




## God's Vision for Sex and Marriage: Is Pre-Marital Sex Really Sinful?

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### The Central Question: Do We Own Ourselves?

This may seem like a dumb question whose answer is, 'Obviously yes!' But walk through the slides with me.

### Who Has a Legit Claim on Your Body?

My future children	My parents	My country
		

### Who Has a Legit Claim on Your Body?

The poor	My God	My significant other
		

I'm anticipating the question, 'Are you telling me how to use my own body?' The objection is raised on the grounds that it is invasive. 'How can someone else, even God, and especially other Christians, tell us what to do with our bodies?' Yet most people would acknowledge that other people have a legitimate claim on our bodies. When we think about it, though, our bodies are clearly NOT just our own. The slides on 'Who has a legit claim to your body' will probably show that. The scenarios below show how we today acknowledge that your body is not just *your* body.

(1) The first scenario: *A married couple regularly gets into a fight. She tells him to exercise more. He tells her to take more calcium. They say, 'Why are you telling me what to do with my body?'* This has some reality. My wife and I are tied to each other's bodies. She tells me to exercise, and I tell her to make sure she's getting enough calcium. Why? What gives us the right to tell each other what to do with our personal bodies? The fact that we'll have to care for each other when we get older. It really matters to her that I stay healthy, especially since her dad had a heart attack just a couple of years before we were married. It really matters to me that she gets enough calcium because women are at risk for osteoporosis. Because we are going to care for each other, she has a say in what I do with my body, and I have a say in what she does with hers.

(2) Second, let me take that up a notch. *A wife who feels uncomfortable that her husband watches pornography and masturbates to it. He says, 'Look, it's my body.'* Imagine a woman who catches her husband watching pornography. She feels betrayed. But why? Isn't that just him using his own eyes? Do his eyes belong to her? If we're going on the superficial assumptions of our culture, then the answer is no. She doesn't own his eyes so her feelings are invalid and there is nothing she can say. And yet something about that doesn't quite feel right, does it? What if he masturbates to pictures of other women, is there something wrong with that? Isn't his penis his own? Does it somehow belong to her? Or take it a step further. What's wrong exactly with Tiger Woods cheating on Elin Nordgren? Or Jesse James cheating on Sandra Bullock? Tiger's body is his body, isn't it? Jesse's body is his body, isn't it? As long as they're not catching some disease? But something about that doesn't quite feel right, does it? There is a sense in which a husband's eyes, a husband's penis, and even his mind actually belong in a secondary sense to his wife. Marriage creates a bond where their bodies belong to each other in an appropriate way. Something in us tells us that. But how can we explain that?

(3) *One day, a 55 year old immigrant woman who cleans other people's houses, is sexually harassed. One of her employers, an older man, fondles her breast. The woman comes home and tells her son, a 25 year old young man. Feeling angry and protective over his mom's body, he decides to confront this older man.* This is based on reality. When my mom, who does domestic work cleaning rich people's condominiums, told me that one of the older men she worked for grabbed her breast, I was incensed. If I was living in Los Angeles near my mom, I would have gone to have a few choice words with that old pervert. Clearly, there is something about my mom's body that I take responsibility for, which I defend. It is *her* body, yes, no question, and yet *I* am tied to her body, too. I feel the same way about the bodies of my sister, my wife, my daughter, and my female friends. Why do men take responsibility for the bodies of the women in their lives? I'm willing to bet that every man has felt that way. But why? How do we explain that?

(4) Fourth, consider abortion, that hot button issue. *Two young women have unwanted pregnancies. One gives birth to her baby and throws the baby into the dorm room toilet. The other has a late term abortion at 7.5 months.* Some people, and perhaps you think this way, believe that abortion should be okay under any circumstances, during any part of the pregnancy. The rationale is, 'My body, my choice.' But do you think it's wrong for a woman to flush her newborn baby down the toilet? You probably do think it's wrong. Incidentally, according to one estimate, 30,000 babies are abandoned every year in the U.S. But if it's wrong to kill a newborn baby, then is it wrong to kill that baby 1 week before it's born? What difference does 1 week make exactly? What difference does it make whether that baby is inside or outside the mother's womb? I understand that these questions are hard to answer, but that's why I raise them. Perhaps there are legitimate circumstances to get an abortion, but I don't think it's as simple as saying, 'My body, my choice.'

