obedience to Christ. I had to completely revamp my thought life. I have found that controlling my thoughts is the most important key in gaining control over masturbation. Second Corinthians 10:5 says, “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

An important factor in controlling our thoughts is controlling what we look at. It is much harder to control our thoughts if we allow our eyes to wonder. Obviously, looking at pornographic material will make it almost impossible to control our thoughts. We don't, however, have to be looking at pornography to be distracted. Billboards, magazines, and provocative clothing can also cause our minds to wonder. Two television sitcoms, *Seinfeld* and *According to Jim*, have both based a show on the allure of non-pornographic magazines in regards to masturbation.

It wasn't that my thought life was a total mess, per se. I didn't look at pornographic material, I didn't go to the beaches to look at girls in skimpy bathing suits, and I have never had an affair or even considered it. Yet, like all humans, I have a fallen nature and fleshly desires. My thought life wasn't perfect and there was room for improvement.

You will never gain true control over masturbation until you bring your thoughts under control. Bringing masturbation under control, however, is a Catch-22 situation. To quit masturbating, you usually need to stop fantasizing sexual encounters for a long period of time. This is difficult to do because until you get your thought life under control you usually succumb to the temptation to masturbate. Of course, when you masturbate you usually fantasize sexual encounters and this causes your thought life

to spiral out of control. Therefore, in order to quit masturbating you first need to quit masturbating. This creates the classic “You can't get there from here” situation.

To get around this problem, I have found a temporary solution that will get you past this initial obstacle. To give yourself an extra boost in the right direction, you should establish a moratorium on masturbation for a set number of weeks; usually about four weeks. I have found we usually have enough raw will-power (without controlling our thought lives) to stop masturbation for a few weeks. As a result, this reduction of fantasizing will go a long way in bringing your thought life under control.

It is important that the moratorium should be short and realistic. It is easier to commit to do something for a set period of time with an end in clear sight as opposed to an indefinite period of time with no end in sight. Remember, the immediate goal of this moratorium is not to quit masturbation, but to eliminate a major source of sexual fantasies.

Establishing this moratorium is also important because it creates inertia (or momentum) in the correct direction. As you probably experienced, losing control puts you into a downward spiral, which makes it easier for you to lose even more control later on. Likewise, gaining control creates positive momentum, which makes it easier for you to be able to gain even more control in the future. As you gain control over small portions of your thought life, you will have the ability to gain control over larger portions of your thought life. Eventually, the addictive powers of masturbation will begin to diminish.

To help you understand the process of controlling your thought life, we will look at the process of controlling the emotions of

anger, bitterness, and resentment. Let's say you have been deeply hurt by a close friend who has betrayed you. Besides the initial feelings of a broken heart, you start developing feelings of resentment and anger. Although these feelings are strong at first, they grow even stronger every time you think of the offense. Of course, the stronger these feelings become, the more compelled you are to think of the offense. This creates a vicious and destructive cycle. Eventually, you are totally overwhelmed with these intense feelings and it becomes a raging fire within your soul.

How do you gain control of this raging fire; how do you bring these strong emotions under control? The first thing you need to do is stop feeding the fire. Since dwelling on the offense increases the intensity of the emotions, you need to stop dwelling on it.

The reason I know so much about this is because I had to deal with a serious and painful betrayal by a friend from work. It affected my life in many profound ways. As a result of what I've learned from this incident, I ended up writing several chapters on how to correctly respond to these types of situations. For more information, go to my website (biblehelp.org/befriends.htm).

After the betrayal, I was flooded with very strong emotions. Having seen the destructive powers of these emotions in other people, I knew I had to quickly and thoroughly bring them under control. So, after evaluating the situation and determining my response, I placed a moratorium on thinking about the incident for two full weeks. Every time I would think of the incident, which was thousands of times a day for the first couple of days, I would immediately put it out of my mind. I would basically say, "No! God, I want your will, not mine. Please give me the strength."

At first, the thoughts would stay out of my mind for only a few seconds. After a while, it turned to minutes. After a few days I was able to keep my mind off the incident for about ten minutes at a time. After a couple of weeks, I was able to keep my mind off it for hours at a time. Amazingly, as I started to control my thoughts, the intense emotions started to subside.

This decrease in the intensity of my emotions resulted in a decreased desire to think about the incident. I had less trouble controlling my thoughts. This, of course, decreased the intensity of my emotions even further. After a few weeks my emotions were much more under control; I was now able to go back to the offense and reexamine my options. This time my thought process was much clearer and less influenced by my emotions. I won't go into the details, but it took me about three years to fully get over the offense. For three years, I had to control my thoughts concerning this incident.

