

Questions I get asked: "Is consensual sex ok?" - 20210522

Hi all,

I receive many emails about many different topics, but there are some questions that seem to be more common than others. So I'm going to take a few commonly asked questions over the next few weeks and answer them here.

After I'm done we will create a new heading in our web site that will have these several questions/answers posted so those who visit our site can have easy access to read and/or share with others. Today the subject is:

"What is wrong with consensual sex between non-married adults?"

First some core truths found in scripture and ancient culture of the Bible. The most foundational purpose of a sexual relationship is reproduction. It doesn't matter what element of creation we look at, from plants to fish to land animals to humans, the primary reason of sex is reproduction. Therefore sex is male-female, not another combination. Because the most basic purpose is reproduction, everything that follows is based on that male-female relationship.

Built upon that truth is a higher purpose for mankind than the lower forms of life of the animal kingdom. Sexual union is the affirmation of a covenant with the other person. The Lord God brought the newly created Eve to Adam, demonstrating the pattern for mankind (highest and best case) of the Lord being the foundation of their marriage. Ever since the Lord did this, marriage has consisted of vows made between man and woman to each other, and to God.

Building upon that male-female relationship confirming the covenant with one another by coming together sexually, reproduction is from within that covenant. Within the bounds of each time that married couple come together sexually is great freedom, what we might call 'recreational sexual activity' ie not for reproduction, but just because they enjoy each other within that union. I use the term 'recreational' meaning not for the purpose of making a baby, but it remains true that every time a husband and wife come together sexually they are reaffirming their vows to one another. That is important to note - once married, sexual relations reaffirm their vows and covenant with each other and the Lord.

That is of course why an adulterous affair consummated with the other person is so devastating to the marriage: One of the spouses has broken covenant with their spouse in order to confirm a covenant through sexual union with another person. A covenant requires the free-will adherence to its conditions for it to exist. Once one of the persons breaks that covenant by establishing the act of covenant with another, it renders the previous null and void - though the offended spouse certainly may forgive and the couple may work through the breach.

Paul alludes to this in I Corinthians 7:3-5 where he advises regular sexual relations between married couples, setting it aside only briefly for a time of fasting and prayer, then coming together again 'lest Satan tempt you for your lack of control.'

These elements form the foundation, so let us explore in more detail; ancient covenants

Why is sexual union the physical confirmation and affirmation of vows and covenant made in the heart?

In ancient covenants and in parts of the world today, after the vows, covenants are sealed with blood, followed by a covenant meal.

In Exodus 24:7-11 we see 74 of the leaders of Israel sprinkled with blood, going up on the mountain to have the covenant meal with God to confirm His covenant with them, and them with Him. The text tells us they went up on the mountain and 'under His feet was a flooring....clear as the sky' and "...they saw God and He did not lay His hand upon them (to hurt them)' and they did eat and drink." That was the covenant meal taken after the speaking of vows and shedding of blood.

In a wedding today that is why we have vows followed by a meal - a wedding reception - it goes back to ancient covenants and the covenant meal. There is nearly always a covenant meal. In ancient Jewish custom the 7 day wedding celebration meal continued while the bride and groom consummated their wedding on their wedding day - with guests outside.

But what if...her virtue was questioned?

In Deuteronomy 22:14-17 we have the example of what would happen if a groom accused his new wife of not being a virgin. The Mosaic law says the parents of the young woman would bring the marriage bed

sheets and spread the sheets before the elders to show the blood from her hymen being broken and sexual fluids, to prove her virginity at marriage.

May I have the rings please?

In ancient covenants the covenant heads, the two who make covenant with one another, give each other their most precious possession. In Genesis 22:1-18 Abraham prepares to offer up his most precious 'possession' - his only son from he and Sarah: Isaac.

At the last second, as the Lord sees that Abraham would have gone through with it, He provides a substitute offering. But He says that as a result of his obedience, all the nations of the earth will be blessed. In covenant terms, because Abraham loosed on earth his only son, God as the covenant head in heaven, could then legally by terms of the covenant, loose His only Son to earth - which caused all to be blessed.

To this day we give rings to one another as part of our vows, symbols that all each possesses is now the others. Beside all possessions becoming one, usually the bride changes her name to his as well - they are now one.

Revisiting blood shed in covenant

"The life is in the blood...it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." (Leviticus 17:11) There is also nearly always, blood shed because of this understanding. If one is willing to shed blood to enter into covenant, it means it is a life-long covenant. The shedding of blood is saying with my life I honor this covenant, with my lifeblood I enter into this covenant, and will defend it with my life and being.

With Abraham it was circumcision, the act of sex being an act of covenant, and the derivative of that is the union between Christ and the church, often described as a groom and His bride, a Husband (the Lord) and His wife. So sex between a married couple is a type of the spiritual union between Christ and the church being one in Christ. Paul alluded to this in Ephesians 5:21-33 where he says, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

So Abraham was circumcised as a picture of union with God in a mystical and spiritual way of being one. As we are one in Christ today, He in us and us in Him, Christ in us the hope of glory - that is the fulfillment of the circumcision sign of the covenant with Abraham.

Sex between married man and woman is therefore the physical act of confirming, reaffirming, and renewing the covenants and vows made in the heart towards one another.

Adulteress - the unfaithful believer

Again, this is why for instance, James 4:1 says, "You adulteresses! Don't you know friendship with the world is enmity against God?" The Greek for 'friendship' is the word 'philia', which is used for best friends. The Greek for 'world' is kosmos; world's system. The Greek word for 'enmity' is 'echthra' and means 'hostility, enmity, alienation from'.

This is the very act of adultery, becoming 'best friends' with someone other than your spouse, adapting to them and their ways, which is alienation to the covenant one has with their spouse.

The King James Version incorrectly states 'adulterers and adulteresses', but the masculine is not in the Greek - only the feminine. Thus James is referring to the body of Christ being also as a wife married to her Husband, Christ and the church - and he accused them of adultery, unfaithfulness to Him by centering their attention and prayers on gaining material goods and selfish ambition.

It is why Jesus said in Mt 12:39, 16:4 that an adulterous generation looks for a sign - the accusation being an Israelite running after other gods instead of believing what is before their eyes and remaining faithful to the Lord.

I try to keep these rather brief, and this is an overview answering the question; What is wrong with consensual sex among adults? The short answer is the act of sex is the physical confirmation of a covenant made in the hearts between a man and woman, affirmed by vows before God and man, and consummated by their sexual union.

I hope this explanation has been a blessing and through provoking. Blessings,
John Fenn

www.cwovi.org and email me at cwovi@aol.com