(5) And then there the responsibilities parents owe their children with their bodies. *Two couples with newborns are handed a short booklet about how infants need loving, physical touch for their brains and body to develop well. (Touch helps develop the brain's emotional wiring, increases the baby's heart and lung strength, and helps the baby's digestion.) One couple reads it; they make concrete changes to how they care for their baby. The other couple throws it away and does nothing differently; they are definitely less affectionate towards their baby than the first couple.* There's something wrong with that second couple. Children need touch and love in order to develop. It's fairly well known now that breast feeding has more benefits to the baby than bottle, that affection helps brains and bodies develop. It's funny that in the Bay Area, in liberal Berkeley, one blogger said that people come out and tell other people what to do. You should get a better children's bike helmet. You shouldn't mess with the animals. You shouldn't litter. (*In Bay Area, Free Speech Means Scolding Strangers*, by Michelle Quinn, <http://bayarea.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/03/the-societal-police-take-on-insect-displays/>)

(6) You go from the U.S. to another country on a vacation. In a crowded restaurant, you ask a couple sitting next to you if they would put out their cigarettes because you're affected by the smoke. They look at you in disbelief. They say, 'Smoking is legal here. Why don't you Americans stop telling the rest of the world what to do?' Well, that's certainly a culture clash, isn't it?

(7) Seventh, consider the connections in families. *A 22 year old young man is about to graduate from college. He is killed by a random shooter. His hard working parents are 55 and 60 years old and were hoping to afford their retirement with help from their son.* That child was obviously the parents' beloved child. But let's also say that that child was their retirement plan. They scrimped and saved all their lives for that child to make it through school,

have those opportunities, go to college, and get a respectable job. That child was about to enter the working world and help his parents. The person who fired that bullet has robbed them. The son's body was not just his own. And what about friendships? If that person was a friend of yours, you are also robbed. Perhaps not as deeply as his parents, but you are robbed nonetheless. We miss their smiles and hugs. Our friends hold our hand and hold us up. We are invested in their bodies.

(8) Eighth, consider the military draft. *The U.S. government imposes a military draft, telling young men and women what to do with their bodies.* The government can call up able-bodied men and women into the armed services through the draft. The government can tell you to kill and die – to do things with your body that you probably would not do otherwise. A few people would say no to the draft, but some would say yes for the right cause. But, in any case, when those same men and women come back with a limb missing, or their nerves shattered from post-traumatic stress, do we have an obligation to their bodies? Do we have a responsibility to care for them? I think we would all say yes to that. We are invested in their bodies, because they risked their bodies for us.

(9) *A veteran of the Iraq War returns home with a leg missing. One war protester points at him and says, 'I don't want my tax dollars going to support him!'* I think most of us would say that the veteran's body exerts a claim on our bodies. When veterans come back with shattered nerves or broken bodies, we feel a claim on our bodies. Because of their sacrifice, even if we disagreed with the Iraq War, we make a sacrifice: in paying taxes to support their recovery.

*So how is it possible to keep saying that you are the only owner of your body when in reality, we don't live like that at all? When we think about loving others, when we think about our duty to them, when we think about our commitments to people, when we think about our most important relationships, we are not the only people who have a claim to our own bodies. Other people do, too. That is clear. So is it so unreasonable to say that Jesus makes a claim on our bodies, too?*

*Finally, in the same way that I would be concerned for the level of stress and damage you put on your body because of what your life will be like later, I am concerned that if we are all going to be resurrected by Jesus, that there are things that you can do now to your body that will affect what your life will be like later. When my children were very small, they loved to wrestle me and be tickled. I told them that one day, they'd be big enough and strong enough to beat me. They looked at me, puzzled and incredulous. It was difficult for them to imagine an experience they had not yet had. In a similar way, Jesus will resurrect us into renewed, transformed human bodies like his own resurrected Jesus. It is hard for us to imagine an experience we have not yet had.*

