

# Sex and the Bible

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## Introduction

The Bible was completed thousands of years ago. It is silent on some subjects and general on others, thus giving room for different opinions. But when addressing human sexuality, the Bible material is very specific. While there are some complicated situations, the basics are still clear. The goal of this article is to present the Bible's view on human sexuality in an accurate and unbiased manner. There is no intention of forcing opinion on the forthcoming material. It is not normal to state a conclusion at the start of an Article. If offensive, there is risk of immediate loss of the audience. But, in this case, it is important to keep the conclusion in view as details are being discussed. The Bible's conclusion is this: **the only approved sex is heterosexual sex between legitimately married people.**

## Creation Rights

Human sexuality either arose from natural forces (evolved), or was created. There are no other options. From the first verse of the Bible, God declares Himself as Creator - including creating sex. He thought it up - and then made it. As the Creator of sex, He assumes *Creation Rights* and defines the proper, or improper, use of this created function. Actually, this is the position behind all Bible commands (See End Note 1).

## The Mosaic Law

Under the Mosaic Law, twenty-eight (28) offenses called for the death penalty. Of these, 8 were for sexual offenses. Capital offenses relating to human sexuality are listed in the order in which they appear (See End Note 2).

**1) Bestiality.** A person having sex with an animal was to be executed along with the animal (Ex 22:19 and Lev 20:15,16).

**2) Adultery.** A married person having sex with some other person was to be executed along with the illegal partner (Lev 20:10 and Deut 22:22).

**3) A son having sex with his father's wife** (his mother or stepmother) was to be executed along with the partner (Lev 20:11).

**4) A man having sex with his daughter-in-law** was to be executed with the partner (Lev 20:12).

**5) Male Homosexuality.** Both men were to be executed (Lev 20:13 and Lev 18:22. Also see Ro 1:27 and End Note 3).

**6) A woman who has had sex while living in her father's house and then marries (presenting herself as a virgin)** was to be executed after due process (Deut 22:13-21).

**7) A man who has sex with a virgin engaged to another,** was to be executed (Deut 22:23-27).

**8) If an engaged virgin is inside the city and has sex with another man,** that woman was to be executed along with her lover. If the virgin is outside the city, she may have been raped, so only the male is executed (See #7 above and Deut 22:23,24).

Other offenses called for violators to be "*cut off*" from the people. I don't think this means execution. See Lev 18:6-30, Lev 20:17-24, Deut 22:5, Deut 23:17, and Deut 24:1-4 for examples.

## Marriage and Complications

The conclusion states the only approved sex is, “heterosexual sex between *legitimately married people*.” But what constitutes a legitimate marriage? It is here I make an assumption. Varied cultures have different practices and procedures as to what constitutes a state of marriage. So, whatever is publicly recognized in each culture as a fidelity agreement between heterosexual individuals constitutes a marriage. With this parameter, when examining sexual expectations within that arrangement, it is best to go from the simple scenario to the complex.

1) The ideal is for a male and female virgin to marry and be entirely devoted to one another sexually until death parts them. Obviously, their sex is approved (See Pro 5:15-20, and Rom 7:1-3).

2) If the mate dies, the widow (*by assumption*, a widower also) is free to remarry. The new sexual union is approved (Rom 7:2,3).

3) If two non-virgins marry, having never been married in the past, their sexual union is approved (See Ex 22:16 and Deut 22:28,29).

4) Legitimately divorced people are free to remarry. But only the violated party is free to remarry. The Bible only recognizes two grounds for divorce.

a) **Sexual Immorality.** If one's partner has sex outside the marriage bond, the violated partner is free to divorce and remarry (Mt 19:3-9). This includes all types of sexual infidelity.

b) **Desertion by an Unbeliever.** A Christian deserted by a non believing mate, is free from the marriage and can remarry (1Cor 7:12-15).

**Note:** There is no provision for divorce and/or remarriage based on physical abuse.

**Note:** If a Christian woman does part from her husband for any reason other than sexual unfaithfulness *or* desertion by an unbelieving husband, she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband (1Cor 7:10,11). It appears that verse 11 of that passage places a Christian husband under the same directive. (See End Note 4 for some various complicated situations).

5) Polygamy by a male is not condemned. However, there is no mention of women being able to have multiple husbands (See End Note 5).

## Some Points Where the Bible is Silent

1) There is no comment on interracial marriages among Gentiles (all the non-Jewish peoples). And since the Law Covenant through Moses ended the moment Jesus died (Mt 27:51), the Jews may be unrestricted from God's perspective now as that system has expired.

