

Sex sells

The media encourages us in our search. Movies, magazines, advertisements are filled with good-looking, happy people whose lives all centre on one thing: sex. Their message seems to be: love = sex = happiness. Is it true?

Maybe you've believed this message and tried it out for yourself. Perhaps you're just confused and can't talk to anyone about it. If so, I would encourage you to take a few moments to read through this leaflet, and look at love and sex from another angle.

What is sex?

Although it might sound surprising, sex was created by God. God made Adam and Eve, man and woman to "Be fruitful and multiply." He gave them the gift of sex to enjoy and to begin a family.

For John, it all started when he noticed how lovely the new girl at college was. While he talked with her, he felt the tingling sensation of butterflies in his stomach. Soon the two were best friends, sharing time and secrets together. When he was alone, he could think of nothing but her. He could not even eat, so great was his longing for her. He was in love and his body was pulled like a magnet towards her. But he was forgetting a very important fact.

Sex is a connection not only of two bodies but also of mind, emotions and soul. It includes a spiritual relationship and requires responsibility, total trust, openness and love between

two persons united in marriage. Sex is a means to confirm and nourish this oneness. By itself, it is like a fire, dangerous to navigate and devastating if not handled properly. A fire in your fireplace at home brings warmth and comfort. But a fire burning outside a given boundary can quickly get out of control and cause death and destruction. Have you ever asked God for his help in this area of your life? He loves you more than anyone else ever could and wants to fill your longing.

God's plan

In the Bible we read that the only safe place for a sexual relationship is inside marriage. God instituted this boundary for one man and one woman, who are committed to one another in a life-long, monogamous relationship.

Sex was not designed for people to use casually, with many different partners. Why? Because it creates such a deep union, that every broken relationship leaves a person damaged. Many people are carrying the hurts that casual sex has left behind. For this reason the Bible treats this issue very seriously. God's law says: "Do not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). Jesus Christ goes even further in his teaching and says that even the desire to have sex with someone other than his or her spouse is wrong (Matthew 5:27-28).

Mary says: "I met Tom at a time when I had a low opinion of myself and was longing for someone who would make me feel "wanted". At first Tom was so nice to me and I hoped that more would come of it. But sex

could not fill the gap. In the end he cared for nothing but my body and I felt like a can of cold drink, torn open, sipped empty for pleasure and then carelessly screwed up and tossed away."

Here are some good reasons for waiting for sex until marriage:

- God created sex and said it belongs within marriage.
- Sex is an expression of love: in a marriage two people can express their love for each other without fear that the other will walk away. Real love has to grow and it can only give itself and bloom if responsibility and security is guaranteed.
- A University of Chicago study found that the most sexually satisfied couples were those who were married.
- Real love wants God's best for each other.
- Avoid the problems of an unwanted pregnancy.
- Avoid the danger of being infected with AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Sex is not a need, it's a desire. It's possible to control your body and not let it control you.

Thomas says: "Sometimes I feel like I'm the only one who's waiting till I'm married. It's really difficult. But I love my girlfriend so much, I want to share all my life with her, not only my body. I believe that sex has the best chance to be fully satisfying only when I follow God's guidelines and trust him to help me. I'm really looking forward to marriage, when we promise in public to love, cherish and be faithful to each other "till death us do part".

People like Thomas, who wait until marriage for sex will be able to enjoy it without the worry or guilty memories of previous partners. Oneness cultivated in marriage will help couples to resist the temptation to separate or divorce, especially during times of sickness, infirmity, or economic woe.

A good gift distorted

Unfortunately many people do not see marriage as a protective boundary. Satan has twisted their view. They think they are living in sexual freedom, but actually they are living in sinful rebellion against God. Satan has turned the pure gift of sex into something perverted, addictive and destructive.

Pornography This is a huge industry and many people think it's harmless. Only looking can't hurt? This is not true! Every action begins as a thought, and porn can so quickly take over your mind. As you look at images, you lose your respect towards other people and sex. Without realising, porn can become an addiction and take control of you.