Now, walk with me through these slides about different views and beliefs about the body:

## What is Your Body?

<p>A prison: 'The soul is a helpless prisoner chained hand and foot in the body.'</p> <p>- Plato (<i>Phaedo</i>, 839)</p>	<p>Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own; you have been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body.</p> <p>- the Apostle Paul (<i>1 Corinthians</i> 6:19)</p>	<p>Our bodies are merely chemicals wrapped in skin.</p>
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## Your Body, Others' Bodies

With which story would you most align?

	STORY 1	STORY 2	STORY 3
What are we?	Souls	Souls & bodies	Bodies
Ultimately, what happens to us?	Souls escape	Resurrection	Death
Sex & marriage are...	Neutral to bad	Unified & good	Social constructs
Do we care for the bodies of the poor?	Not really	Absolutely	Maybe
With which view do you most align?			

Beliefs matter. Why is marriage so important to this God who speaks to us from the pages of this Bible and in the person of Jesus? I understand that if you are not a Christian, you might feel like I am saying that Christians are 'more moral' than other people. That's not what I'm saying. So please listen carefully. *Everyone is moral in their own way.* But our moralities don't agree. For example, my mom is not a Christian. She believes it is immoral for me and my wife to raise our kids in a lower-income, higher crime, mostly Black neighborhood. We are not sending them to the best possible schools. We have taken lower paying jobs, so we don't give our kids the things she thinks we should buy. For Stanford and Harvard graduates like us to plan to send our kids to a public college rather than a private is immoral to her. The issue is not that we are 'more moral' than her. The issue is that we have *different moralities*. Another example: Non-Christians don't do evangelism, but evangelism is a moral duty for Christians because Jesus is a new humanity for all humanity; so is prioritizing forgiveness over retributive justice because Jesus forgives people; sex is for husband and wife in a lifelong marriage, even if both husband and wife agree to have an 'open marriage' where they can sleep with other people, because God designed marriage and His vision defines it. The moralities are actually different. And those different moralities flow out of different core commitments. You can't just evaluate one morality using another morality. Instead, you need to look into the *basis* of those moralities. Sadly, we don't have the time here for that. (please see my material on my website: [http://nagasawafamily.org/archives\\_question\\_proof.htm](http://nagasawafamily.org/archives_question_proof.htm))

So you may think I'm saying that there is a morality that everyone agrees with, and Christians are just better at it than other people. That is not what I'm saying. *There is no morality that everyone agrees with.* There's something I'd like you to keep in mind: I'm speaking as a Japanese-American. Meaning: Christian faith has never been a big part of my ethnic community, so I think of Christian morality as a *different* morality than what my parents taught me, and from what Buddhism taught me. But I think if you are Korean-American, where 77% of the population goes to church, or when you're surrounded by Korean-Americans, people who are leaving the church, or not Christians, think that they need to prove to the Christians that they can have the same morality and be 'just as moral.' I've found a similar dynamic to be true in the Black community, because of the high rates of church going, and also the White community. That's because some European modernists and some postmodernists would like us all to believe that there is really just one morality, and that some people are better at it than others. But it's because those White people are post-Christian and still feel like they need to prove something to the Christians. And then Christians and non-Christians get into debates about 'who is more moral.' But that doesn't make any sense. The problem goes even farther back. How you define good and evil, morality and immorality, self-giving and self-centeredness, depends on where you stand.

What else makes sex and marriage *meaningful*? Someone once said to me, 'With my last boyfriend, sex was one of the most meaningful things I've ever done.' To which I asked, 'Really, then *why did it end?*' What is the *meaning* of something like that? Either you say you're the center of the universe and therefore whoever pleases you at the time is fine, or you say that God is the center of the universe and therefore we live for Him.

Sex and marriage have different meanings depending on what belief system you stand in. You cannot compare moralities; you have to compare the entire worldview package. But you can compare meanings. Above are three different views of sex and marriage.