2) There is no comment about masturbation. A reader asked me to address this, so ... I did.

3) Other than the Law prohibition of having intercourse with a menstruous woman (Lev 18:19), there is no comment about the types of sexual activity that can be engaged in between legitimately married people.

## Conclusion

1) When one marries, authority of one's body is surrendered to the mate (1Cor 7:3-5).

2) The sex act creates a unique union between two people - they become one flesh (Gen 2:24 and 1Cor 6:16).

3) Marital fidelity extends past the physical act. Internal lust for a different partner is adultery (Mt 5:27,28). However, it does not appear **internal** adultery establishes grounds for divorce.

4) Sex in marriage should be directed toward satisfying each others physical need (1Cor 7:9).

5) Sexual activity should provide a unique pleasure experience. God created the unique actions and reactions of the whole process.

6) Usually, this union results in the privileges and responsibilities of procreation (Gen 1:28).

### End Note 1

If one opts for an evolutionary development of human sexuality, there are still parameters for acceptable sexual behavior. For example, few evolutionists condone bestiality as acceptable human sexual behavior. Sexual activities arose for the propagation and incremental development of each species. Outside of the human species, it is exceedingly rare that any creature engages in cross species breeding. Another sexual phenomenon that is at total cross purposes to scientific evolution is homosexuality. The evolutionist sees each human being as the product of millions of years of evolution - maybe a billion years. Homosexual activity brings his/her billion-year line to an abrupt, eternal end. For an in-depth Article entitled, "*Evolution and Homosexuality*" go to [freelygive-n.com](http://freelygive-n.com). (Scroll down)

### End Note 2

"The Mosaic Law" could be called "The Theocratic Law." The six hundred plus commands (the Ten Commandments being but a fraction) are declared as originating entirely from God. Moses was simply the channel through whom this Law came. These laws can be divided into two broad categories - religious and civil. **Religious law** deals with man's relationship toward God. In this area, there are nine offenses requiring the death penalty. **Civil law** deals with man's relationship toward man. In this category, there are nineteen offenses requiring the death penalty. Only one of these could be commuted to a lighter sentence - and that choice is presumably in the hands of the victim's family (Ex 21:28-32). Of these nineteen capital offenses, eight are for sexual offenses. There are no reprieves for sexual offenses. For an exhaustive exploration on this subject, get my Ebook, "*Capital Punishment and the Bible*".

### End Note 3

Female homosexuality is not addressed in the Old Testament. But in the New Testament, Romans 1:26 describes female homosexuality as a "*degrading passion*" that is "*against nature.*" Female homosexuals have been "*given over*" by God to homosexuality - a judgment by Him for rejecting and/or suppressing truth (Rom 1:18-32).

In light of this Biblical material, I have often been asked to explain how homosexuality can be accepted in many churches today. There is even a homosexual "Christian" denomination called The Metropolitan Church. Here is the basic explanation.

Principles used in Bible interpretation are called hermeneutics. Conservative interpreters have developed five (5) principles that are to be applied to any given passage when seeking to interpret the passage properly. Those who believe homosexuality is acceptable have added two (2) more principles. The one of interest here is their "cultural hermeneutic." This is how it works. When examining a passage, one must consider *the culture* to which it was written to understand *why* it was written. For example, in Moses' day, the children of Israel were being led to the Promised Land - which was to be gained by military conquest. They needed warriors. Therefore, *in that culture, at that time* homosexuality was sin **for them**. After the conquest was basically over, attitudes began to soften. When Jonathan died, David cried, "*Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women*" (2Sam 1:26). These interpreters are convinced David and Jonathan were homosexual lovers. Thus, David was bisexual as he had many wives. By the time of the New Testament, Paul heralded celibacy *as superior* to marriage, but still clung to Old Testament taboos about homosexuality - at least in doctrine. But an old Apostle Paul wrote young Timothy, "*I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I might be filled with joy*" (2Tim 1:3,4). These interpreters are sure this is evidence of a homosexual union. Some also boldly point out

that Jesus surrounded Himself *only with men* for 3+ years of ministry travels.

So how does this work out for our culture? The argument goes something like this. “*What is one of the great problems for our present age? Overpopulation? In our current age, it is best, like the New Testament affirms, to be celibate. That way a person will not add to the crisis. But if one cannot remain celibate, homosexuality is the Christian way to go. In fact, homosexuality may be God's answer to the overpopulation problem.*” With this cultural hermeneutic, all Bible passages are affirmed. Nothing is explained away. The prohibitions were correct *for those cultures in those times* - but not ours. The teaching goes further. “*The Bible says, ‘everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, being received with thanksgiving’ (1Tim 4:4). If you were **born** a homosexual, **it is sin to reject the way God made you.** Everything God makes ‘is good’ and to reject what He has done **is sin.** Receive your homosexuality with gratitude! Start thanking Him for the way He made you!*”

The Bible warns about those twist the Scriptures “*to their own destruction*” (2Pet3:16). This is a current day example.