Stay away from porn, don't pick it up! Take extra care when you are surfing the internet or using your mobile phone, so you don't fall into a trap, which will rob you of your time, money and self respect. Make a firm decision to walk away from temptation. If you're already in trouble then talk to a Christian counsellor and be accountable to him. Ask Jesus to free you from bondage. He will help you.

Prostitution It is sad that some women sell their body for a living. In doing this, they give up their dignity and often end up



being cheated. Read the Bible and ask for God's help to find a way out of this lifestyle. The Bible also tells each one of us how wrong it is to use a prostitute:

"Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in his body? ... 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 6:16, 18).

Rape This is man's selfish desire gone mad. All people – whether young girls, children or adults – are created and loved by God. He cares for them. Do you want to risk God's anger on you if you take advantage of those who cannot defend themselves? Don't do it!

Homosexuality The Bible clearly teaches that a sexual relationship between people of the same sex is wrong (1 Corinthians 6:9). If you struggle with this issue, it is important that you talk to someone you trust and ask for help. Maybe a pastor at your local church can advise and pray with you.

Real love

So where does all this leave us in our search for love? Although it's true that love and sex within a marriage can totally enrich our lives, even this is not the answer to our deepest longings for love. No other person will ever fully satisfy our needs and fill up all the gaps in our lives. And sometimes marriage can be disappointing too. The love that we are ultimately searching for is only found in God. The Bible tells us that *"God has set eternity in the hearts of men"* (Ecclesiastes 3:11). This means that our hearts are always

longing for His love, and as long as we don't get in touch with Him we will never be satisfied.

Did you know that God loves you? His love is deeper, stronger and more powerful than any other love you have ever encountered. God is also holy. He cannot stand sin. (Sin means we have turned our backs on God and don't believe in him). We have rebelled against God – we have rejected His way for our lives and gone our own way. And now we find ourselves empty, weak and needing God. So how can we get in touch with a holy God?

The Bible teaches that God sent his Son Jesus Christ to earth, where he lived as a human, but without any sin in his life. Although Jesus didn't deserve it, he was arrested, beaten and crucified. As he hung on the cross, he took our place, and God punished him instead of us – for our rebellion against him (1 John 1:7). He did that because of His great love for us. Jesus says that whenever we come to Him, believe in Him and are sorry for going the wrong way, God will forgive us completely and welcome us into his family as his child.

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:9).

Before we can really love another, we have to first know and experience the love, forgiveness and acceptance of God in our personal life.

Are you looking for love? Do you need forgiveness and healing for your past? Do you long to be cherished and accepted? Come to Jesus. He will fully satisfy your needs, and make you ready to love a

husband or a wife and enjoy the gift of sexuality in the way that he planned. If you want to know more about building a good marriage, sign up for a Christian marriage course in your local church.

Personal action plan

What I can do:

- Think about my attitude to sex and marriage; does anything need to change?
- Find a Christian church family which I can join, and find help and support to live life God's way.
- Read the Bible and Christian books to find out more about God's plan for my life.
- Pray: find forgiveness and healing. Trust in Jesus as my Saviour. Follow him.

Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet. Hopefully it will help you to start thinking about love in a new way. If you have any questions, please talk to your local Pastor. May God bless you as you take steps to follow Him.

RS, DCL team

For more information see "Helpline 3"



Life 4 you

No. 05

Looking for love?

A song is playing on the radio. The tune may be new but the message is very familiar. Somebody is looking for love.

*I was looking for love in all the wrong places
Looking for love in too many faces
Searching your eyes, looking for traces
Of what.. I'm dreaming of...
Hopin' to find a friend and a lover
God bless the day I discover
Another heart, lookin' for love (Wayne Jennings)*

The search for love is one of the most urgent and consuming quests in life. Without love there's always a feeling that something is missing... So where do **you** look for love?