

**PROTECTING  
OUR FAMILIES  
FROM  
IMMORALITY**

# PROTECTING OUR FAMILIES FROM IMMORALITY

You, as teens, are being bombarded with an unbiblical view of life and especially in the area of sexuality.

## Input:

1. In what different ways is the unbiblical view being communicated?

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2. What kinds of messages are being communicated about sexuality, relationships, etc.? (i.e., What are you being told is right or OK?)

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## The State of Culture: Institutionalizing Sexual Idolatry

Our culture's emphasis on and view of sexuality (the secular world view) is anchored in and flows out of the view of a life that has exchanged the worship and service of the Creator for the worship and service of the created thing.

Romans 1:21-25 *Because that, when they knew God, **they glorified [him] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**(22) **Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,** (23)*

And **changed** the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. (24) Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: (25) Who **changed** the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

**Input 1**      **Identify in the Romans passage the:**

***Exchange of one thing for another***

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***Idolatry, worship and service***

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***Resulting perversion of sexuality***

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**Input 2**      **What happens to a person's heart when he rejects God and His truth? (vs. 21)**

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**Input 3**      **How does a person evaluate himself after he has refused to acknowledge God? (vs. 22a)**

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**Input 4**      **How does God evaluate that same person?**

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**Input 5**      **Look at your answers for questions 1-4 and jot down your thoughts about our culture and its views of sexuality.**

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**The following are seven controlling ideas that make up this godless philosophy and world view:**

- People are ultimate and autonomous. That is, there is nothing more important than the individual. I am free from any authority I do not choose to follow. *This thinking is the result of Romans 1:21.*
- The highest human value and experience is personal satisfaction and pleasure. *This flows out of Romans 1:24.*
- I must be constantly vigilant that my “needs” are met.
- The most important love is the love of self.
- With pleasure, bigger is better. There is constant desire for greater stimulation. *The idea of “The Law of Diminishing Returns”!*

- ❑ The here and now is what is important. There is a constant pursuit of instant gratification. No concept of future judgment, accountability, rewards.
- ❑ The physical person is more important than the spiritual person. Ephesians 4:17-19
- With this kind of philosophy driving people's lives (remember people are ultimate, God and His authority resulting in accountability are absent, and pleasure is the highest value) **self becomes god** (overthrowing the first great commandment) and **people become objects** to give me satisfaction rather than God- honoring relationships(overthrowing the second great commandment).

Matthew 22:35-40 *Then one of them, [which was] a lawyer, asked [him a question], tempting him, and saying, (36) Master, which [is] the great commandment in the law? (37) Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (40) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

Romans 1:18-27 and the philosophy it teaches stands in bold contrast to Matthew 22: 35-40!

### **State of the Church: Giving Mixed Messages to Our Teens**

- Teens may often think that the church is “sex negative” or against sex.

**Input 1      For what reasons might this be so?**

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**Input 2      How could an emphasis on sin being primarily behavioral and physical limit the help teens really need?**

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- When teens do not come to church with their questions regarding sexuality, they are left with one of three options:
- 1) They can try to live with the church's embarrassed silence and cope with their questions, interests and experiences alone.
  - 2) They can assume that Christians do not have sexual questions or problems, and begin to question their own relationship with the Lord when they do.
  - 3) They can go where information and open discussion are readily available – that is, the world.
- ★ Our goal is to talk freely and appropriately about this important issue so that biblical answers are not only available without embarrassment, but that those answers are readily sought by our teens.

### **A Biblical View of Teenagers**

- A biblical view of adolescence is crucial to effectively helping our teens with the area of sexuality.
- The following quotes are typical of many parents who are offering no hope to their teens:

Quote:            "We just have to expect our teenagers to be rebellious, all of us were. We just need to ride it out." -Father

Quote:            "You can't argue with hormones." -Mother

Too many times we have bought into the model that teens are essentially a bundle of biological (physical) urges and rebel hormones about which nothing can be done.

This views teens as victims of these biological (physical) urges over which they have no control.

