

*Moral Issues of Our Time*  
*Lesson 4 – The Snare of Sexual immorality*  
[www.aubeacon.com](http://www.aubeacon.com)

**Introduction:** How can I have a fulfilled and joyful life?

- A. There are *choices and relationships* that have a powerful influence on how we view ourselves. Putting God first blesses this life and the one to come! **(Jn 10:10)**
  - 1. Each of us has a need to be accepted and to have a purpose in life.
  - 2. Start with God and *view all things from our relationship with Him*. **(Jer 9:23-24)**
  - 3. God’s way is “more difficult” in the short term but provides a foundation that will greatly bless one who pursues it. **(Ps 27:10-11; 32:7-11)**
- B. We face an onslaught of teaching from the world in this area. **(Rev 12:9)**
  - 1. Satan also does not want you to see the end of his ways. **(Rev 21:8, 20:10)**
  - 2. Those that *refuse wisdom* will fall for the easy short-term pleasure of sin. They think that nothing will happen to them! **(Job 24:15, 17)**

**I. The sexual drive has been designed by God for our good!**

- A. How do our natural desires motivate us in a good way?
  - 1. The desire *to marry and have children* is good. **(Heb 13:4)**
  - 2. The desire to marry should cause us to step outside of ourselves and *learn how to understand and serve another!* **(1 Pt 3:7)**
  - 3. There are numerous *changes for are good* that seeking to marry can bring.
  - 4. This *humbling time of change and uncertainty* will also reveal our hearts. Some have abandoned Christ out of a desire to marry.
- B. God has *designed men and women differently*.
  - 1. Men are stimulated by sight, smell and are “body-centered.”
  - 2. Women are stimulated by touch, attitudes, actions and are “person-centered.”
  - 3. Men have *a very quick “on button.”* Some view like eating meat. **(1 Cor 6:13)**
  - 4. Women *are often blind* to how their dress can affect a man.
  - 5. God has given emphasis to the men about *their sight and thoughts*. **(Mt 5:27-30)**
  - 6. God has given emphasis to women about *their dress and actions*. **(1 Tim 2:9-10)**

**II. Consequences of sexual immorality**

- A. God’s design *builds each one up* in marriage. **(Mt 19:4-6)**
    - 1. In the learning, serving relationship of marriage we can have a true “helper comparable to him.” **(Gen 2:20)**
    - 2. The sexual relationship can *promote trust and communication*. Outside of marriage it tears down and alienates. **(Prov 31:10-12)**
- “One reason God gives his loving commands is so our dignity will be preserved. That dignity is the sense of nobility, worthiness and honor God puts in everyone. That is a concept unique to human beings and makes us more than animals.”
- B. The immediate desire to fulfill our lust can *blind us to consequences*. **(Prov 6:23-28)**
    - 1. Our *culture will laugh and ridicule you* for being prudish. God has given great emphasis and warning concerning sexual immorality. **(Eph 5:5-7)**

2. Regardless if we recognize them or not, *consequences will come*. (**Gal 6:7-8**)
  3. One of the leading causes of our young falling away is sexual sins.
- C. Consequences of pre-marital sex. (See article by David and Flora Tant)
1. *Value and dignity is lost*. “Premarital sex has a serious adverse effect on the self-image of the partners.”
  2. It *increases the rate of cheating after marriage*. It also leads to a greater incidence of divorce among couples who are sexually active before marriage.
  3. *Misleading feelings* – “The sex is so powerful that it creates a strong emotional bond often when there is little in common and little basis for a lasting relationship.”
  4. Efforts to really get to know the person and their likes and dislikes *are often hindered* when sexual activity starts.
  5. There are *damaged family relationships* as a result of sex before marriage. “There is the involuntary comparison of sex partners.”
  6. There is often *disappointment and regret at lost virginity*. “I do not know how many young people have told me, “I wish I had waited.””

### ***III. How should we act in wisdom?***

- A. We must be absolutely committed to hate and oppose this sin. (**1 Cor 6:18**)
  1. We must protect the conscience. How can we do this?
  2. The battle begins in the mind. (**Job 31:1; Dan 1:8**)
  3. Sadly, many in the church may become your opponents in this.
- B. We need wisdom to *know the areas of danger to avoid*.
  1. Have *no part with the modern alcoholic beverages*. Sexual immorality and drinking are very close partners. (**1 Pt 4:3-4**)
  2. Avoid *situations where by clothing and actions, the sexual desire is stimulated* and encouraged. Discuss the modern dance and mixed swimming. Here is where women do not understand the effect upon men.
  3. *Put boundaries on your actions*. Should you spend the night in the same room or alone in the same house after a late night study? What about a trip or a camping trip?

