

Is SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE ALWAYS SINFUL?

Adapted from the Village Church

"If it feels good, do it. If it makes you happy, go for it."

"Before we get married, we have to make sure to make sure we are compatible."

This is the anthem of the day. Our feelings are exalted as the ultimate authority of our lives and as feelings become authoritative, God's Word is rendered impotent. If our feelings are opposed to God's Word, it isn't because His Word is wrong, outdated, or impractical, but rather because our hearts are rebellious, wicked, and sick with sin (*Jeremiah 17:9*). As Christians, we should look at what the Scripture says on the topic of premarital sex (also called "*fornication*" in some translations).

The *most common* word that the Bible uses in reference to fornication is porneia. Here are a few places where this particular word is used (translated as "*sexual immorality*" in the NIV):

1 Corinthians 6:18-20: "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies."

1 Corinthians 7:1-2: "Now for the matters you wrote about: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband."

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 your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God..."

Galatians 5:19-21: "The acts of the flesh 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."

There are a number of other passages that would be helpful to study in order to pursue a more comprehensive understanding of this issue, but the above passages suffice to show that Scripture is clear in condemning porneia as sinful and inappropriate. Porneia is a very general word that describes nearly every form of sexual activity that occurs outside of the context of a marital relationship. In other words, it is broader than simply premarital sex, but certainly includes it.



God has declared sexual immorality to be improper, sinful, and against His will for Christians. Those who continually and unrepentantly practice it are declared guilty and unrighteous. Rather than engaging in the act of sexual immorality, the Bible says that we are to “flee” and “abstain” as we attempt to “control” our bodies for the sake of the Lord. *1 Corinthians 7* indicates that marriage is the only proper God-ordained context for sexual intimacy.

When it comes to sexual intimacy in any form, too often we ask questions like, “*Do I love him or her*” and, “*Am I committed to him or her,*” but the ultimate and decisive question should be, “*Am I married to him or her.*” If not, then the Scriptures are clear – you must abstain. Enjoy and even indulge in sexual intimacy once you are married, but until then refrain.

Why is this restriction good? Why has God restricted sexual activity to the context of marriage? Is He opposed to sex? Of course not; He is the One Who created it! Is He then a cosmic killjoy who created sex and then forbids its enjoyment? Again, the obvious answer is no. God created sex, but has restricted it for His own glory and the good of His people. Don’t overlook that last phrase. God restricts sex to marriage for our good!

The fact that God places boundaries upon the ways and forms of pleasure does not imply that He is against our joy. Consider the example of an architect who specializes in roller coaster design. No one would call him a killjoy when he necessitates a safety bar across the lap for his ride that loops and takes turns at 70 mph. We understand that certain restrictions are necessary for such an adventure. Likewise, God created marriage as a picture of His relationship with His people (*Ephesians 5:22- 33*) and any perversion of marriage distorts the picture of the relationship which we desperately need with Him.

Sex is a gift to be pursued and enjoyed, but within its proper parameters. Premarital sex does feel good, but that does not mean that it is good.