**Input 1**      **In what ways can these kinds of perspectives rob a teen of hope in dealing with his/her sexuality?**

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**Input 2**      **What do these perspectives imply about responsibility, accountability, the Scriptures and/or God?**

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- ➔ The Scripture does not ignore this time of life nor the temptations that teens must deal with.
- ➔ You and I as teens and adults must ask the question, "What evil desires, lusts or temptations can grip a teen during this phase of life? They are not just sexual in nature, but sexual temptations are definitely included.

**Input 1**      **Look up the following passages and record what is being said or implied about this stage of life.**

2 Tim. 2:22

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1 Tim. 5:1,2

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- It is clear that with adolescence (teen years) comes a unique set of strong temptations stemming from one's maturing sexuality. However, that is not a complete view of teens. To stop here would definitely be an unbalanced model of the struggles unique to teens.
- Proverbs chapters 1-7 (notice who is teaching whom – Dad) teaches us about fathers addressing their sons (and certainly daughters would be included) about living wisely and foolishly. This section gives great balance to the current single-pronged biological view. Remember the seventh issue we talked about earlier "the physical person is more important than the spiritual person". The biological model of teens driven by what we saw in Romans 1:21-25 basically eliminates the "spiritual" issues, the Scripture does not.

**Teenagers don't tend to value wisdom.**

The issue here is a lack of commitment to God's truth:

- Teenagers tend to be closed.
- Teenagers tend to be defensive.
- Teenagers tend to not love correction.
- Teenagers tend to be externally focused; more concerned about physical things than spiritual things.

**Input**      **In what ways do you tend to be this way?**

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**Teenagers tend to be unwise in their choice of companions, those who significantly influence their lives.**

**Input**      **In what ways do your choices of friends tend to reflect a lack of wisdom?**

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**☐ Teenagers don't tend to focus on the heart.**

- Teens tend to bring a natural legalism to a relationship with authority. That is, they want to know the rule and how close they can get to the edge without getting into trouble and what will happen if they "cross the line".
- Teens tend to focus on the letter of the law and not the spirit.
- To ignore this heart-driven life (or to treat as behavior only) may result in helping to create a Pharisee.

*Matthew 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*

**Input**

**In what ways do you tend to emphasize the letter of the law and ignore the issues of the heart? Can you give an example or two?**

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**☐ Teenagers don't tend to have a perspective that factors in eternity.**

- The view of life that brings godly responsibility to one's sexuality is rooted in eternity.
- In other words, this is not all there is (here and now, instant gratification, etc.). Don't let the desires of the moment fool or deceive you or blind you into ignoring what is to come.

**Input**

**For what reasons would you or one of your peers not factor in eternity when viewing sexual responsibility?**

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- ❑ **Teenagers tend to be uniquely susceptible to sexual temptation.**

Chapters 5 and 7 of this section in Proverbs are entirely given to this subject.

- ★ Teens see and feel things, during this time, that they never have before, but often do not have the accompanying wisdom and maturity to deal with them. Their bodies are changing, they begin to notice the opposite sex...God created them to change... let's help.

**Input**      **In what ways does each of these five characteristics influence the way you think about and respond to your sexuality?**

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## **A Biblical Model of Sexuality**

- ❑ **Sex is a key way a person expresses worship.      (Rom. 1:18-27).**

- Sex is a principle way in which a person reveals what is really ruling his life.
- Teens see life as worship.

### **✚ Worship of God**

- Living in a growing relationship with God
  - Hoping in His promises
  - Obeying His commands
  - Relying on His grace
  - Desiring His glory

### **✚ Idolatry**

- Someone or something else is controlling my heart and life.
- Some part of creation has replaced the Creator

- Live for personal pleasure
- Live for glory of self

Without this heart/worship perspective the Christian life is basically reduced to a Pharisaical “do this and please Jesus” religious routine.

**Input**

**Write your thoughts about the following two ideas.**

- Worship of God demonstrated by my sexuality. What kinds of choices (thoughts) at this age demonstrate God-Creator worship?

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- Idolatry demonstrated by my sexuality. What kinds of choices (thoughts) at this age demonstrate idol-creature worship?

