

Premarital Sex and the Bible

Sometimes you will hear people say that the Bible doesn't say anything about premarital sex. Apparently this statement is made by people who haven't read the Bible or, at least, who haven't read it thoroughly. The Bible speaks in clear language directly to the issue in both the Old and New Testaments. Here are the Biblical passages with short comments.

Old Testament Scriptures Regarding Sex Before Marriage

Exodus 22:16-17

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. If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must still pay the bride-price for virgins.

[If premarital sex occurs, then an Israelite male was to marry the woman he slept with - that is, assuming the father allowed the marriage.]

Deuteronomy 22:13-21

If a man takes a wife and, after lying with her, dislikes her 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. 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, and the elders shall take the man and punish him. 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.

[Premarital sex is viewed as a "disgraceful thing" and "evil."]

Proverbs 5:15-21

Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your

springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer? may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love. Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife? For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all his paths.

[A man's "fountain" should be saved for "the wife of [his] youth." The man is to be a virgin when he takes his wife.]

[In addition to these three Scriptures, there are 32 other verses in the Old Testament speaking about a "virgin" or "virgins." Each of these passages shows that virginity was highly cherished as the standard for God's people.]

New Testament Scriptures Regarding Sex Before Marriage

[When we come to the New Testament we don't have verses explicitly describing the act of premarital sex and its consequences like we do in Exodus or Deuteronomy. It is clear, however, that virginity is still the standard for unmarried Christians and that sex outside the context of marriage is still considered sin.]

1 Corinthians 6:16-18

Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

[Sexual intimacy "unites" you with the other person. When this uniting of flesh happens outside of marriage, it is called "sexual immorality." One fleshness is to be limited to the one you marry. This is similar to what we saw in Exodus 22:16-17.]

1 Corinthians 7:1-2

Now about the questions you asked in your letter. Yes, it is good to live a celibate life. But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband.

[Notice that to avoid sexual immorality outside of marriage people should marry.]

1 Corinthians 7:8-9

Now I say to those who aren't married and to widows it's better to stay unmarried, just as I am. But if they can't control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn with lust.

[If you are struggling with wanting to have sex, get married. Premarital sex isn't an option for dealing with lust. It's either marriage or you are in sexual sin.]

Ephesians 5:31

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

[Paul is quoting from Genesis 2:24 and affirming the Old Testament standard of uniting in flesh only with your spouse. One fleshness is to happen when a man leaves his father and mother and is "united to his wife." Compare with 1 Corinthians 6:16-18.]

1 Thessalonians 4:2-8

For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to acquire a wife in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this manner no one should cheat 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. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

["Acquire a wife in a way that is holy and honorable" or you are in sexual immorality. Sexual sin harms others besides those who engage in it. In adultery, the spouse is always wronged. Premarital sex "cheats" the future partner by robbing him or her of the virginity that ought to be brought to marriage.]

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.

[Again, it's a pure marriage bed or you are an "adulterer" or "sexually immoral."]

1 Timothy 5:2

Treat older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

[As a Christian man, if you are not married to her, then she is your sister (who you must treat "with absolute purity").]

1 Corinthians 7:28,34,36-38

[Note in these verses how virginity is assumed for unmarried women living in Christian homes. This is the same thing as we saw in the Old Testament. Virginity was the standard for God's people.]

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.

[Although this passage is talking about Christ and His people, it uses the analogy of a Christian man receiving his bride "as a pure virgin." Virginity was the ideal. Premarital sex was viewed as sexual immorality - just as in the Old Testament.]

only in marriage.

It is important to say, however, that many Christians have violated this standard. THIS WAS TRUE OF THOSE IN THE EARLY CHURCH TOO.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

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... will inherit the kingdom of God. And **that is what some of you were**. But **you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Christians were sinners before they came to Christ and Christians are still sinners after they come to Christ. If you have violated God's standards of premarital sex, but are repentant, then accept the FACT that you are washed, made pure, and in a right relationship with your heavenly Father. Seek the miracle of His power filling you to overcome further temptation toward sexual sin.