### End Note 4

#### It is here that situations get complicated.

Please note that the use of “legal” or “illegal” in this end note refers to God's standard – not the shifting laws of any particular human government construct. The laws of man will not trump God's standard on this - or any other matter.

1) A mate who leaves his/her first marriage illegally, by committing sexual immorality or by desertion, cannot engage in approved sex before God. Even if “legally” divorced and remarried in his/her given society, the sexual acts are still illegal before God. It is continuous adultery (Mt 19:9).

2) **However**, if one becomes a Christian while in this adulterous union (“legally” remarried in his/her society), *it appears* this formerly adulterous union is no longer considered adulterous by God. **No adulterer** can enter God's approaching, eternal world (1Cor 6:9,10 and Gal 5:19-21). The new Christian is declared forgiven of all sin - past, present and future. There is no call for dissolution of one's present union. So, the new Christian is obviously not viewed as living in an adulterous state. Concerning the other party of this union, it does not follow that he/she is automatically pardoned because of the other's conversion. His/her part in the union may still be considered sinful until such a time that he/she also becomes a Christian. However, it is possible the faith of the new believer may serve to sanctify the union for the unbelieving one (1Cor 7:14). This is complicated.

3) A professing Christian cannot illegitimately leave a marriage for a new one and presume that he/she is automatically forgiven. There are numerous warnings against *presumptuous actions* - *assuming* deliberate sin will be pardoned (See Rom 6:1,2 and 15, Heb 6:4-6, Heb 10:26-31 and possibly Rom 3:8). It may be that the cleansing of a formerly adulterous union (as discussed in #2 above) is a one time pardon by God that occurs at the Christians conversion.

4) The passage in 1Cor 7:10,11 is a clear directive to a Christian couple – a Christian wife (vs 10) and Christian husband (vs 11). “*But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave (“chorizo”) her husband (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried or she must be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not leave (“aphiemi”) his wife.*” There are two different verbs for “leave.” The one directed at the wife means, “*disunite, sever, withdraw, or depart*” from her husband. The one directed at the husband means, “*to send away, dismiss, desert, forsake, or leave behind*” his wife. Bottom line: they are *not* to leave their marriage. The lone exception is if a partner engages in sexual immorality (“*Pornea*” covers all kinds of illegal-to-God sexual activity). Paul asserts this command is not from him, but from the Lord. But, if a Christian woman *does leave* the command to the deserter is to remain unmarried or be reconciled to his/her spouse. Since the Christian husband is also not to leave, I think it is safe to assume that if he

deserts the marriage, he would be under the same directive. But, how many perpetrators will obey these commands if he/she has decided to nix the primary command of not leaving in the first place? Such a desertion is a great violation against one's spouse on many levels. Most people get married because they are not celibate. When one marries, that one loses rights to his/her body for the sexual need of the spouse. To withdraw one's body unilaterally is sin. It can only be withdrawn by agreement - and for a season (See 1Cor 7:1-5). But, to totally leave? There is still more.

What about the Christian *who is left behind* by the Christian who deserts the marriage? We know that the woman who leaves is to “*remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband*” (1Cor 7:10), and it can be assumed a husband who deserts is under the same injunction (1Cor 7:11). But, what is the status of the one who has been deserted – the victim? The passage above does not address his/her status ... or does it? This is my view.

As we have seen, the Christian who deserts the marriage has two options: remain unmarried or be reconciled to his/her spouse. The verb, “*remain*” is “*meneto,*” - an imperative verb (a command), in the present tense (ongoing present action), and in the active voice (meaning action by that person – in this case, the perpetrator of the illegal desertion). *That* one is to remain – what? “*Agamos*” - not married. That is a compounded word, “*a*” + “*gamos.*” “*Gamos*” means, “*married*” and the “*a*” negates the noun – so it means, “*not married.*” So, **the victim** who has been illegally abandoned ... is still married? If **the perpetrator** is now “*not married*” and must continue in that state ... *to whom is the victim now married?* To the one ... “*not married*”? Marriage is two people. I have never known of a marriage consisting of one person. But there is more.

