

*"Kay Arthur speaks healing truth to the most intimate wounds of our lives, and breathes beauty back to the places defiled by perversion and shame, answering every question we bring. This book is a gift."*

—**Lisa Bevere**, best-selling author, *Kissed the Girls and Made Them Cry* and *Fight Like a Girl*

# KAY ARTHUR

**Best-Selling & Award-Winning Author**

# THE TRUTH ABOUT SEX

Foreword by

Hayley DiMarco,

best-selling author of *Dateable*

Previously released as *Sex...According to God*

**KAY ARTHUR**

**THE** What the World  
Won't Tell You &  
God Wants You  
to Know  
**TRUTH**  
**ABOUT**  
**SEX**



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## PLAYING WITH DANGER

**W**ithin our society today—even within the church—many are confused about sex and sexual morality. We see a growing movement toward accepting behaviors that were almost universally considered immoral just a few decades ago. Of course, sexual sin goes back almost to the beginning of history, but in times past it was viewed as something shameful, something to be hidden away.

These days, sexual innuendo and even sexual acts are flaunted on prime-time television and in advertising for seemingly every product imaginable. And the problem lies not only with the media. This attitude that sex is a form of entertainment, a harmless, nearly meaningless interaction between two consenting people, has seeped into every aspect of our culture.

Consider the following questions, based on a survey by The Barna Group, which highlight just a handful of decisions regarding sexual behavior that each of us face on a regular basis. How would you respond?

*1. Is it morally acceptable to live with someone of the opposite sex without being married?* Sixty percent of adult Americans say yes. Forty-nine percent of those who identify themselves as born-again Christians agree, as do 12 percent of those who call themselves evangelicals.<sup>1</sup>

The 2000 U.S. census found 5.5 million couples who were living together without being married, up from 3.2 million in the 1990 census. If you don't know the truth about sex, this may seem to be a reasonable choice—you may as well find out if you're compatible before you tie the knot, right?—but a number of studies show that those who live together before marriage are more than twice as likely to divorce as those who did not live together before their wedding day.<sup>2</sup>

And what about the children born to unmarried parents? According to a number of studies, “compared with children living with their married biological or adoptive parents, children living with cohabitators are more likely to experience material hardships such as poverty, food insecurity, and housing insecurity; more likely to exhibit behavioral problems or problems in school; and less likely to have positive interactions with their parents.”<sup>3</sup>

*2. Is it morally acceptable to have a sexual relationship with someone of the*

*opposite sex to whom one is not married?* Forty-two percent of adult Americans say yes, as do 35 percent of born-again Christians and 7 percent of evangelicals.<sup>4</sup>

That number may seem shockingly high—unless you're one of the many who have experienced the devastating effects of adultery. Couples therapists estimate that between 30 and 40 percent of wives have had extramarital affairs, as have 50 percent of husbands.<sup>5</sup>

This new acceptance of adultery has spawned an entire industry of Web sites and other resources geared toward helping people along in their efforts to commit infidelity. At least one site, run by an admitted philanderer, provides space for cheaters to exchange advice on how to cover up their affairs. Another Internet service bills itself as a dating site for married adults “with unmet needs.” Apparently, many believe they fall into this category, since 160,000 people have registered and posted their profiles on the site, which boasts the slogan, “When Monogamy Becomes Monotony.”<sup>6</sup>

*3. Is it morally acceptable to look at pictures of nudity or explicit sexual behavior?* Thirty-eight percent of adult Americans believe it is. Twenty-eight percent of born-again Christians and 5 percent of evangelicals agree.<sup>7</sup>

The numbers of people who actually engage in such behavior may be even higher. Increased acceptance of pornography has created a 57-billion-dollar industry worldwide, with 12 billion dollars of that coming from the United States. According to some figures, the Internet now includes 4.2 million pornographic Web sites, and daily pornographic search-engine requests comprise 25 percent of all such inquiries. Perhaps more startling, the average child is first exposed to Internet pornography at eleven years of age. Think those in the church are immune? According to a survey by Promise Keepers, 53 percent of their attendees confessed to having viewed pornography in the previous week.<sup>8</sup>

*4. Is it morally acceptable to engage in homosexual behavior?* Thirty percent of adult Americans believe it is morally acceptable to have a sexual relationship with someone of the same sex. Twenty percent of born again Christians and 5 percent of evangelicals agree.<sup>9</sup>

As our nation's leaders consider the possibility of legalizing gay marriage—or banning it outright—within the church many denominations are wrestling with the decision of whether to ordain as ministers those who describe themselves as homosexuals. V. Gene Robinson, an openly gay min-

ister, was confirmed in 2003 as a bishop within the Episcopal Church, and other denominations also boast a growing number of pastors and church leaders who proudly proclaim their status as homosexuals.

