

1 Corinthians 6:12-7:5

Good Sex—Bad Sex

12 “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything. 13 “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

At Corinth there were certain sayings that were familiar to the Church. One was “All things are lawful to me.” The second was “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food.” One was probably a misunderstanding by the church when Paul spoke about their Christian freedom in Christ; the second was probably a bit of conventional wisdom by the culture. The context revolves around sexual immorality. We learned several weeks ago that sexual immorality is a junk-drawer word for incest, adultery, prostitution, and fornication. So here’s what’s going on. Some in the church were sleeping with temple prostitutes. Before you say “that is sick;” you have to remember this was a form of religious expression. The City of Corinth had a history of mixing sex and religion. You can bet this was a popular form of worship. People even showed up in the summer. The conventional thinking was that since Christ paid for their sins, sleeping with prostitutes was permissible. Paul responds to the catch-phrase “All things are lawful for me” by saying, “Oh yeah, but not all things are beneficial.”

The second way some validated sleeping with prostitutes was to try to justify their sin. In fact, you will hear our culture use this one as well. “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food.” This is known as the biological argument. Just as the body needs food to survive—the body also needs sex. “It is a biological necessity, baby! We have to have it! We won’t be able to function without it. If we don’t have it, we will explode!”

Paul responds by saying God will one day destroy both food and the stomach; and that the body is not meant for sexual immorality. Then he institutes his own catch phrase. “The body is meant for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.” In other words, our bodies are not ours; they belong to the Lord. Some of you might think that is ridiculous! This is my body and I can do whatever I want with it. This is the argument used by abortionists. But I have a couple questions: Did you create your *own* body? Were you the one who determined your *own* sex? Did you pick the color of your *own* eyes or the color of your *own* skin? The bottom line is you were created. To use a theological argument; the Bible says if you have accepted Christ you have been redeemed. You were bought with the blood of Jesus. You are not your *own*; you belong to Christ. Therefore, your body is for the Lord; and the Lord for the body! Eventually, like Christ; God will raise your body from the dead. You have no control over it.

Since this section involves sexual immorality there are a couple of points I’d like to highlight. In this passage—sexual immorality refers to sleeping with prostitutes. However, as we have discovered in our studies, this is a junk-drawer word that includes incest, adultery, and fornication as well. To make things easier today; I want to refer to sex in two ways when it comes to Christians; good sex and bad sex. Good sex involves a husband and a wife. Bad sex involves any other type of sex (*porneia*) outside of marriage. Let’s look at the bad stuff first.

1. **Bad Sex is Never Beneficial**

The civil authorities are not going to put you in jail if you commit adultery or fornication. In that sense it is lawful. But even so—it is never beneficial in the long run. Your life is not going to improve because of bad sex. If anything it will get worse in the long run. When you talk to most couples who get married one of their biggest regrets is having bad sex before they were married. They realize that they gave a very private part of them away to someone else. One of the most awkward moments is when a believer confronts someone they slept with and did not marry.

When I was a pastor to singles, I could always tell the relationships that would end in heartbreak. In most cases they left the church for a while, slept with each other, broke up, and never remained friends. It is very difficult to remain a friend with another Christian that you had bad sex with and did not marry. It could be great at the time—but it always comes back to haunt you. You sever a friendship, you bring a baby into the world with no spouse, and you later regret the decision when you meet someone who later becomes your spouse. It may not be against the law. But bad sex is not beneficial.

2. Bad Sex Leads to Enslavement

The second thing Paul says is that he will not engage in bad sex because he doesn't want to be enslaved to it. In other words, bad sex is addictive. It has the power to dominate your thoughts. Bad sex leads to more bad sex with different partners, it leads to pornography, and it leads to masturbation. Statistics show that two types of people are predisposed to being addicted to sex; those who are very busy and those who are bored. The very are generally tired and seek safe relational intimacy; the bored are looking for something that will make them feel good.

I had a friend who was so enslaved to bad sex that he needed to have it on a weekly basis, usually with someone new. The sad part was that he had a girlfriend. I'll never forget one day he had a rash and went in to see his doctor. The doctor told him he had herpes and that he needed to tell his girlfriend so she could get checked. He told her the truth because he did care about her. The problem of course dealt with her next question. How did you get herpes—who were you sleeping around with?