### ***IV. Win the battle over pornography***

- A. Porn teaches a terrible lesson about relationships. People become throw-away items. (**1 Cor 6:13**)
  1. The brain is greatly affected by prolonged use. (<http://fightthenewdrug.org/> )
  2. Relationships are greatly affected. You are in a bad place when fantasy is preferred over reality.
  3. You can get caught in a snare of guilt and secrecy.
- B. This is a common struggle among the men in the church.
  1. Reach out to spiritual men and talk about this. You are not alone. (**Gal 6:1**)
  2. Make a commitment to limit what you see and hear. Movies, computer games and popular cable channels broadcast pornography. (Ex. 'Game of Thrones' more popular than porn?- Fox News)
  3. God will forgive and aid you as you fight this battle. (**1 Jn 1:7-9**)

**Excerpt from Dealing With the Effects of Premarital Sex**  
**By David and Flora Tant**

God's plan gives *protection from being put on a performance basis*. When put on a performance basis with another person, one is accepted only if he acts or does something the way the other person wants. They are respected not for *who they are*, but for *what they do*. Their **value and dignity is lost**. A boy says, "I love you *if you will have sex with me*" or "*because you are pretty*," rather than "I love *you*." That is *conditional* love, and is worthless for building a committed relationship. Without the committed bonds of marriage, sex is inherently a selfish act done for personal satisfaction or gain. We must continue to please for the relationship to continue and that leaves one in a constant state of insecurity. God protects us from being put on a performance basis by reserving sex for the commitment of marriage. Are you aware of the various studies that show that sexual satisfaction is much greater in marriage than in uncommitted relationships? Why is it this way? Could it be that God knew what he was doing when he created us, and ordained the marriage relationship as the place for fulfillment?

The emotional baggage that often comes with premarital sex includes **sexual dysfunctions in marriage**. Many end up in counseling or therapy to deal with problems related to "teenage" sex. Studies have shown that premarital sex also **increases the rate of cheating after marriage**. Teens don't know that when they are young, but God knew it when he gave the rules in his "Owner's Manual."

*Guilt* is another consequence of violating God's standard of chastity until marriage. This has long term effects on future relationships in marriage, and may haunt and affect a person longer than any other consequence. To have the sex act linked with guilt in one's emotions because of premarital activity, causes the joy intended by God for husband and wife to be robbed and clouded. For example, a couple I know has been married over 50 years, and sex has never had any meaning for her. Premarital sex did its damage. Guilt is an awareness of having transgressed a standard of right and wrong. Or it may be just a lingering *doubt* of thinking that some act was wrong.

Our society is plagued by those two kinds of guilt. The first is a moral guilt, which Christians are subject to, which tells us specifically when we have stepped outside God's boundaries of conduct. It is a conscious awareness of specific transgressions. The other kind of guilt might be called a floating sense of guilt. One psychologist says, "It is indeed amazing that in a fundamentally irreligious culture as ours, the sense of guilt should be so widespread and deep-rooted as it is." This floating guilt he spoke of comes from a society that says there is no absolute right and wrong. Rather than producing freedom as many claim they are seeking, such are in a constant turmoil. "Are these things I'm doing right or wrong?" These people have no standard, therefore no direction in their lives and are constantly adrift. Yes, they are free — as free as a ship at sea without a rudder. Christians have the Bible which gives direction and guidance to lives and tells of God's character. (Illustration: A farmer was *asked which was better — raising cattle on open grazing land, in a pasture, or in a corral*. His reply was, "*Well, on open grazing land they are always subject to attack from wild animals or they could wander off and be lost. In a corral they are safe, but somebody has to take care of them. In a fenced pasture, the cattle have everything they need. They are protected, yet have the freedom to graze.*")

The Bible defines our pasture. God has placed intelligent boundaries around us to keep us "home" and to keep away those who would prey on us, yet within those boundaries we have freedom to make choices. Deep down, young people want boundaries. We have seen those who had no rules, no curfews, who could make all their own decisions, but who *wanted* some guidance.

God has set marriage as the proper place for sex. We are protected within this boundary. Husbands and wives don't have to be concerned with catching diseases; they are unselfish and open in expressing their sexual needs to one another. They can plan for the family they want and when children come, they are counted as blessings from God, not reminders of a grave mistake. Again, God protects us from shame and guilt, and gives us joy in the sexual union of marriage.