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**☐ Sex is a key way a person expresses his identity ( 1 Cor. 6:12-20).**

- The question of identity is “Who am I?” → How I view and respond to my sexuality will clearly answer this question.
- The answer can be simply stated by two contrasting world views of self.
  - ⇒ I am ultimate and autonomous – puts me in a ruling posture.
  - ⇒ I am created and dependent on God – puts me in a subordinate, obeying, serving posture.
- So the question you must grapple with and answer in your heart, as well as in your life, is: “By which paradigm, or world view, will I live my life?”
- Paul gives four aspects of the Christian’s identity that provide Godly boundaries for sex and every other area of life.

**One: I am a servant of Christ (v. 12).**

- You are free from the bondage of sin, but not to self-centered liberty. → You are free to enjoy your slavery to Him and, in that, find true freedom.
- The point is, your sexual life will either demonstrate joyful submission to Christ or loyalty to another master.

**Two: I am an eternal being (v. 14).**

- This world is not all there is.
- Your future hope changes the way you view your present pressures, responsibilities and opportunities.
- You must live carefully, prayerfully and patiently. You must be aware of the eternal value of every sacrificial, flesh-crucifying choice you make.

**Three: I am one with Christ (vs. 15,17).**

- There is union with Christ. Independence is a myth. Therefore, your life should express the will of Christ.

**Four: I am the property of Christ (vs. 19-20).**

- Christ bought you. Your obligation now is to please your new owner.

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your**

**With those four aspects of “Christian identity” in mind, jot down thoughts about how these can be a powerful defense against “youthful lusts”.**

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**Sex is a key revealer of a person’s heart (Eph. 5:3-7).**

- It is not enough to say, “I have not physically committed sexual sin, therefore I am pure and holy.”

- For Christ, lust breaks the prohibition against adultery (Mat. 5:27-28).
- Your sexual behavior demonstrates what is ruling your heart.
- A sexually immoral person is an idolater (Eph. 5:5). Therefore, it is not enough to abstain from outward sexual sin. → That outward sin reveals a sinful heart that determines behavior.
- You must face your heart.

**Input**

**How can a focus on “purity equals not committing physical sexual sin” deceive me in what biblical purity really is?**

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**What other passages clearly deal with sin being primarily an issue of the heart?**

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**Sex is a key revealer my need for grace (Rom. 7:7-25).**

- Sex causes me to see my weakness.
- God’s grace for Christian living is an absolute necessity. Where sin abounds, God’s grace abounds more (Rom. 5:20).
- Self-sufficiency to handle my sin, or self-righteousness to please God, are lies.

## Biblical Goals for Teens and Sex Must Be Established

**Input**      **Jot down your thoughts about the accuracy or inaccuracy of this statement:**

**“To be physically abstinent is to be morally pure.”**

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- Moral purity is a matter of the heart.
- You cannot relax, feel successful or self-righteous because you have kept the letter of the law while violating the spirit (Mat. 5:20-22, 27-28).

**Input**      **Jot down your thoughts about the accuracy or inaccuracy of this statement:**

**“A physically abstinent relationship is automatically God-honoring.”**

- You can have idolatrous goals for a relationship and be physically abstinent. (I want to be seen with someone popular. I want someone with a car to take me places. I want to get out of my home. I want to “feel loved”, etc.)
- You can't be comfortable with self-centered, manipulative friendships simply because you have not committed physical immorality.

**Input**      **Jot down your thoughts about using the “abstinence goal” as an indicator of other relationships being God-honoring (parent-child, employer-employee, deacon care-team member, etc.)**

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- The bottom line issue here is: Where do we begin to establish boundaries of sexual purity?
- It can't be the edge of behavior.
  - It must be where Christ set the boundaries – squarely within the heart.
  - You can't merely settle for external do-able goals that encourage self-righteousness without solving the problem. The Pharisees were prime examples of this kind of living. Unbelievers do this all the time!!