The issue here is not morality but meaning. In the biblical story, sex and marriage really have *meaning* because our bodies and our relationships are meant to reflect God's character. Does sex have meaning otherwise? As atheist biologist Richard Dawkins said, 'Sex is [merely] the gene's means to produce more genes.' It's nature's trick to get us to have kids. If you wanted your significant other to be faithful to you, well, on what basis could you ask that? That's an older notion of commitment, and that's nice and romantic, but there's no real reason for anyone to do that. Love is just a chemical reaction in your head; if you want to feel good, just eat chocolate – you'll get the same endorphins. Love isn't real. Likewise, marriage is just a social construct; it's not real. The only real thing is the physical act of sex. Everything else is just socially designed to make it feel okay, or regulate it.

If you're an atheist, how do you really make sense of sex? Take Sigmund Freud. When Freud was dying, he said to his wife, 'Come and love me, irrationally.' He wanted something that he knew was love, but he thought there is no such thing, really. But he wanted it anyway. So he couldn't live in his own story. If love is a construct, if relationships are constructs, then sex is all that really matters. Love and relationships are not *real*. It's just a cover up for sex.

Here's the challenging thing. I don't see a way to blend these worldviews. Where you stand depends on bigger questions about whether we are souls or bodies or both, whether there is a good God who has a vision for our relationships or whether we are just individuals making relationships out of social constructs.

## What Scriptures Are Relevant?

	Positive: God's Vision	Negative: To Avoid
God's Way of Relating to Us	<p>God's covenantal, loving commitment to us (Ezk.16; Hos.1 – 2)</p> <p>God's covenant is modeled after the bond in the Trinity: The Father is covenantally bonded to the Son in the Spirit.</p>	<p>God says He will not abandon His covenant people (Hos.</p>
Human Ways of Relating to Each Other	<p>God calls us to bear His image and likeness from creation, including the special relationship of loving, lifelong and life-bearing human marriage between husband and wife (Gen.1 &amp; 2).</p> <p>The Song of Songs models a godly, wise relationship from attraction through courtship and then wedding and then married life and then old age. It uses the refrain, 'Do not arouse or awaken love' twice when the couple is engaged but not married (Song 2:7; 3:5). But when they are undressing on their wedding night, the woman says, 'Awake,' and invites her husband into the garden of her body (Song 4:16). Clearly, sexual intimacy and even sexual arousal are reserved for marriage. This is why my wife and I were advised, and pass as good advice, the guideline for Christian dating couples, 'Affection, not arousal.'</p> <p>Jesus returns people to God's creation order for marriage and sex because he is undoing 'hardness of heart' which set in after the fall, which persisted even in the life of Israel (Mt.19:3 – 12). Marriage covenant &amp; lifelong commitment to demonstrate the faithfulness between two persons. Note that children might be involved but are not the reason for the faithfulness.</p>	<p>'Fornication' (all sex outside marriage) is sinful according to Jesus (Mt.19:3 – 12) and Paul (1 Cor.6:9 – 10).</p> <p>In the Sinai Law, consensual sex by a non-married couple ALMOST constitutes a marriage (Dt.22:28 – 30), and they are instructed to <i>become</i> married. This shows that premarital sex is not just an issue of human consent by the two people, but a vision from God of how sex requires the context of marriage.</p> <p>Also, rape laws clearly are meant to protect virginity (Dt.22:23 – 27) and therefore God's vision for marriage, not just the woman's ability to voice her consent to sex or not.</p>

## How Are We Using the Biblical Texts to Derive Christian Ethics?

Q: How are we using the Old Testament laws? Why does it seem like some laws are set aside?

A: It's because the biblical story is a story that has unfolded and is still unfolding. The Old Testament contains the story from creation onwards. God had a vision for all human relationships from the creation. Part of the biblical story includes the special covenant God made with the Jews and the Sinai Law that He gave them. The Sinai Law is rooted in God's creational vision but includes some things that are accommodations to Israel's 'hardness of heart' (Mt.19:3 – 12), or which were symbolic and looked ahead to represent Jesus (Heb.7 – 10).