**Misleading feelings is another emotional effect of fornication**. This often comes from confusion between sex and love. Sex outside of marriage turns the relationship upside down and mixes emotions to the point of misinterpreting feelings. When we mix sex and love, we confuse the concepts of giving and taking. Personal selfish reasons cause premarital sex to *take*, but sometimes the taking may be confused as

giving. A girl gives in to have the security the boy provides, or maybe the popularity achieved in being “his” girlfriend. Many times young people are misled by these emotions and think they really are in love.” The sex is so powerful that it creates a strong emotional bond often when there is little in common and little basis for a lasting relationship. Those mixed up feelings are destructive in a dating relationship and can have tragic consequences if the relationship progresses to marriage. God’s plan protects us from the devastating effects those confused emotions bring. Sex does not constitute love. As Christians, we are to develop *agape* love, the kind God has for us that gives with no expectation of getting something in return. The 1 Corinthians 13 model of love does not describe emotional feelings, but rather acts of the will. Love is primarily an act of the will, but has tremendous emotional overtones because it has to do with how we relate to people. Our actions of love are tied to our emotions because relationships naturally have emotional bonds. Likewise sex has a powerful emotional aspect because God meant for it to be a joining of soul and mind as well as a physical union. That involves the moral conscience which can inflict pain after the physical pleasure is gone, unless the two have become one in marriage. Marital sex is a model of God’s provision to draw us closer to one another and to him.

*The hardship of breaking off the relationship* is another consequence. The pain that comes when one breaks up with a sexual partner is often an emotionally terrible tearing apart. *Even* when a couple realizes that fornication is sinful, they may try to find ways to justify the relationship because of the emotional bond formed between them. **Sex forms a bond that exists when the rest of the relationship is bad.** We see evidence of that when a girl stays with a partner who physically abuses her, and who often treats her like dirt.

Then there is the effect of *psychological and emotional distress* that comes. **Premarital sex has a serious adverse effect on the self-image of the partners.** Rather than joy, an emotionally crippling guilt seems to be the companion of permissive sex. Sex is such a definite experience that a part of each of us remains forever a part of the other. The effects of this “casual investment” on the mind and emotions is far reaching. Humiliation and a poor self-image come to many after sleeping with a person who never calls back or breaks off the relationship. “Let marriage be held in honor . . . and let the bed be undefiled” (Heb. 13:14). One partner accepts sex as love and directs his or her love toward the other. But anger and rejection come when love is not returned. Resentment and bitterness often come toward the other person, as well as blaming that one for causing you to violate your standards.

We have shared our very bodies and souls with another and when we don’t find meaning in the relationship we feel that we have been stripped of our dignity and self-worth. One reason God gives his loving commands is so our dignity will be preserved. That dignity is the sense of nobility, worthiness and honor God puts in everyone. That is a concept *unique to* human beings and makes us more than animals. The Bible spells out in numerous passages the inherent dignity and value in each person. That dignity and value come because we are handmade by God in his image — God’s spiritual and moral image (Gen. 1:27). If young people can understand that and realize that they are valuable to their parents and to God, it can help them in overcoming the false assumptions of evolution that we are mere animals and, therefore, must behave like animals.

Some try to justify sexual experience before marriage as profitable to see if the two are compatible, but **studies show a greater incidence of divorce among couples who are sexually active before marriage.** Often these first experiences are not pleasurable and leave greater emotional scars that must be dealt with in marriage. Emotional damage almost always comes as a result of fornication and adultery. There has been a great increase in teenage suicide in recent years as sexual promiscuity has increased, along with increased pregnancy, abortion and STDs. Certainly this unrestrained lifestyle is one factor of the high suicide rate.

**Unequal levels of commitment** is an effect that is nearly always present in premarital sex and can bring emotional devastation. Especially for girls and women, the sex act has a psychologically binding effect. Sex increases the feeling of closeness to the partner. When this is not shared, one partner is always vulnerable to rejection. “What if I don’t please him any longer?” If the boy is not as committed, the girl may feel she is merely being used by the guy to fulfill his physical lust. God’s design for marriage brings protection against emotional suffering and builds self-esteem as we realize we are unique creatures made in the image of our Creator. The sexual bonding as he created it in marriage is for our good. A young person who uses self-control to say “no” to sex outside of marriage is building discipline and

security into future relationships, because *waiting* gives your mind and body time to mature. If we do not learn to develop self-control *before* marriage, it makes it easier for a lack of self-control to lead to extra-marital affairs after marriage. Various studies have confirmed this fact.

Consider the sad case of a 31-year-old woman I talked to whose life is filled with guilt. She began having sex at age 19. She has admitted to having sex with five different men. She has never been married, but would like very much to be married. When I asked her why she began having sex, she said it was to create a bond, hoping that she would be able to hold on to her boyfriend. I asked her, "Did it work?" "No," she admitted. "Then why do you think it's going to work now?" She didn't have an answer. I repeated to her the old adage, "Why should he buy the cow when he gets the milk free?"

God teaches that our body is the dwelling place of God, described in 1 Corinthians 6 as a temple of the Holy Spirit. Sexual immorality disgraces God's temple.