The more you say no to an impure thought, the easier it will be the next time you are tempted. Obviously, reducing the number of times you masturbate also reduces the frequency of sexual fantasies. This in turn gives you even more self-control. Gaining control over your thought life is difficult; you have to be aggressive and bold. When an impure thought comes into your mind, you need to immediately and aggressively say, "No. I want your will God; not mine. Please give me strength."

Controlling your thought life won't give you control over masturbation right away. It will take you a while to regain control. It usually, takes a great deal of mental house-cleaning before a person can see tangible results, so don't get discouraged if you don't see anything happening right away.

After you have succeeded in gaining control over masturbation, you will still have times when the temptation is incredibly strong. In those times, I remind myself that I don't want to ruin my record; I don't want to have to start all over again. Another chapter (*The*

Tablecloth -Leaving Our Past Sins Behind Us) deals with this subject in more detail. Basically, that chapter explains how our past success and failures greatly influences the ways we respond to our future temptations.

Appendix

Chapter: 4.01

Miscellaneous Verses about Sexual Immorality

In a previous chapter, *What Does the Bible Say?*, we saw a few verses that said we are to avoid sexual immorality. This chapter will provide a more comprehensive listing of these verses.

Following are verses in the Bible that talk about sexual immorality

Numbers 25:1	While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women.
Proverbs 6:24	Keeping you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife.
Jeremiah 3:9	Because Israel's immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood.
Matthew 15:19	For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality , theft, false testimony, slander.
Mark 7:21-23	For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality , theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.

	All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.
Acts 15:20	Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality , from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.
Acts 15:29	You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality . You will do well to avoid these things..
Acts 21:25	As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality .
Romans 13:13	Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.
1 Corinthians 5:1	It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife.
1 Corinthians 5:9	I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people.
1 Corinthians	Not at all meaning the

5:10	people of this world who are immoral , or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.	10:8	sexual immorality , as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died.
1 Corinthians 5:11	But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.	Galatians 5:19-21	The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality , impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.
1 Corinthians 6:9	Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders.	Ephesians 5:3	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.
1 Corinthians 6:13	Food for the stomach and the stomach for food—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality , but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.	Ephesians 5:5	For of this you can be sure: No immoral , impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
1 Corinthians 6:18	Flee from sexual immorality . All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.	Colossians 3:5	Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality , impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.
1 Corinthians 7:2	But since there is so much immorality , each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.	1 Thessalonians 4:3-6	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
1 Corinthians	We should not commit		

	in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.		the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality .
Hebrews 12:16	See that no one is sexually immoral , or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.	Revelation 2:20	Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.
Hebrews 13:4	Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral .	Revelation 2:21	I have given her time to repent of her immorality , but she is unwilling.
Jude 1:4	For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.	Revelation 9:21	Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.
Jude 1:7	In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.	Revelation 21:8	But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral , those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.
Revelation 2:14	Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice	Revelation 22:15	Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral , the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Following are verses in the Bible that talk about fornication (KJV)

2 Chronicles 21:11	Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication , and compelled Judah thereto.
Isaiah 23:17	And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.
Ezekiel 16:26	Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger.
Ezekiel 16:29	Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.
Matthew 5:32	But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication , causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.
Matthew 19:9	And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication , and shall marry

	another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.
John 8:4	Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication ; we have one Father, even God.
Romans 1:29-31	Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication , wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.
2 Corinthians 12:21	And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.
Revelation 14:8	And there followed another angel, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication ."
Revelation 17:2	With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the

	inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication .
Revelation 17:4	And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication .
Revelation 18:3	For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.
Revelation 18:9	And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.
Revelation 19:2	For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication , and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

Following are passages that place a major emphasis on a person being a virgin. (These are only summaries, not quotes.)

Genesis 24:43	The special wife found for Isaac was a virgin.
Matthew 25:1	The parable of 10 virgins at a weddings.
Luke 1:27	Mary, mother of Jesus, was a virgin.
2 Corinthians 11:2	The term virgin is used to describe our relationship with Christ.
Revelations 14:4	The 144,000 Hebrews in the tribulation period will be virgins.

Following are verses in the Bible that talk about virgins.

Genesis 24:16	The girl was very beautiful, a virgin ; no man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.
Exodus 22:16	If a man seduces a virgin who is not pledged to be married and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price, and she shall be his wife.
Exodus 22:17	If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must still pay the bride-price for virgins .
Leviticus 21:13-14	The woman he marries must be a virgin . He must not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled

	by prostitution, but only a virgin from his own people.
Deuteronomy 22:14,15	And slanders her and gives her a bad name, saying, “I married this woman, but when I approached her, I did not find proof of her virginity .” Then the girl's father and mother shall bring proof that she was a virgin to the town elders at the gate.
Deuteronomy 22:16,17	The girl's father will say to the elders, “I gave my daughter in marriage to this man, but he dislikes her. Now he has slandered her and said, ‘I did not find your daughter to be a virgin .’ But here is the proof of my daughter's virginity .” Then her parents shall display the cloth before the elders of the town.
Deuteronomy 22:19-21	They shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver and give them to the girl's father, because this man has given an Israelite virgin a bad name. She shall continue to be his wife; he must not divorce her as long as he lives. If, however, the charge is true and no proof of the girl's virginity can be found, she shall be brought to the door of her father's house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death. She has done a disgraceful thing in Israel by being promiscuous while still in her father's house.