Q: What are the relevant passages, then?

A: Please see below.

### *Category 1: God's Original Vision from Creation*

Gen.1:<sup>26</sup> Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'<sup>27</sup> God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.<sup>28</sup> God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'

- Notice that in the literary unit of Genesis 1:1 – 2:3, God makes everything with life able to bear more life and reproduce life. In this sense, everything alive bears a similarity to God, and is like Him. While it is true that each individual person is made in the image of God, here the marriage of male and female is in the image of God, because that union is life-bearing. To be life-bearing is to bear God’s image, since God is life-bearing.

Gen.2:18 Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.’

<sup>19</sup> Out of the ground the LORD God [had<sup>1</sup>] formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup>

The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. <sup>22</sup> The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> The man said,

‘This is now bone of my bones,

And flesh of my flesh;

She shall be called Woman,

Because she was taken out of Man.’

<sup>24</sup> For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

- In the literary unit of Genesis 2:4 – 4:26, the stress falls on *relationships*. We find the *relational*, covenantal name of God, translated here ‘the LORD God.’ We find *relationships* of origins: Adam from the garden land, and then Eve from Adam’s side. The *relationship* between husband and wife in marriage is a ‘one flesh’ of reunion, not just union. Jesus will later clarify helpfully (Mt.19:3 – 12, see below) that divorce did not and would not have existed in the original state.
- This ‘one flesh’ means a lifelong commitment, especially because it is rooted further back in God’s own eternal commitment to human beings in covenant love. This is called a ‘covenantal relationship.’ For God desired and desires to be ‘in’ a person’s life, to bring forth more and more spiritual life, moral life, relational life, emotional life, and so on, *within that person forever*. Hence, marital sex takes its meaning as the act that expresses this ‘one flesh’ union by analogy to God’s relation with us. For a husband to sexually be ‘in’ his wife is a physical analogy to the hidden, spiritual, but nevertheless life-giving union of God being ‘in’ a person’s very being. This is why, in the biblical vision of relationships, sex is reserved for marriage alone, and marriage itself must be undertaken between one man and one woman as a lifelong commitment before God.

### Category 2: Jewish Law, a Partial Restoration of the Original Vision

Dt.22:23 If there is a girl who is a virgin engaged to a man, and another man finds her in the city and lies with her, <sup>24</sup> then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and you shall stone them to death; the girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he has violated his neighbor’s wife. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. <sup>25</sup> But if in the field the man finds the girl who is engaged, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lies with her shall die. <sup>26</sup> But you shall do nothing to the girl; there is no sin in the girl worthy of death, for just as a man rises against his neighbor and murders him, so is this case. <sup>27</sup> When he found her in the field, the engaged girl cried out, but there was no one to save her. <sup>28</sup> If a man finds a girl who is a virgin, who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her and they are discovered, <sup>29</sup> then the man who lay with her shall give to the girl’s father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall become his wife because he has violated her; he cannot divorce her all his days. <sup>30</sup> A man shall not take his father’s wife so that he will not uncover his father’s skirt.

Ex.22:16 If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and lies with her, he must pay a dowry for her to be his wife. <sup>17</sup> If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the dowry for virgins.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew language does not have the past perfect tense. This is an inference based on Genesis 1:1 – 2:3, where we are told that God created the animals before humanity.