In Matthew 18:15-18, Jesus gave a clear procedure when one is sinned against by a fellow Christian. While it speaks of *a brother* having sinned against you, I think this holds for any Christian against Christian sin – sisters included. That is an assumption on my part, but I know major sin is to be addressed, so I think sisters are in this procedure as well – on either side of the ledger – victim or perpetrator. This procedure gets every word out in the open, and the offending party has three opportunities to reverse course. Here it is in a nutshell. You confront the sinning one in private, and if rejected, then a second attempt is made with one or two more witnesses. If these are rejected, then a third attempt involves the church (presumably the elders), and if the perpetrator refuses to listen to them, the victim is to “*let him (her) be to you as a Gentile and (or, even) a tax collector.*” Gentiles were of a different nation, and the tax collector was labeled a traitor (a fellow Jew working for Rome). My Masters thesis is this passage in much greater detail.

So, here's the point. Our citizenship is in heaven and we have been transferred into the “*kingdom of the beloved Son*” (Col 1:13). That is the nation to which we now belong. It is clear that if *an unbeliever* abandons a Christian marriage, the Christian victim is free - “*not under bondage*” and can legally remarry (1Cor 7:15). But if it is a *professing* Christian that illegally abandons a marriage (that is meant to be until death), the perpetrator is said to be “*not married.*” By default, the Christian victim is also now “*agamos*” - not married. If something akin to the procedure above has been done by the Christian victim (although the one deserting may not even allow the process to be completed), then the deserting partner is to be regarded as outside the nation (a Gentile) - even a traitor to the nation (a tax collector). In my view that is another way of saying the deserter is to be regarded - *as an unbeliever*. The Christian victim is not under bondage in such cases – just like with a deserting *unbeliever* (1Cor 7:15). There are those who “*profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him*” (Ti 1:16a). The marriage commitment is a foundational moral Bible tenet. Any Christian – every Christian understands that. No rationalizations will prevail before the Lord.

Most of the time, the deserter has left for another person and that soon comes to light and the marriage bond is broken by sexual immorality anyway. But what if the deserter moves out of state, or out of country, and has no contact with the victim? How is the victim to know if sexual immorality has

occurred and the victim is then clearly free? Is the victim to leave home, friends, work and his/her church and chase after the perpetrator and spy to catch him/her with another person? And if dependent children are left with the victim, are they to be drug along, too? While we are not under Mosaic Law, it was, and is, indeed God's Law. The *victims* of wrongdoing in all of the civil Law were never neglected or punished. They were always placed in the power position and they were to be publicly vindicated by those in the governing roles. God does not change. His morals are the same. The deserter, can be regarded as an unbeliever, and the Christian victim of the desertion is free to do as he/her chooses. Otherwise, the deserter is in the power position - the sinning one. I don't see that as God's position in the matter.

The material in this entire End Note should **not** be considered the final word in this complex area. However, this material should not be easily dismissed either. Our sexual activities are more importance to God than any of us realize. If one is in a complex sexual/marriage web, that person should earnestly bring the situation before God and carefully work it out. The only goal is that things be in right order before Him. Weigh the counsels of others cautiously - including mine. Much counsel is half thought out and wrong.

### End Note 5

For many, it is a shock to discover the Bible does not unequivocally prohibit or condemn polygamy by males. There are many instances of central Bible figures who had multiple wives. These men include Abraham, Jacob (Israel), David, and Solomon. However, there are several conditions to this arrangement. For example, each wife was unattached to any other man. If she had been previously married, her husband was dead before marriage to the polygamist (1Sam 25:39-42 and 2Sam 11:26,27). The Bible is extremely clear that no adulterer, fornicator, whoremonger, or otherwise sexually immoral person will enter the kingdom of heaven (I Cor 6:9-11 and Gal 5:19-21). Many of these men died while having multiple wives. The Bible does not teach these men are condemned. In fact, quite the opposite. Polygamy evidently does not fall under the category of sexual immorality.

Note: In the New Testament, a church elder must be *“the husband of one wife”* (1Tim 3:2). This is not a condemnation of polygamy - just a qualification for the position of elder. Literally it says, “of one woman a husband.” It is a cardinal number, “of *one* woman a husband” ... not two, or three, etc. God could easily have said, “married once only” or “married only once to only one woman” as such words were readily available, but that was not His intent. A polygamist was not to hold the role of elder. Also, it is not required that an elder be married as Paul could not have been one

Many societies have laws against polygamy. If a person violates any governmental law, he/she risks the consequences of that choice. But it does not necessarily follow that God will judge that person as a violator of **His** moral code. Such appears to be the case with male polygamy.

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