	You must purge the evil from among you.
Deuteronomy 22:23-24	If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death—the girl because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man's wife. You must purge the evil from among you.
Deuteronomy 22:28-29	If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered, he shall pay the girl's father fifty shekels of silver. He must marry the girl, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives.
Judges 11:39	After the two months, she returned to her father and he did to her as he had vowed. And she was a virgin. From this comes the Israelite custom.
Judges 19:24	“Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But to this man, don't do such a disgraceful thing.”
Judges 21:11	“This is what you are to do,” they said. “Kill every male and every woman who is not

	a virgin. ”
2 Samuel 13:2	Amnon became frustrated to the point of illness on account of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin , and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.
2 Samuel 13:18	So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. She was wearing a richly ornamented robe, for this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore.
1 Kings 1:2	So his servants said to him, “Let us look for a young virgin to attend the king and take care of him. She can lie beside him so that our lord the king may keep warm.”
2 Kings 19:21	This is the word that the LORD has spoken against him: “The Virgin Daughter of Zion despises you and mocks you. The Daughter of Jerusalem tosses her head as you flee.”
Esther 2:2	Then the king's personal attendants proposed, “Let a search be made for beautiful young virgins for the king.”
Esther 2:17	Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins . So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

Esther 2:19	When the virgins were assembled a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.
Psalms 45:14	In embroidered garments she is led to the king; her virgin companions follow her and are brought to you.
Song of Solomon 6:8	Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number.
Isaiah 7:14	Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.
Isaiah 23:12	He said, “No more of your reveling, O Virgin Daughter of Sidon, now crushed! Up, cross over to Cyprus ; even there you will find no rest.”
Isaiah 37:22	This is the word the LORD has spoken against him: “The Virgin Daughter of Zion despises and mocks you. The Daughter of Jerusalem tosses her head as you flee.”
Isaiah 47:1	Go down, sit in the dust, Virgin Daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, Daughter of the Babylonians. No more will you be called tender or delicate.
Jeremiah 14:17	Speak this word to them: “Let my eyes overflow with tears night and day without ceasing; for my virgin daughter—my people— has

	suffered a grievous wound, a crushing blow.”
Jeremiah 18:13	Therefore this is what the LORD says: Inquire among the nations: Who has ever heard anything like this? A most horrible thing has been done by Virgin Israel.
Jeremiah 31:4	I will build you up again and you will be rebuilt, O Virgin Israel. Again you will take up your tambourines and go out to dance with the joyful.
Jeremiah 31:21	Set up road signs; put up guideposts. Take note of the highway, the road that you take. Return, O Virgin Israel, return to your towns.
Jeremiah 46:11	Go up to Gilead and get balm, O Virgin Daughter of Egypt. But you multiply remedies in vain; there is no healing for you.
Lamentations 1:15	The Lord has rejected all the warriors in my midst; he has summoned an army against me to crush my young men. In his winepress the Lord has trampled the Virgin Daughter of Judah.
Lamentations 2:13	What can I say for you? With what can I compare you, O Daughter of Jerusalem? To what can I liken you, that I may comfort you, O Virgin Daughter of Zion? Your wound is as deep as the sea. Who can heal you?

Lamentations 5:11	Women have been ravished in Zion, and virgins in the towns of Judah.
Ezekiel 23:3	They became prostitutes in Egypt, engaging in prostitution from their youth. In that land their breasts were fondled and their virgin bosoms caressed.
Ezekiel 23:8	She did not give up the prostitution she began in Egypt, when during her youth men slept with her, caressed her virgin bosom and poured out their lust upon her.
Ezekiel 44:22	They must not marry widows or divorced women; they may marry only virgins of Israelite descent or widows of priests.
Joel 1:8	Mourn like a virgin in sackcloth grieving for the husband of her youth.
Amos 5:2	Fallen is Virgin Israel, never to rise again, deserted in her own land, with no one to lift her up.
Matthew 1:23	“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” —which means, “God with us.”
Matthew 25:1	At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

Matthew 25:7	Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps.
Matthew 25:10	But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.
Luke 1:27	To a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.
Luke 1:34	“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin ?”
1 Corinthians 7:25	Now about virgins : I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.
1 Corinthians 7:28	But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.
1 Corinthians 7:34	And his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband.

