

introduction

You'd have to be living in a cave in Outer Mongolia not to notice how everybody is talking about sex these days. It seems to be the focal point of practically every conversation. Unfortunately, those with the loudest voices hail from Hollywood.

Many of the male characters in today's movies and television shows are depicted as horny guys with stunted personalities, traveling through life with nothing more on their minds than girls—and getting some sexual action. The writers of these sexually charged films and sitcoms build their plots around a simple yet familiar formula: Boy meets Girl, Boy chases Girl, Boy gets Girl in bed, Boy and Girl have lots of fun. Boy and Girl experience no guilt and no consequences as they ride off into the sunset in their azure blue BMW M3 ragtop. Roll the credits.

But in the real world, sex is never quite as simple as the media would have us believe. Hollywood producers love showing us the night of passion, but they conveniently bypass the reality of the morning after: the feelings of remorse, the girl waking up to realize she was nothing more than a convenient object for fulfilling a guy's sexual desire, the visit to a doctor's office because a former sexual partner said it would be a good idea to get checked, or the ominous phone message from a girlfriend who thinks she's pregnant.

So why is the portrayal of sex so far from reality? The fact is,

Hollywood—and our sex-crazed culture—has turned its back on God's advice and tried to reverse centuries of biblical principles. According to Hollywood's credo, being good (like staying out of bed before marriage) is actually bad for you, but being bad (as in indulging in frequent premarital sex) is actually good for you.

Our Creator knew this would happen. Several centuries ago the prophet Isaiah quoted God as saying, "Destruction is certain for those who say that evil is good and good is evil; that dark is light and light is dark; that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter" (Isaiah 5:20, NLT).

Maybe you've begun to question the truth of the messages you've been hearing. Maybe you suspect that sex is a bit more complicated and dangerous than you realized—either because of personal experience or seeing the impact on your friends. The fact that you are holding this book means that you are at least willing to hear what God has to say about sex, and that's good news, because He sure has a lot to say. He has given us clear direction on everything from how we should treat the opposite sex to how and why we should abstain from sexual activity until marriage.

Keep in mind, though, that God is not some big killjoy in the sky, wanting to put a damper on your attempts at fun. First and foremost, His words are those of a loving Creator who wants to spare His children—you *and* her—the agony that sexual sin can bring. He wants to spare us the emotional pain of the morning after and the physical distress from sexually transmitted diseases that inevitably arise from promiscuous sexual encoun-

ters—or that seven-pound “surprise” nine months later. God only wants the best for us, a better future that includes “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope,” as His Word states in Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV).

As you will read in the following pages, the Lord of the universe delivers some straight talk about sex that goes against what you’ve been hearing. God doesn’t go for that if-it-feels-good-do-it stuff, nor does He let us make up our minds based on which way today’s cultural winds happen to be blowing. Instead, God’s standard for sexual purity can be captured in a single Bible verse: “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity” (Ephesians 5:3, NIV).

For young single guys, that verse may prompt some challenging questions. What does a “hint” mean? How far can you go with a girl when you’re alone? How far can you go with yourself when you’re alone?

These are great questions, and you’ll receive some straight answers in *Every Young Man’s Battle Guide*.

**if it feels so right,
how can it be wrong?**



GOD COMMANDS US TO BE HOLY

For I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.... For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

LEVITICUS 11:44-45, RSV

Say to all the assembly of the Israelites, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

LEVITICUS 19:2, AMP

Since you have...learned the truth that is in Jesus, throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God's likeness—righteous, holy, and true.

EPHESIANS 4:22-24, NLT

But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God—who chose you to be his children—is holy. For he himself has said, “You must be holy because I am holy.”

1 PETER 1:15-16, NLT

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

ROMANS 8:6, RSV

EVERY CHOICE HAS A CONSEQUENCE

It's critical to recognize visual sexual impurity as foreplay. If viewing sensual things merely provides a flutter of appreciation for a woman's beauty, it would be no different than viewing the awesome power of a thunderstorm racing over the Iowa cornfields. There would be no sin and no problem.

But if it *is* foreplay, and you *are* getting sexual gratification, then it defiles your body and your relationships. And it's certain that you'll be paying a cost that you may not even be aware of.

—*adapted from Every Young Man's Battle*

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

GALATIANS 6:7-8, NIV

Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest.

GALATIANS 6:7, MSG

As I have observed, those who plow evil
and those who sow trouble reap it.

JOB 4:8, NIV

They sow the wind
and reap the whirlwind.

The stalk has no head;
it will produce no flour.

Were it to yield grain,
foreigners would swallow it up.

HOSEA 8:7, NIV

What benefit did you reap at that time from the
things you are now ashamed of? Those things result
in death!

ROMANS 6:21, NIV

You can buy an hour with a whore for a loaf of bread,
but a wanton woman may well eat *you* alive.

Can you build a fire in your lap
and not burn your pants?

Can you walk barefoot on hot coals
and not get blisters?

It's the same when you have sex...

Touch her and you'll pay for it. No excuses.

PROVERBS 6:26-29, MSG

The LORD hates people with twisted hearts, but he
delights in those who have integrity.
You can be sure that evil people will be punished, but
the children of the godly will go free.

PROVERBS 11:20-21, NLT

Don't you know that those who do wrong will have no
share in the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves.
Those who indulge in sexual sin, who are idol worship-
ers, adulterers, male prostitutes...none of these will have a
share in the Kingdom of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-10, NLT

The authorities are sent by God to help you. But if you are
doing something wrong, of course you should be afraid,
for you will be punished. The authorities are established by
God for that very purpose, to punish those who do wrong.

ROMANS 13:4, NLT

But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up
wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's right-
eous judgment will be revealed.

ROMANS 2:5, RSV

But my people have stubborn and rebellious hearts. They
have turned against me and have chosen to practice

idolatry. They do not say from the heart, "Let us live in awe of the LORD our God, for he gives us rain each spring and fall, assuring us of plentiful harvests." Your wickedness has deprived you of these wonderful blessings. Your sin has robbed you of all these good things.

JEREMIAH 5:23-25, NLT

I will not answer when they cry for help. Even though they anxiously search for me, they will not find me. For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the LORD. They rejected my advice and paid no attention when I corrected them. That is why they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way. They must experience the full terror of the path they have chosen.

PROVERBS 1:28-31, NLT

So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict. But when you are directed by the Holy Spirit, you are no longer subject to the law.

When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, your lives will produce these evil results: sexual immorality,

impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, idolatry, participation in demonic activities, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other kinds of sin. Let me tell you again...that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

GALATIANS 5:16-21, NLT

FREEDOM COMES WITH RESPONSIBILITY

A lot of us talk a good game about purity while sitting on the bench (or sitting in church), but when given the chance to play, we keep our eyes on the babes in the stands, not on the pitcher holding the ball.

If you aren't trustworthy in handling fleshly passions, how can you be trusted to handle things of greater value?

—adapted from Every Young Man's Battle

Be careful with this freedom of yours. Do not cause a brother or sister with a weaker conscience to stumble.

1 CORINTHIANS 8:9, NLT

For you have been called to live in freedom—not freedom to satisfy your sinful nature, but freedom to serve one another in love.

GALATIANS 5:13, NLT