After his disclosure, I told Thomas that he needed to get checked for aids. He looked at me and said he wasn't going to do it because he was afraid what he might find. He had slept with so many girls. He simply did not want to take that test. Bottom line: He was enslaved to sin. Bad sex leads to enslavement.

If you are going to be a slave; be a slave to Jesus. Paul continues.

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

3. Bad Sex Corrupts Divine Union

This may be hard for Christians to understand. But once a person accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; the Holy Spirit indwells them. What that means is that although you may only see me physically, there are two of us—the Holy Spirit and me! You may not physically see Him; but hopefully you will see Him in the way I live my life. The Spirit guides my thoughts and reminds me about Jesus. He convicts me of sin. He helps me to discern right from wrong. Wherever I go—the Holy Spirit goes with me. The problem is when the Spirit inside tells you how to live your life and you ignore Him. God does not allow the Spirit to live our life for us. Ultimately we can decide whether to follow His leading. Paul reminds us of this reality in Galatians 5 when he says there is a war going on inside us between the flesh (our carnal desires) and the Spirit. When we engage in bad sex, we side with the flesh not the Spirit of God.

When we physically engage in bad sex—it is not just the fornicator, adulterer, or one who sleeps with a prostitute that engages in sex—we also force the Spirit inside us to be involved in this union. In all, there are three persons involved in a sexually immoral union; the man, the prostitute, and the Spirit. This is not the union that God had in mind when He perfected good sex. The correct union is the husband, the wife, and the Holy Spirit. In reality, sexual intercourse is designed not only to be a physical act—but also a spiritual act. It is the perfect union; the husband, the wife, and the Spirit of God. That is good sex.

As Christians, we are not alone. The Spirit also lives in us. We have to remember that. Bad sex corrupts the perfect union of Christ! Paul says do not take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

4. Bad Sex Sins Against Your Soul

What should you do if you are involved in bad sex? Paul says you should flee! Some of you might be familiar with the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. When she tried to seduce him he ran from her. She grabbed his robe and he left it behind. He said, to be involved in that kind of bad sex would be to sin against God. Joseph is a great example of someone who was very aware of how his actions could affect his relationship with God. He had such a good relationship with Him that he did not want to jeopardize it.

That is what bad sex does. It wears on your soul. It affects you personally and it distances your relationship with God. There are so many people walking around with wounded souls because of bad sex. In reality whenever you sleep with someone who is not your spouse you have given that person a part of your soul. There are tons of people walking around who feel horrible about themselves because of bad sex. There are people who feel God can't forgive them because they have been so promiscuous. That is not true. God washes you and makes you pure. The important thing is to be honest with God and yourself. Tell Him; Father I have sinned against you! Forgive me! Help me be like Joseph and flee. Practically, flee means just what you think. Leave. Get out of that relationship. It will be hard but God will wash you clean if you commit your life to not sinning against Him with bad sex.

I went to church with a girl in Tacoma who was involved with prostitution and Satanic worship. She finally decided to flee that lifestyle. It was very difficult because her family was involved in this cultic form of worship. Anyhow, she picked up the Yellow Pages and let her fingers do the walking until she came across our church, Life Center. The first several years she focused on Jesus healing her from those emotional and sexual scars. Later, she would share her testimony and explain how Jesus washed her and is still in the process of healing her. Finally, several years later she got married. Today, she is enjoying her husband and having good sex. They had their first child a couple years ago. This is just an example of how bad sex can lead to good sex. God is our divine healer. He just wants us to confess, repent, and submit that part of our lives to Him. If Julie can change; you or someone you know can change through Christ as well.

Okay, enough about bad sex—let's talk about the good stuff. Remember good sex is between a husband and his wife. As we read; you will notice that we can even botch up good sex.

7:1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." 2 But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

Paul begins this chapter addressing another saying the Church in Corinth had been taught by some in the church. This one involved abstinence. There were people who apparently thought they could achieve a higher level of spirituality in their marriage by not having good sex. That is what is meant by the statement: "It is good for a man *not* to have sexual relations with a woman." Paul responds by saying that this is not a good idea because it can lead to sexual immorality. Therefore each man should have (a verb for good sex) their wife and each woman should have their husband. This leads to our fifth point.