- The Jewish Law from Sinai (Ex.19 – Dt.29) was a partial restoration of God’s original vision for human beings. Jesus will helpfully clarify that it also allowed for ‘hardness of heart’ (Mt.19:3 – 12) because Israel was still sharing in a corrupted human nature, just like all human beings did before Jesus. In every case of morality and ethics, however, Jesus ‘raised the bar’ back to the moral order of God’s original creation. If anything, Jesus’ teaching is ethically more challenging, even though he made his people not a civic society capable of instituting the death penalty or other criminal sanctions straightaway. In addition, some of the ceremonial symbolism looked ahead to foreshadow Jesus. Hence, the Jewish Law from Sinai is not directly applicable to Christians but is nevertheless informative and helpful to understand relational priorities.
- The Sinai Law speaks directly to cases of premarital sex, in cases of both rape and consensual sex. The rape laws clearly are meant to protect *virginity* in both the man and woman (Dt.22:23 – 27) and therefore God’s vision for marriage. The Law is not just protecting the woman’s ability to voice her consent to premarital sex or not, because premarital sex itself was against God’s moral vision, as shown by the death penalty for the man who rapes a woman when her cries could not be heard, and as shown by the death penalty for both man and woman where the woman did not cry out in the city where she could have been rescued. Furthermore, consensual sex by a non-married couple *almost* constitutes a marriage (Dt.22:28 – 30, which is an expansion on Ex.22:16 – 17). Presumably the young woman would be in the position of telling her parents whether she did not consent or consented because of affection for the man. In case of the latter, because of the assumption of attraction and affection (and familiarity, since in a small village context, the two would have known each other and were part of the social fabric of fairly close relations), they are instructed to become married. This shows beyond a doubt that premarital sex is not just an issue of human consent by the two people, but a vision from God of how sex requires the context of marriage.



Category 3: *The Song of Songs Portrays a Godly Relationship from Courtship to Old Age*

Affection, not Arousal

Attraction  
1:1 – 2:7

Serious Dating  
2:8 – 3:5

Marriage  
3:6 – 5:1

2:7 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
By the gazelles or by the hinds of the field,  
That you will not arouse or **awaken** my love  
Until she pleases.

Affection, not Arousal

Attraction  
1:1 – 2:7

Serious Dating  
2:8 – 3:5

Marriage  
3:6 – 5:1

3:5 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
By the gazelles or by the hinds of the field,  
That you will not arouse or **awaken** my love  
Until she pleases.

Affection, not Arousal

Attraction  
1:1 – 2:7

Serious Dating  
2:8 – 3:5

Marriage  
3:6 – 5:1

<sup>4:16</sup> **Awake**, O north wind,  
And come, wind of the south;  
Make my garden breathe out fragrance,  
Let its spices be wafted abroad.  
May my beloved come into his garden  
And eat its choice fruits!

In Act One, which focuses on attraction (1:1 – 2:5), the couple is taking a long walk in the woods alone and the opportunity comes to have sex. The man says no: ‘I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, that you will not arouse or awaken my love until she pleases.’ Then in Act Two, which focuses on serious dating and courtship (2:6 – 3:5), the couple again has the opportunity to have sex. Again the man says no: ‘I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the hinds of the field, that you will not arouse or awaken my love until she pleases.’ It’s only in Act Three, at the wedding night, where the woman says, ‘Awake...May my beloved come into his garden and eat its choice fruits’ (4:16). The pattern is ‘Do not awaken,’ and then ‘Do not awaken,’ and then at the wedding night, ‘Awaken.’ They kept their physical intimacy at affection,

not arousal. Can it get any clearer than that??? A lot of Christians ask, 'Where is the line? Can we make out in our underwear as long as we don't have sex?' NO: The line is at arousal. That is where you stop.

I observed that the *man* in the previous two sections stopped the physical intimacy. Why is that? In our culture we tend to have the woman decide when to draw the line, wherever she feels uncomfortable. I think that is unfair and here's why. It is much more obvious to a man when he becomes aroused, and it usually happens much earlier. That means he should be the one to stop. Of course, if she's aroused, then she should stop, too. So, what does that mean? For most of you, you can hold hands, hug, and kiss lightly without being aroused, so that's great. Do that. There's the line for you. But if you're more easily aroused, and you need to talk about what activities are safe for you, then do that and make that commitment. If you make a mistake, ask the Lord for forgiveness, let Him cleanse you spiritually, tell other people, make sure the other person is telling other people, ask them to hold you accountable, and avoid the situations that are tempting for you. I encourage readers to read my reflections on the Song of Songs here: [http://nagasawafamily.org/song\\_of\\_songs\\_outline.htm](http://nagasawafamily.org/song_of_songs_outline.htm).