5. *Is it morally acceptable to enjoy sexual thoughts or fantasies about someone other than your spouse?* Fifty-nine percent of adult Americans affirm such behavior as morally acceptable, as do 49 percent of born-again Christians and 15 percent of evangelicals.<sup>10</sup>

This is yet another area in which the Internet has created new opportunities for those not committed to both emotional and physical fidelity. The Employment Law Alliance reports that nearly 25 percent of Americans polled said that they or their co-workers “engage in sexually explicit online activity” at work.<sup>11</sup> And interested parties don’t necessarily have to visit pornographic Web sites to indulge in their fantasy life. Through chat rooms, instant messaging, and even Web sites for those who openly describe themselves as “married but still dating,” individuals can flirt from the “safety” of their homes, though the spiritual and emotional damage of such encounters can be devastating. In one study, 80 percent of married individuals who engaged in online flirtations didn’t believe it qualified as cheating on their spouse. But that same study revealed that 30 percent of such online relationships led to face-to-face meetings, and of those, a huge majority continued on into physical adultery.<sup>12</sup>

So what’s the big deal about sex, really? Is it, as the trends detailed above seem to indicate, a simple bodily function, as instinctual and irresistible as the need to satisfy our hunger and thirst? Or is there something holy and beautiful about sex, something we should treasure? And why does our culture seem to be obsessed with this topic?

Let me share with you a story that demonstrates why I believe it’s so crucial that you learn the truth about sex—the dangerous reality that the world won’t tell you, but God very much wants you to know.

## Sex Is Like a Can of Drano

I got up from the table, carried the dishes to the sink, and as I looked down all I could think was, *Good grief! A clogged sink. I don’t have time for this!*

I was scheduled to drive to a nearby town to speak to a group of teenagers about sex, and here was a mess of soggy garbage floating in a sink that was



probably as old as our farmhouse!

I couldn't just walk out and leave the mess. Dropping to my knees, I began rummaging under the sink, looking for the Drano. Finally, way at the back, I spotted its red-white-and-blue can. I couldn't remember when I had last used it.

Following the directions carefully, which the manufacturer of Drano had convinced me was important, I cautiously popped the red top, did exactly what I was told, then stood at my gurgling sink—mesmerized, relieved, and delighted as I watched the product work its magic.

Minutes later as I turned onto Interstate 75, heading toward Dalton, Georgia, I eased back into the driver's seat and began to review my message on sex, but my mind quickly went from sex to sinks. I was still amazed at what an incredibly quick job Drano did on my sink. *What a great product!* I thought. *Read the directions, do what it tells you, and it works! And nothing dire happened because I followed the directions.*

Then it hit me: *Sex is like a can of Drano!* Drano is a wonderful product, but if you don't follow the manufacturer's directions, it could burn you, poison you, or erupt violently! The same is true of sex. That's why so many are traumatized by sex instead of delighting in it as God intended.

Maybe this is your experience, my friend. You've been burned and you bear the scars, whether others see them or not. Maybe the poison still seeps through your mind or body. Maybe you've acquired a sexually transmitted disease—even AIDS. Maybe sex exploded, with results you never anticipated. You had an abortion, or you paid for her to get one. Or your infidelity was discovered, and your life and your plans were ruined. You never dreamed it would turn out this way.

You bought into the lies of the world rather than discovering for yourself the truth about sex, as revealed by God in the pages of His book, the Bible. If only you had searched for the truth, you would have found the dangers of misuse clearly identified, much like the cautions listed on the can of Drano.