1 Corinthians 7:36-38	If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin —this man also does the right thing. So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better.
2 Corinthians 11:2	I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

Following are verses in the Bible that talk about adultery:

Exodus 20:14	You shall not commit adultery .
Leviticus 20:10	If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.

Deuteronomy 5:18	You shall not commit adultery .		lie. They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his wickedness. They are all like Sodom to me; the people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah.
Proverbs 6:32	But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself.		
Jeremiah 3:6,8-9	During the reign of King Josiah, the LORD said to me, Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there. I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery . Because Israel's immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood.	Jeremiah 29:23	For they have done outrageous things in Israel; they have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives and in my name have spoken lies, which I did not tell them to do. I know it and am a witness to it, declares the LORD.
Jeremiah 5:7,9	Why should I forgive you? Your children have forsaken me and sworn by gods that are not gods. I supplied all their needs, yet they committed adultery and thronged to the houses of prostitutes. Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known?	Ezekiel 16:38	I will sentence you to the punishment of women who commit adultery and who shed blood; I will bring upon you the blood vengeance of my wrath and jealous anger.
Jeremiah 23:14	And among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen something horrible: They commit adultery and live a	Ezekiel 23:37	For they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands. They committed adultery with their idols; they even sacrificed their children, whom they bore to me, as food for them.
		Ezekiel 23:43	Then I said about the one worn out by adultery , "Now let them use her as a prostitute, for that is all she is."
		Ezekiel 23:45	But righteous men will sentence them to the punishment of women who commit adultery and shed blood, because they are adulterous and blood is on

	their hands.		
Hosea 1:2	When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD.	5:32	who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress , and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery .
Hosea 2:4	I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery .	Matthew 15:19	For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery , sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.
Hosea 4:2	There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery ; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.	Matthew 19:9	I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery .
Hosea 4:13-14	They sacrifice on the mountaintops and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar and terebinth, where the shade is pleasant. Therefore your daughters turn to prostitution and your daughters-in-law to adultery . Though you commit adultery , O Israel, let not Judah become guilty. Do not go to Gilgal; do not go up to Beth Aven. And do not swear, "As surely as the LORD lives!"	Matthew 19:19	Jesus replied, "Do not murder, do not commit adultery , do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself."
Matthew 5:27,28	You have heard that it was said, "Do not commit adultery ." But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.	Mark 7:21	For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery .
Matthew	But I tell you that anyone	Mark 10:11-12	He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her." And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery .
		Mark 10:19	You know the commandments: "Do not murder, do not commit adultery , do not steal, do not give false testimony, do

	not defraud, honor your father and mother.”
Luke 16:18	Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery , and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery .
Luke 18:20	You know the commandments: “Do not commit adultery , do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.”
John 8:3,4	The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery . They made her stand before the group. And said to Jesus, Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery .
Romans 2:22	You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery ? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?
Romans 13:9	The commandments, Do not commit adultery , Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not covet, and whatever other “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
James 2:11	For he who said, Do not commit adultery, also said, Do not murder. If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

2 Peter 2:14	With eyes full of adultery , they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood!
Revelation 2:22	So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.
Revelation 17:2	With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.
Revelation 18:3	For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries . The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.
Revelation 18:9	When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her.

Following are verses in the Bible that talk about adulterous relationships:

Ezekiel 6:9	Then in the nations where they have been carried captive, those who escape will remember me—how I have been grieved by their adulterous hearts, which have turned away from me, and by their eyes, which have lusted after their idols. They will loathe themselves for the evil they have done and for all their detestable practices.
Ezekiel 16:32	You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband!
Ezekiel 23:45	But righteous men will sentence them to the punishment of women who commit adultery and shed blood, because they are adulterous and blood is on their hands.
Hosea 1:2	When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD.
Hosea 2:2	Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness

	from between her breasts.
Matthew 12:39	He answered, A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.
Matthew 16:4	A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. Jesus then left them and went away.
Mark 8:38	If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.
James 4:4	You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.



When you meet someone of romantic interest, you start developing surplus sexual energy. God provides this extra energy to energize the growth of your new relationship; it's similar to the way God provides extra rain in the spring to help new plants develop properly. If you use this surplus energy for sexual encounters, your relationship will not have enough energy to develop properly. The misuse of our sexual desires can poison a great relationship, but its proper use can energize the growth of a fantastic relationship.

This book is different from other books on dating and sexual temptation. First, since I wrote this book when I was single, I was forced to practice what I preached. Second, I got married when I was thirty-five, so I had to deal with these issues longer than most people. Third, the fact that my wife and I were virgins when we got married shows there is some merit to my advice.

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