#### *Category 4: Jesus and His Restoration of God's Original Vision*

Mt.19:3 Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing him and asking, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?'<sup>4</sup> And he answered and said, 'Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female,<sup>5</sup> and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?<sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.'<sup>7</sup> They said to him, 'Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?'<sup>8</sup> He said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.'<sup>9</sup> 'And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.'<sup>10</sup> The disciples said to him, 'If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.'<sup>11</sup> But he said to them, 'Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given.'<sup>12</sup> For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it.'

- Note: Dt.24:5 is an example of the inclusive male pronoun, where the Hebrew language says 'he' to mean 'he or she'. The Hebrew language is like the Spanish language, where you have gendered nouns and pronouns. For economy of speech, you would just say 'he' to mean both genders. So even though the text refers to a man, Jewish rabbis until the 5th century BC understood that a wife could also initiate a divorce from her husband on the same grounds (source: Dr. Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Theology of the Pentateuch* class). Jesus affirms that interpretation in Mark 10:12, where he assumes women were divorcing their husbands. However, when the Greeks invaded the Middle East, the influence of Greek Hellenistic culture and its more male biased view caused a corresponding shift in Jewish culture.
- The word 'immorality' is *porneia*, also translated 'fornication.' The definition of fornication is any sex outside of marriage. The reason why Matthew did not use the word *moicheia* for 'adultery' is presumably to cover betrothal and engagement practices in Jewish culture. At that time, a Jewish couple may have been betrothed to each other by their parents for quite some time. However, at some point, they would have to declare their personal intent to each other. If they said yes in agreement to the betrothal arrangements their parents made, then they would have a 1 year engagement period. Technically they could be called 'married' even though they had not yet sexually consummated the marriage and become a married unit in the eyes of the community and God. Note that this was the period of time that Joseph and Mary were in when the Son of God took human flesh within Mary's womb, narrated in Matthew 1:18 – 25. Thus, Matthew used the word *porneia* to cover the case of an engaged young man or woman having illicit sexual relations with someone else.

#### *Category 5: Paul in 1 Corinthians – The Christian Vision of the Body Confronts the Greek View of the Body*

<sup>1</sup> Cor.6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> Such were some of you; but you were

washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. <sup>12</sup>[You say,] ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are profitable. [You say,] ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be mastered by anything. <sup>13</sup>[You say,] ‘Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food,’ but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. <sup>14</sup>Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. <sup>15</sup>Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! <sup>16</sup>Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, ‘The two shall become one flesh.’ <sup>17</sup>But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. <sup>18</sup>Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup>Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup>For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