## **A Plan for Helping Teens**

### **Prevention: Responsibly Educating Teens**



**There are at least seven principles that need to be stressed.**

1. God is the Creator, and it is important to understand His original purpose for all things (Ps. 24 – to glorify Him).
2. People are God's creatures, and therefore we are responsible to Him for all we are and do. The goal of life is to live for His pleasure and glory (Gen. 1; Col. 3:17).
3. People are unified beings. Sin is both spiritual and physical, a matter of the heart and behavior (Rom. 8:1-17).
4. Life is worship. Everything I do expresses worship to God or something else. The deepest questions of human life are not questions of my pain or pleasure, but of what I worship. This is what really determines my approach to life (Rom. 1:18-32).
5. God's way, no matter how hard, is always best. As the psalmist says, all the ways of the Lord are right and true, while the way that seems right to a

man leads to death. I will not always understand how God's way is best. That is why I need a heart of humble submission to His commands and a humble faith in His promises (Ps. 19:7-11).

6. Because the goal of life is to follow the will of God and to live to His glory, I always have a higher agenda than momentary personal pleasure (see 1 Cor. 6:18-20; Titus 2:9-10).
7. Jesus Christ came not only to protect us from eternal evil, but to free us from slavery to the desires of our flesh, so we may live under the control of the Spirit (Eph. 2:1-5; 2 Pet. 1:4).



### **There are at least six practical implications for teen sexuality.**

1. God does not single out teenagers for sacrifice and suffering. Rather, He calls them to experience the joys and blessings found by serving Him in everyday situations.
2. Since God, as Creator, formed our bodies and created sexuality, we will never properly experience this part of life until we understand His plan and purpose.
3. God's plan is that we would, within His boundaries, enjoy this area without ambivalence or shame.
4. We are unified beings, so our sexuality is never isolated from the other parts of us. Sex is never just a physical act; it is always a matter of the heart. It is not enough to ask whether a person has "had sex" yet. We should also be asking about the desires, motives, and thoughts that shape his or her approach to a relationship.
5. We must always examine the thoughts and motives of our hearts in the area of sex: "Have I accepted the sensual lies and the idols of the culture around me?"
6. A person's approach to sexuality must always be shaped by the Two Great Commands, to love God first and to love our neighbor as ourselves.



## Restoration: Helping Teens Who Have Misused Sex

Some teens (and parents of those teens) think their life is wasted because they have sinned sexually. Some think they must marry the one they had sex with, etc.

1. Be totally honest and make a commitment to be held accountable.
2. Keep a focus on your heart. Don't settle for "talking about or stopping" behavior only. What rules your heart will be lived out.
3. Identify the voices in your life. Who is influencing you? What is being said to you? To what degree are you buying into what you hear?
4. Repent. Where has God's truth been exchanged for a lie? Where has the worship and service to God been exchanged for the worship and service of something else?
  - **Consideration:** Be willing to look at your sexual life in the light of Scripture.
  - **Confession:** Take responsibility for your sexual sin before God and rest in His forgiveness.
  - **Commitment:** Determine, by God's grace, to live a new life in the area of sex.
  - **Change:** Identify changes that will conform your sexual life to God's will and plan to bring about those changes.
5. Identify places of temptation and make plans to deal with it.
6. Learn about biblical friendship. Purpose to keep the two great commandments in each one.
7. Make sure you are not just talking in comfortable generalities. Be concrete and specific.
8. Balance the put-off (don't have sex) with the positive put-on. List some practical, godly goals for your relationships with the opposite sex.

## Strategizing: Helping Teens Plan for Godly Relationships

1. Study the biblical view of relationships that will lead to a practical, godly plan for relationships.

Talk to your parents and/or other godly adults about your struggles with relationships.

Don't be afraid to be honest. Your struggles are not different from theirs.

2. Evaluate what you are actually doing to cultivate and maintain an open, honest relationship with your parents. Get help if you need it to see this relationship grow.
3. Be transparent about areas of temptation. Be honest with "where you are" in handling these temptations. Ask for stronger accountability, if necessary.
4. Take the long view of relationships. Rather than focus on the joys and pains of "now", start thinking in terms of preparing for marriage.
  - What steps need to be taken now?
  - What habits need to be developed now?
  - What things need to be forsaken now?

*Much of this material has been gleaned from the writings of Paul Tripp.*