## Manufacturer's Warnings

*"Read Back Label Carefully."* Therein lies our problem today. Those who bear the title *Christian* haven't read the label carefully to learn what the Manufac-

turer says about sex. That's why I'm so excited that you're reading this book, even if you've done everything right when it comes to sex. If you're one of those rare people who clearly recognize the sexual seduction so prevalent and pervasive in our world today, if you have your passions reined in and under control, you still need this book. It's a thorough guide to the truth about sex—the good, the bad, and the beautiful. Although the word *sex* won't be found in a Bible concordance—except for two places in the *New International Version*—the Word of God, through a variety of terms, deals thoroughly with all God intends for us to know about the subject. Wherever you are, whatever your past experience, you and I and those who join you in studying this topic are going to discover for ourselves the truth about God's "product." We're going to look at what sex is and why God created it in the first place. You're going to see and know for yourself what God says about the where, the when, and the how of it—and what happens when you don't follow God's directions. And of course, since it's so necessary, we'll also explore what to do if you've experienced the harmful side of sex because you didn't know the truth or didn't listen or were victimized.

As you study the Bible, you're going to learn so much, my friend, that you'll find God using you in a significant way to help others in these critical, difficult days. You could be used of God to start a new sexual revolution. How awesome that would be!

What other warnings does the Manufacturer offer?

*"Poison: Keep Out of the Reach of Children."* That was what I wanted the teens to understand that night in Dalton, Georgia! Sex is not for children—or for anyone else who doesn't know the rules and how to handle it in a responsible way. If we engage in sex without understanding and without following the Manufacturer's instructions, it will poison us. Sex is not for children, yet many in our society believe differently and are doing everything they can to legalize sex with children. Think of the children who have been abused for the pleasure of some adult. Think of the children exploited for child pornography. When you look in their eyes, it's as if the light of life has been turned off and their precious bodies have been vacated. All is dark, hopeless. They have been forced into an adult world they cannot handle.

No matter what anyone says, sex is not for children, and woe to those who use children for their sexual gratification or the gratification of others.


According to Jesus, their judgment will be great.

*“Causes Severe Burns on Contact.”* This crystal drain cleaner, the back label informed me, would not “harm pipes, septic tanks, or cesspools”—but it could burn skin! Not only that, but the contents could *“violently erupt or boil out!”* That evening as I talked to the teens about the similarities between sex and Drano, I used a little body language to illustrate this fact that both could explode. Arching my back and sticking out my tummy, I ran my hand over my abdomen as if I were pregnant. From the response of the group, I knew my point was made.

Tragically, in the two decades since I talked to those teens, sex has erupted more and more frequently in other ways—STDs (sexually transmitted diseases), AIDS, abortions, and even hysterectomies because of too many sex partners or botched abortions. I know far too many who have been burned by sex or who watched in disbelief as it exploded into horrific consequences! Sex is powerful and grievously destructive when used by those who don’t know the truth about its far-reaching consequences.

Well, my friend, that’s what this book is all about—the truth about sex. Truth is always liberating; it lets you know exactly where you are, what is right, what is wrong, whether it can be fixed and how. And I want you to know—no matter where you are—it *can* be fixed. We’ll see how.

When you read the bottom of the back label of a Drano can, you’ll find these words not only written in red but also outlined in red:

*Poison*   
*May Be Fatal or Cause Permanent Damage If Swallowed.*  
*Causes Severe Burns to Eyes and Skin.*

The label goes on to say the product *“may cause blindness.”* Can you see how that correlates with our society today? The blindness that comes from misunderstanding and misusing sex, from not knowing the truth?

I recently received this e-mail from someone who “accidentally,” in the sovereignty of God, caught my television program.

For the first time last night I watched your program. You discussed the purpose of marriage and read scriptures from the Bible that very much identify with the situation I am in. I have lived with a guy for 4.5 years now, and for some reason both of us are afraid to commit for various different reasons. We know we want to be together, but [we]

just think if it's working okay for right now, why bother with getting married. Now I know why we should get married. I have never been much into reading the Bible. I have tried several times but find it hard to comprehend. You put meaning and explanation behind the scriptures that people in everyday life can relate to. I want to thank you. I am glad I was channel surfing...