- We are back to the first two slides (at the top of this document) contrasting the Greek pagan view (also ‘Eastern’) view of the body as inferior to the soul, with the Judeo-Christian-Islamic view of the body as equally important to the soul. Some Greeks believed that you could do anything with your body, or do what your body seemed to want. Hence Paul refutes their quote, ‘Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food,’ because the Corinthians used that quote to effectively say, ‘If you feel the urge, do it.’
- The issue in this ‘vice list’ in 6:9 – 10 is the misuse of the body. Each of those sins involves sinning with your own body or, additionally, against someone else’s body.
- Note Paul uses the word *fornicators* (rooted in the word *porneia*) in 6:9, designating any unmarried person who has sex. He distinguishes that from *adulterers* designating those who are married and have sex with someone outside of their marriage. Paul clearly believed that premarital sex was against God’s will. That should answer the immediate question, ‘Is pre-marital sex really sinful.’ It really is sinful. But to hear more about the bigger question, about why this makes quite a bit of good sense in actual relationships, please see my reflections on the Song of Songs here: [http://nagasawafamily.org/song\\_of\\_songs\\_outline.htm](http://nagasawafamily.org/song_of_songs_outline.htm).
- Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians challenges our contemporary American culture like almost nothing else. Here is why: We are not actually the primary owner of our bodies. God is the primary owner of all our bodies (1 Cor.6:18 – 20). You are the secondary owner of your body. You have been entrusted with your body to share it with God. God has a vision for how we all use our bodies. That vision is for our bodies to house Him.
- If 1 Corinthians was a blanket, it would look like this: a blue rectangle at the top, a green rectangle second, a purple rectangle third, a red rectangle fourth, and at the bottom, a rectangle that has all four colors: blue, green, purple, and red. The letter is composed of 5 major sections that are interwoven. Each section has to do with our bodies and Jesus’ body. In the first section, chapters 1 – 4, the issue is the unity of the corporate body, the community. That is tied to the last section, chapter 15, which is about Jesus’ resurrection body and our future resurrection body. Because Jesus has one body, we who are ‘the body of Christ’ must also be one – in terms of good relationships, not in terms of worshiping in one place. In the second section, chapters 5 – 7, the issue is sexuality and our individual bodies. That is tied to the last section, chapter 15, about Jesus’ resurrection body and our future resurrection body. Because Jesus has a purified body, we are to have purified bodies. In the third section, chapters 8 – 10, the issue is about eating, culture, and disciplining our bodies for Christian mission. That is tied to the last section, chapter 15, Jesus’ resurrection body and our future resurrection body. Because Jesus offers his body to all humanity, so our mission is to offer our bodies to his mission. In the fourth section, chapters 11 – 14, the issue is worship as one body. That is also tied to the last section, chapter 15, Jesus’ resurrection body and our future resurrection body. Because Jesus’ body is physically filled with the love of God, so the Christian body – corporately – must be physically filled with the love of God. Notes below.

*Exegetical and Literary Outline of 1 Corinthians (by Kenneth Bailey, modified by Mako Nagasawa)*

Introduction: 1:1 – 10

First Essay: Unity in the Body: 1:10 – 4:16

A. Division in the Church: 1:10 – 16

- B. The Wisdom of God in the Cross: 1:17 – 2:2
- B'. The Wisdom of God in the Spirit: 2:3 – 16
- A'. Christian Unity: 3:1 – 4:16

Second Essay: Sex and the Body: 4:17 – 7:40

- A. Immorality in the Church Without Discipline: 4:17 – 6:8
  - B. Theology of Sexuality: Kingdom Ethics: 6:9 – 12
  - B'. Theology of Sexuality: Joining the Body: 6:13 – 20
- A'. Christian Sexuality: 7:1 – 40

Third Essay: The Body and the Mission: 8:1 – 11:1

- A. Food Offered to Idols, Freedom and Responsibility: 8:1 – 13
  - B. Paul's Personal Freedom and Responsibility: 9:1 – 18
    - C. Freedom in Mission is for Identification With Others: 9:19 – 27
  - B'. Old and New Covenant Lessons, Partial and Non – Identification: 10:1 – 22
- A'. Food Offered to Idols: Use of Your Freedom for God: 10:23 – 11:1

Fourth Essay: Worship in the Body: 11:2 – 14:40

- A. Women and Men in Worship, Prophets and How They Dress: 11:2 – 16
  - B. Order in Worship, the Lord's Supper: 11:17 – 34
    - C. Gifts and the Nature of the Body: 12:1 – 31
      - D. Love: 13:1 – 13
      - C'. Gifts and the Upbuilding of the Body: 14:1 – 25
    - B'. Order in Worship, Prophets and Speaking in Tongues: 14:26 – 33
  - A'. Women and Men in Worship, How They Speak: 14:34 – 40

Fifth Essay: Jesus' Resurrected Body and Our Future Resurrection Bodies: 15:1 – 58

- A. Resurrection and the Validity of Christian Faith: 15:1 – 20
  - B. Adam and Christ, the End of All Things: 15:21 – 28
    - C. Resurrection and How to Live: 15:21 – 28
    - B'. Adam and Christ, the Nature of the Resurrection Body: 15:29 – 50
  - A'. Resurrection and Victory: 15:51 – 58

Final Remarks and Greetings: 16:1 – 24