5. Abstaining from Good Sex can Lead to The Bad Stuff

The bottom line is that Good Sex helps prevent one from committing adultery on their spouse. Remember that Jesus said adultery is not just the physical act—but also the mental act. There are a lot of sexually frustrated spouses that have committed adultery against their spouse in their heart because they don't have a regular sex life. In that sense, good sex can be preventative. Abstaining from regular good sex in your marriage will not strengthen your marriage; it will slowly make it deteriorate. If you continue to tell your spouse "I'm too tired" you will put yourself in a position to have a bitter spouse in marriage.

I have seen the lack of good sex lead to pornography addiction, mental and physical adultery, and ultimately divorce. There is always a price, whether subtle or overt when spouses deprive each other. Sadly, this is a very common occurrence with pastors. I have personally known some that have had to walk away from ministry because their lack of good sex lead them to the bad stuff. Today, I know one pastor personally whose marriage is hanging by a string.

Unless you are physically unable because of age or health related issues—spouses should be having regular good sex to protect their marriage and family.

The next thing Paul addresses deals with property rights in the marriage bed. His point is that each person belongs to the other. Let's read.

3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

6. In Good Sex, the Spouse owns the Property Rights

I cannot think of a better way to express selfless good sex than how Paul explained it. Husbands and wives need to understand that sexually; their bodies belong to their spouses. Theologically, if my wife has authority over my body, and I have authority over hers—then when these two selfless people come together for good sex—they become one flesh. Consequently, husbands and wives should not deprive each other; they should be sacrificial in love making. The thought should not be this is my body and I am tired; but rather, “I am here to use my body to please my wife.” My body is for her and my body is for him.

Think of the implications. If your body belongs to your spouse, there are some things you need to do to show them that practically. You might start with your appearance. Instead of walking around the house in your underwear unshaven—instead of walking around barefoot in your sweats with no makeup; you should actually consider presenting your bodies as attractive to your spouse. This will be advantageous in pursuing good sex.

If I think in terms of my body belonging to my wife it would be a good thing to consider my diet and exercise. One reason married folk don't engage in more good sex is that they don't feel good about their bodies. I have personally watched the second law of thermodynamics erode my body. But instead of accepting it; I need to treat my body as if it is my wife's. That means I have work to do. If spouses want good sex; they should work on making themselves more desirable.

If I think in terms of my body belonging to my wife; I should take it places that she enjoys. My wife has told me she wants me to take her out to a jazz club in Portland. I can think of many reasons not to. The distance, the money, the kid, you name it. But I show love to her when I take my body to where she wants to go. Bottom line: Sometimes you just need a baby sitter. Good sex suffers when you no longer enjoy an evening with your spouse alone.

Bottom Line: My wife has authority over my body and I have it over hers. As long as we are biblical; respectful of each other, and consider each other's feelings; we should consciously make an effort to do things with our bodies that please our wife. The last thing Paul says involves abstinence.

7. Good Sex Ceases only with Mutual Consent

Now I am saying this in general. I realize we have some bodies are physically unable to have consistent good sex. But for those that can; good sex should be consistent unless by mutual consent you both decide to take a break. But even then Paul warns; it should not be for a long time; otherwise you open the door for Satan to tempt you with bad sex.

The thing that is important to understand is the term mutual. It is a team decision. This was a revolutionary way to think of marriage in Paul's day because according to Roman law the man had authority over his wife and his children. Today it is not uncommon for people to criticize the institution of Christian marriage. Our culture tends to think the wife is inferior. But Paul shows us that we are to consider our bodies belonging to the other and that cessation from good sex is mutual.

Final Thoughts

So now that we have talked about Good and Bad Sex, I realize some people have been successful; others have not. As Duan Walker from Mid-Valley Fellowship told us last night; God is a God of redemption and cleansing. Christ forgives us if we come to him and repent and tell him we are committing ourselves to change. This will be necessary for those of you who have been involved or are still involved in bad sex. Christ is here to wash you like he washed many in the church of Corinth. Others of you are married and you have not done a good job when it comes to consistent good sex and taking care of your bodies. It is so important to confess this to your spouse, ask forgiveness, and commit yourself to God and your spouse to doing better. The lack of good sex leads to bitterness, self doubt, and a loss of respect over time. You don't want this to happen to your marriage. God has made us so that we can be cleansed and start a fresh. And for those of you who are single and think this is not a good lesson from either perspective—remember, God is preparing you for your future spouse. Don't have Bad Sex regrets when God does bring that person into your life. If you are not gifted to be single—know this is the time you are in training. That's all I have to say about Good and Bad Sex. Amen.