This book is vital and crucial in its timing, because our postmodern culture denies all absolutes, cries for tolerance toward everyone except Christians, and encourages people to do what is right in their own eyes. In such a world, many, even in the church, are ignorant about the consequences of sex outside God's parameters. Tragic consequences follow when sex is pursued without rules or restraints, and God doesn't want you to be blind or blindsided by this subject. Therefore, our goal in this book is to discover His truth so your vision is not clouded by the lies of the Enemy.

But let's continue our look at the Drano label. What if you don't follow the instructions on the can of Drano and you get burned or poisoned, or there's a violent eruption? What does the manufacturer advise? *"Immediately Give First Aid."*

As you've been reading, have you been holding your breath, shaking your head, wondering if there's any help, any hope for you or others you know? Oh, how I wish I could say this to you in person: There is *still* hope no matter how far you've deviated either unintentionally or willfully from what is right. There *is* hope no matter what has been done to you sexually. You can recover; your loved ones can recover. Our society could recover!

I know that may seem impossible, given the appalling state of our morals—but the situation *can* be reversed. It happened in England in the late 1700s, when the tide of social principles was turned for the better under the leadership of William Wilberforce. This godly man sought to reform the morals of his nation as he in 1787 conceived of a society that would work "for the encouragement of piety and virtue; and for the preventing of vice, profaneness, and immorality."<sup>13</sup> Biographer John Pollock wrote that "Wilberforce...made goodness fashionable."<sup>14</sup>

Can you imagine how such a movement might transform our country, our world today? There *is* a way to recover, because God is God and He is all about the business of redemption, reclaiming what was lost and transforming

it into something of value.

Just remember: Because God is God, no one—absolutely no one—is outside the reach of His healing, restorative power.

## The Road Best Left Untraveled

I know what it is to struggle in the area of sex because I have been there. I know the pain, the regret that comes when sex takes place in a way that isn't according to God's plan. I didn't read the directions in full, and the one command I did know, "Thou shall not commit adultery," I flagrantly broke mentally while I was married and numerous times physically after my husband and I divorced.

Why did I do those things? I wanted to be happy, to be loved. I wanted to be sexy—irresistibly, delightfully appealing—because I thought that was where I'd find happiness!

Consequently, I really messed up my life and the lives of others. I sinned. I broke God's commandments. That's what sin is—living independently of God. It's *you* acting like God, *you* deciding what is right and wrong instead of listening to what God has already said in His book. Sin is choosing not to believe God. It is knowing to do good but not doing it.

I sinned, and it took me further than I ever wanted to go and cost me more than I ever intended to pay. How I wish someone had helped me see the warning signs, the dangerous curves ahead, and had led me to God's straight and narrow road that leads to life.

I didn't consider my future; I simply lived for the moment, a moment I believed might give me the joy I longed for. But it didn't. It was a downward spiral until, at the age of twenty-nine, I fell on my knees and told God He could do anything with me He wanted. Oh, if only I had known before what He wanted, I would have been on my knees in full surrender much earlier.

When I finally listened and decided to live God's way, the recovery began. I look back now and cannot help but grin and shake my head. Never! Never did I dream what God had in store. It's awesome. Only God could do it! Yet with all my being I wish I had never taken that other road. I wish I had known the truth about sex.

Well, my friend, let's begin this adventure of discovering those crucial truths for ourselves. I have to warn you, however, that we're going to see more

negative warnings about sex than positive instructions, although the positive *is* there. It has to be; God invented sex, and He is a God of good and perfect gifts. But sex is high, holy—so sacred, so finely tuned in its creative power that this is where our sinful nature is most likely to cause us to self-destruct. Thankfully, because God's business is creation and redemption rather than death and destruction, He's given you absolutely everything you need to keep from self-destructing.

So let's dig into the truth—positive and negative and redemptive.

# IN THE BEGINNING

## Why Did God Create Sex?

**T**here's great confusion in our society today about sex. We live in a culture where we almost breathe sex! Grab the television remote for a few minutes of channel surfing, and it's there, discussed, debated, demonstrated, and used to sell anything and everything from cars to shampoo, from coffee to toothpaste. The message is loud and clear: We have to be desirable. One way or another we have to attract the opposite sex if we ever want love. It's no longer love that makes the world go round; it's sex!

Go on the Internet, type in an innocuous word, and without warning you're offered titillating sights and experiences you never knew existed—or you wish you never knew. Your curiosity tempts you to investigate further. Your mind tries to rationalize how you can go where you know you shouldn't. You find yourself battling a desire—a longing so unexpectedly awakened.