### **Relational**

There are relational reasons to wait for sex until marriage. For one thing, sex hinders *communication*. Sex is often the easy way out to those who have never learned to communicate intimately apart from the physical. **Efforts to really get to know the person and their likes and dislikes are often hindered when sexual activity starts.** Sex becomes the focus, and other aspects of the relationship have no chance to develop. And a relationship based solely on sex is in trouble, for you can spend only so much time in bed. When we delay physical involvement till its proper time, we allow the relationship to grow and mature. Friendship lays the foundation for love to blossom. By obeying God's plan to wait for sex, a couple can discover other ways to communicate that will do much in building a healthy relationship.

**There is the involuntary comparison of sex partners.** This is very harmful to both partners as they deal with mental flashbacks of earlier sexual encounters. These can be frustrating, disturbing and destructive to a couple who later desire to experience God's plan for true intimacy and love in their marriage. Minds are like computers, as all information is stored there. Intimate sexual encounters which involve senses of sight, sound and touch are not easily erased. Memories are called to mind by association. Something from within us (thoughts, feelings, actions) or from without (through our five senses) *remind us* of something similar from the past. If these earlier experiences involve hurt, pain, mistrust, exploitation, or guilt, then permanent scars are left which carry over into marriage. This is one reason rape and incest are so devastating in people's lives. The most important sex organ God gave us is the mind. When two people learn about sex together for the first time within marriage, they are creating vivid and unforgettable memories. These are positive memories that bind two people together in a loving, trusting union without any interferences from the past.

**There are damaged family relationships as a result of sex before marriage.** Often premarital sex is justified "because we are getting married anyway." But studies have shown that there are twice as many broken engagements among those couples and those are the ones more likely to be divorced or separated or to engage in adultery. One of the things God protects is the trust and assurance of fidelity that a proper sexual union brings.

There are *children* who come as a result of fornication and adultery. "Safe sex" is very often not safe as a prevention of pregnancy. Then a child is born without the proper foundation for nurturing that should be there. The exploding violence among teens has a direct relationship to children born out of wedlock and raised by a single parent. What God intended as a blessing of man and woman's love brings shame, embarrassment, and trouble.

**Damaged relationships with parents also come as a result of unlawful sexual behavior.** Godly, loving parents can forgive (and must do so), but they will experience hurt and pain for the young people who have strayed from the boundaries God has established.

**Last, there is often disappointment and regret at lost virginity.** When we lose something we *know* is valuable, we feel regret. I do not know how many young people have told me, "I wish I had waited." God's way to protect us from that is to reserve sex for marriage. There is no chance of heartache later when our first sexual experience is with the person we will spend our lives with. When we wait until the wedding night, we have a most *special gift* that has been reserved for our chosen lifelong companion. We



establish a bond of trust and love that has no equal. God's design to limit sex to marriage protects us from hurting each other and provides the proper setting in which to express love through sex.

The story is told of a 15-year-old boy who looked and looked for a special girl for the true love of his life. He finally settled on a beautiful ring, and gave it to her as a token of his love. And as usually happens at that age, in a few months there was another "true love." Again he looked and looked, but could find nothing more beautiful than the same ring he had given before. As you might suspect, the same thing happened a few more times during his teen years. And then at 22 he did find his genuine true love. He looked and looked and looked to find a special gift for her on their wedding day. But all he could find was the same ring, which by now had lost its special significance. I think you get the point. There is no gift as special and sacred as the giving of one's body. But if we give it again and again before giving it to our marriage companions it will have lost its sacred meaning.

For Full Article: <http://www.truthmagazine.com/dealing-with-the-effects-of-premarital-sex>

### *Living Together Before Marriage by Ray Fowler*

Here are some statistics on living together before marriage from Michael McManus, the president of Marriage Savers. Statistically speaking, living together is not a trial of marriage, but rather a training for divorce.

- The number of unmarried couples living together soared 12-fold from 430,000 in 1960 to 5.4 million in 2005.
- More than eight out of ten couples who live together will break up either before the wedding or afterwards in divorce.
- About 45 percent of those who begin cohabiting, do not marry. Another 5-10 percent continue living together and do not marry.
- Couples who do marry after living together are 50% more likely to divorce than those who did not.
- Only 12 percent of couples who have begun their relationship with cohabitation end up with a marriage lasting 10 years or more.
- A Penn State study reports that even a month's cohabitation decreases the quality of the couple's relationship.

Here are some more statistics relating to the children of cohabiting parents.

- Children of cohabiting parents are ten times more likely to be sexually abused by a stepparent than by a parent.
- Children of cohabiting parents are three times as likely to be expelled from school or to get pregnant as teenagers than children from an intact home with married parents.
- Children of cohabiting parents are five times more apt to live in poverty, and 22 times more likely to incarcerated.

<http://www.rayfowler.org/2008/04/18/statistics-on-living-together-before-marriage>