

Sex, Body and Soul – Part 1

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There is nothing in the human experience quite like the act of sex. It is a uniquely physical act. It is a uniquely spiritual act. It is beautiful if performed within God's boundaries. But it is destructive to body and soul if experienced outside God's design.

What the bible teaches regarding marriage and sex is fundamentally different than what the world teaches. It is no secret that in recent years our world has undergone a seismic change in regard to its perspective toward sex. Those who seek to uphold a sexual morality based on biblical standards find themselves increasingly at odds with the prevailing culture, mocked for holding an antiquated worldview, and slandered as being intolerant and close-minded.

How do we stay encouraged and resolute in our pursuit for purity? Where can we find motivation as we swim upstream against an increasingly hostile environment? How do we teach our children to view sexuality through a biblical lens and impart to them a desire for purity amidst a generation that disdains moral excellence?

The pursuit of sexual purity is one of the greatest trials in the Christian life, and the present culture that we live in only amplifies this trial. Like all trials, the battleground for purity begins with a proper understanding of biblical truth. There are two biblical truths that are foundational to understand if we want to give ourselves and our families a fighting chance to persevere amidst this battle: 1) a proper understanding of our body and soul/spirit, and 2) eternal hope, by which I mean living our lives in such a way that the pursuit of eternal gain supersedes the pursuit of worldly gain.

As Christians we are united with Christ. We have been bought with a price, and our body and soul belong to God. Union with Christ is union of both body and soul.

In the act of sex, a man and woman are united both physically and spiritually. No act other than sex unites the body and soul with another human. Our earthly body is the temple of Christ, therefore, to have sex with someone outside of marriage is to defile Christ's temple; it is a sinful union with another while at the same time being in union with Christ.

It is for this reason that God views sexual immorality as a separate class of sin (1 Corinthians 6:18). Sex outside of marriage is a sin against our resurrected body. The body and soul are inseparable; this is the case during our earthly lives, and it will be true in eternity. The Apostle Paul teaches that

sexual immorality harms the union the Christian has with Christ, and furthermore he teaches it is the only sin that will affect our eternal body.

As a teenager growing up in church, I remember being told not to have sex before marriage because it could lead to pregnancy or a sexually transmitted disease. This is good advice, as far as it goes. But it misses the much more important point. It is worldly advice that does not take the eternal into account. Venereal diseases are treatable. And even if they go untreated, their impact is limited to the earthly body. As men and women striving for purity, and as parents hoping to instill a desire for purity in our children, we do well to remember that there is something much more important at stake: sexual immorality in this life will forever affect our resurrected bodies in heaven.

In Part 2 of this series, we will explore man's two-part being: body and soul/spirit. And in Part 3 we will further examine the connection between sex and our body and soul.

Questions For Reflection:

- Why does the Apostle Paul compare the marriage of a man and woman to the union of Christ and the church in Ephesians 5:28-32?
- What is the connection between eternal hope and sexual morality? From where do you draw motivation as you strive for sexual purity?