You get out of the house, walk down the street, and it steps right in front of you—parading long, luscious legs and a short, tight skirt that rides every movement of her hips. You look up to distract yourself from the thoughts invading your mind, and you see a billboard that only entices you to carry the thoughts further.

You walk into a corner store to grab something to eat or drink, and the magazines catch your eye. The pictures and headlines promise answers to your questions, ways to get or keep a lover excited and interested, and ways you can test your sexual IQ.

You get together with your friends, and eventually the subject turns to the opposite sex—conquests are shared, frustrations are expressed, advice is given, or you're laughed at because you haven't had it! You're told you just don't know what true excitement is.

That night you go to a movie; it's rated PG, but the upcoming attractions are not. Most of them sell sex, and you're sitting with your arm around someone whose skin is warm and soft, her perfume sweetening the aura of her femininity—or you're snuggling closer to a guy who exudes strength and tenderness. Your mind is going where it shouldn't go, your flesh is longing for what it shouldn't have; she's not your wife...he's not your husband.

You go home with your date and what do you do? Should you really go in, even for just a few minutes? If you do, will you engage in intercourse—or everything short of it? And whether or not you “go all the way,” will you experience sex the way God intended it to be when He created sex?

## The Original Design

Let's go back to the very beginning, to Genesis, the first book in the Bible. I want you to see for yourself what God says about sex, about our gender differences, and why He made us this way. As you read Genesis 1, a portion of which is printed out for you below, I suggest that you mark the text as you read it. When you do this and then write out your observations, it helps you not only grasp for yourself exactly what God says and means, it also helps you remember what you discovered. Now then, color or underline every reference to *man*, including every pronoun (every *him*, every *them*).

GENESIS 1:25-28

<sup>25</sup> God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

<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.”

What did *you* learn from marking the references to *man*? Did you notice the word *you* in that question is italicized? That’s because this book is about you. Our study together is not an issue of your agreeing or disagreeing with what I write; rather it’s about seeing with *your own* eyes the truth about sex. Then you can make an informed, intelligent, rational decision about what you’re going to do with what you’ve learned. And when you come to the final page of this book, you’ll never have occasion to say with regret, “Well, if only I had known!” You will *know*. You’ll know it all, because we’ll cover it all.

Now let’s get back into our study, starting with listing your insights. Observing the text in this careful way helps you see exactly what God is saying, and it keeps you from straying into “I think,” “I heard,” or “I just feel” as you strive to grasp God’s truth. These comments are not bad; you just need to get the facts first and go from there. So in the space provided, record the facts you learned about *man* from reading Genesis 1.

Before we discuss what we observed in Genesis 1, let's look at Genesis 2. What God does in this next passage is tighten the focus on the telescope and take you in for a closer look, enabling you to see the details of the creation of man and woman.

As you read the text, mark every reference to the *man* like this ♂ and every reference to the *woman* like this: ♀. Also mark pronouns the same way.

GENESIS 2 : 7 - 8 , 15 - 25

7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

8 The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed....

15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

16 The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

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."

19 Out of the ground the LORD God 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.

20 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.

Now list below what you learned in this passage from marking *man* and *woman*.

MAN

WOMAN

Genesis 1 tells us that both man and woman were created on the sixth day, yet Genesis 2 shows us there was an order to their creation. Adam was created first from the dust of the earth, while the woman was created from a rib taken from the side of the man. God makes sure we know His purpose in creating the woman: She is to be a helper to the man, because among the beasts of the field no suitable companion for him was found. The Hebrew words in this passage translated as *helper suitable* (*help meet* in the *King James Version*) are *ezer neged*. *Ezer* means "an aide," while *neged* means "a counterpart, a mate."

If it wasn't good for Adam to be alone, why didn't God just create another

man to be Adam's companion? Is there a difference between the sexes? You need to know what the Bible teaches, because an opposing view has long been promoted—and many have bought into its lie.

I've saved a page of notes given to me by a college student who wrote them down while sitting in a class on child development in 1979. As you read verbatim what my friend wrote, please know these are not the ravings of a lone liberal. I wish they were. Rather these notes reflect the cleverly wrought lies that had to be presented—and believed—to make way for the perversions that would follow in the name of "scientific" research. I will share only the first three; they're enough.

1. We are born asexual, neither homosexual nor heterosexual.
2. Children's sex is determined by labels parents place before two years of age.
3. All our sexual behavior is learned. Sex drive is learned, influenced by our environment.

Although these statements were supposedly based on the latest scientific research in the study of human sexuality, are they true? Do they concur with the Word of God?

What did you see in Genesis 1 and 2? Were we created asexual?

And were we designed to reproduce asexual offspring? Genesis 4 answers that quickly: When Eve gave birth to their first child, she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD" (verse 1). Eve could tell the baby was not female like she was. A human, yes; a woman, no. His anatomy was different and the difference was evident from birth. So it was then, and so it has always been.

God determines the sex of the child, and the sex, except in very rare situations, is evident from birth. But the difference is not one of mere anatomy. You can put a little boy in a feminine environment, but it won't remove the Y chromosome that makes him male. It won't diminish his levels of testosterone, a hormone that shoots up six to seven weeks after the sperm meets the egg and far exceeds the testosterone levels in females.

When children reach the age of puberty, it won't matter what environment they've been raised in, what clothes they were dressed in, what gender

they were labeled with. A girl's estrogen level will be eight to ten times higher than a boy's, and his testosterone level will exceed hers by a factor of fifteen.<sup>1</sup> Our environment can greatly impact how we view ourselves, what we think of as normal, and some of our preferences—but it cannot change our gender. If it could, people wouldn't be seeking sex-change operations.

If you want truth without distortion, you'll find it in the Bible. God's Book tells us we were created distinctively male and female. Eve was designed to be a suitable helper, a companion for Adam. Both were also designed for the purpose of procreation. Two men, no matter how they were raised, cannot have sex and produce a child. Neither can two women. It takes a sperm and an egg to make a child—and for those elements you need a man and a woman.

As I said, God didn't create another man to be Adam's companion; He created Eve, a woman. It was Adam and Eve who were to be fruitful and multiply by producing male and female babies, who in turn would grow up and produce more male and female babies.

And how would this happen? Did you notice that Genesis 2:24 says, "and they shall become one flesh"? What does that mean?

God explains it very clearly in 1 Corinthians 6:15-18. As you read this passage printed out for you, remember that the apostle Paul is writing these words to Christians. A genuine Christian has the Holy Spirit dwelling inside him or her. Christianity is Christ in us; therefore, our bodies become His temple.

Also as you read, mark the following three things each in a distinctive way: every reference to *you* and *your*; every occurrence of *prostitute*, and every mention of *immorality*. In marking words, I find it most helpful to use different colors, so they're easily recognized. (As you continue in this book, you may want to keep on hand a half-dozen colored pencils—or at least a three-colored ballpoint pen.) If marking these words in different colors isn't practical, you can underline *you* and put a downward arrow over *prostitute* like this ↓ and a big **I** over *immorality*.

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 6:15-18

<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.

What did you learn from marking *you* and *your*?

According to what you read in this passage and in Genesis 2, how would you explain the phrase, “the two shall become one flesh”?

What is the “immorality” to which Paul refers in these verses?

It’s so incredible, so awesome: Sex, by God’s design, is *becoming one flesh*. When God made Adam and Eve distinctively male and female, He designed them anatomically so they could physically become one flesh in the act of sexual intercourse.

God formed us to know no greater ecstasy than when a man and a woman literally merge into one flesh. Hormones, nerves, sensory receptors, and other specific physical characteristics are all part of His divine design for our pleasure in the physical oneness of marriage.

An ecstasy beyond exquisite.

A oneness washing over you, a wave of passion carrying you weightless to a sea of delight.

Passion that loses consciousness of anything else.

Exhaustion that leaves you spent, drained of tension, and filled with satisfaction, total satisfaction.

Sex has a beauty all its own and—wonder of wonders!—God invented it.

You do realize, don't you, that God didn't have to make sex so pleasurable! He could have designed it to be very mechanical, much like the instructions on the Drano can: To make a baby, first do this, then that, and follow with this. Be careful of such and such. Nine months later you should produce a child; if not, repeat entire process again until successful.

No feelings, no passion, no exhilaration—just mechanics.

Never! That's so far from what God intended in creating sex. Sex is not meant to be mechanical; it's meant to be passionate. Sex, in its perfect form, brings the intimacy of not only truly belonging to another but longing for the presence of our beloved. In its hallowed purity, the union of a husband and wife becomes a holy metaphor of the wife God seeks for His Son, of the oneness He longs to have with His chosen people Israel.

## **The Ultimate Love Story**

From beginning to end, the Bible is about a divine romance. It opens with the account of a man and woman becoming one flesh. It ends with the Spirit and the Bride inviting others to join God's forever family. The Old Testament shows us the joy of fidelity and the heart-wrenching pain of adultery. We watch as God takes the canvas of the Old Testament and paints the picture of His love affair with Israel.

In Ezekiel 16, He sketches the picture of Israel's birth, her abandonment, and His compassion when He found her in the field, her cord uncut, her body bloody and unwashed. Our hearts are touched as we observe His care in raising her until the time of love had come. In Jeremiah 2 we watch as He pauses for a moment, a smile crossing His face as He remembers the devotion of her youth, the love of their betrothal, the way she followed Him through the wilderness. Then the day came when Israel became His wife: "I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I

spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine,' declares the Lord GOD" (Ezekiel 16:8).

A covenant is a solemn, binding agreement between two parties—one lesser and one greater, or both of equal status—who commit themselves to each other under certain conditions. A covenant once made is never to be broken. In a covenant relationship, two become one; they no longer live independently. They are now bound to protect and defend one another, share everything in common, be there for the other until death. So solemn is this arrangement that God becomes the sovereign administrator of every covenant, watching to make certain its conditions are fulfilled and, if they are not, to come to the defense of the violated one and to deal out retribution against the violator of the covenant. In the book of Malachi, God calls marriage a covenant and expresses how He hates divorce, a man putting away the wife of his youth.<sup>2</sup>

God's love for His covenant nation is so evident in the Bible, in the telling of their love story. Nothing is too good for her. He adorned her with ornaments, putting bracelets on her hand, a necklace around her neck, a beautiful crown upon her head. Her dresses were of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. She ate the choicest of food. Exceedingly beautiful, she advanced to royalty. He bestowed His splendor on her, and her fame spread.

Then it happened.

She trusted in her beauty and began to play the harlot, pouring out her favors on every passerby. She sacrificed their children on the altars of fame and fortune.<sup>3</sup> What once was beauty became lewdness. Her nakedness was experienced by many...and His heart broke.

Eventually, to get her attention, He wrote her a bill of divorcement and sent her away—but she was never far from His heart.

She descended down and down into greater degradation until she ended up for sale in a slave market—and God went to redeem her, Israel, His beloved. (We're given the picture in the book of Hosea, in the story the prophet tells of himself and Gomer.)

Israel's redemption would come through their own son, Jesus, whose very name means "God is our salvation," for it was He who would save their people from their sins. When Jesus came of age, God sought a bride for their son. This half-breed—Jew and Gentile in one body—was offered for re-



demption in a slave market at a terrible price, but the Father and Son did not hesitate to pay. They counseled together to redeem her with the blood of her betrothed, God's only begotten Son.

The covenant of marriage has been cut at Calvary, but it has not yet been consummated. Jesus is at home preparing a place for His bride, the church, in His father's house. The Father's servants are watching over her, urging her to stay pure so that she might be presented as a chaste virgin when the trumpet sounds and He at last comes, with shouts of joy, to take her home. Longing and looking for that day, she is preparing her bridal gown, white and clean, and sending out the invitation to come to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The Book of books, the Bible, opens with a wedding and a home in a garden, then it closes with a wedding and the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

And what do we find in the middle of this Book of books? We find the greatest of all the love songs ever written: the Song of Solomon. A song that from beginning to end extols the beauty of sex in its ideal form. A story of unquenchable, priceless love, a love that so satisfies our deepest longings that we turn to no other, for we know, "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, . . . and his desire is for me" (6:3; 7:10). A book that does not mention God—and doesn't need to, for it is the very expression of all God intended when He made us male and female and brought woman to man. A book that cautions us not to arouse or awaken love until it pleases, lest we mar its intended beauty and unique intimacy.



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