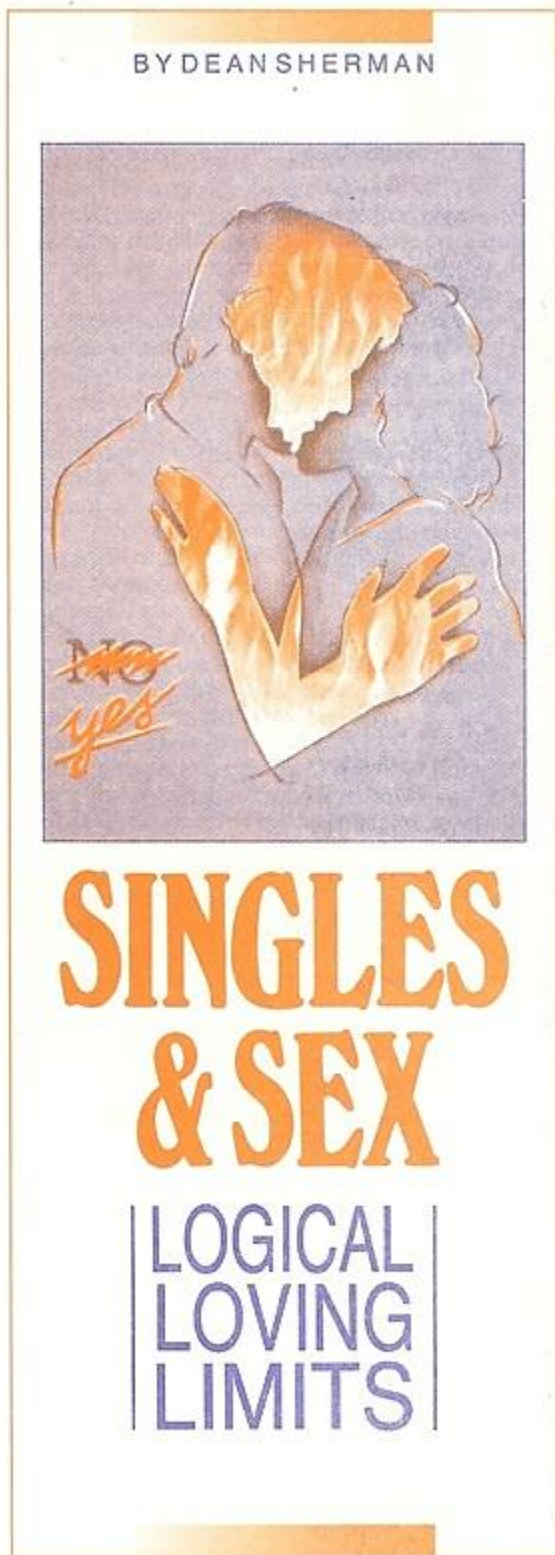




Singles & Sex

Logical, Loving Limits

by
Dean Sherman

Many people think God is unfair. That He made us sexual beings and then tells us *don't*! Almost every young person I know faces this problem. "Well, when you really like somebody, and you really get close to them, it's really hard to control yourself." Why does God limit our behavior towards one another in sexual areas? Let's take a look at the character of God and find out the reasons behind His logical loving limits.

God is, by nature, not a restrictor but a fulfiller. When He limits our sexual activity to certain situations, He's not trying to steal our fun but has logical and loving reasons. God thought up sex. It was 100% His idea. He created our bodies and our responses. The devil wants us to believe *he's* the sex expert - that if we get too close to God, or too holy, we'll miss something. It's a lie that we'll miss something if we do it God's way. To the contrary, we'll miss something if we *don't*.

Most people feel that God is trying to push them into a corner and cramp their style. If you have too much fun or too much pleasure, you're not going to be saved and He won't like you anymore. They think God wants you lying on beds of nails to prove you're really serving Him. That's not the way God is and that's not Christianity.

God saw you in your mother's womb and said, "Oh, have I got something for you!" And He got so excited (and He's still excited) about every human being on the planet. Some are greatly disappointing Him and hurting Him, but every one of us made Him exceedingly excited when He saw us in our mother's womb. And He had this thing in mind, and it was that He wanted the highest possible spine-tingling... oooh ... depth of fulfilling experience for you. *That* is His plan for you in relationship to the opposite sex. But few of us really believe it. We think, "If I'm really gonna have what I want, I'll have to get it myself. I know what's going to fulfill me better than God does." And most of us blow it because we don't know God. We don't understand that He created pleasure.

The God Of Taste Buds

Did you know that God didn't need to give you taste buds? You don't need them. This ought to tell you something about God and what He's into. Food is simply to maintain and repair your body, and you don't need to go mmmm . . . over chocolate sundaes. There's only one reason for taste buds, friends, and that's pleasure. If God is the God of pleasure and wants me to enjoy what I eat, then I ought to be able to enjoy any amount at any time in any way. Wrong! That's not logical. I know my stomach holds two quarts, so to eat a bale of hay a day is not really smart. It's best that I limit my enjoyment. Likewise, we can't reason that because God has given us sexual ability or the gift of attraction, that any amount is good at any time.

Man - Created In The Image Of Chemicals?

Many of the things we learn about sex come from songs, movies, and TV. We're taught by people who think we are a barnyard animal or just a bag of chemicals. If it's true that we're just a bunch of pieces of matter, then we *don't* matter... and we can do anything to anybody at any time. By contrast, God's thing is love. He knows we are a delicate, finely-tuned personality made in *His* image. Therefore, we *do* matter and can only be fulfilled by loving Him and by truly loving others. We cannot let materialists define love for us.

The Corinthians had some of the same misconceptions that many of us do. They thought they had a body that operated separately from their spirit. They said, "Well, Jesus is in my spirit so my spirit will go to heaven, but my body will rot in the ground so it doesn't matter

what I do with my body."¹

Paul wrote them and said, "Hey, wait a minute! Your body is a container for your spirit. It's a temple. Your bodies are members of Christ." What you do with your body always touches your spirit. Sex, therefore, is never just a physical thing as some would have us believe. "Did you love her?" "No, it was just a physical thing." Sex never has been and never will be just a physical thing, like playing tennis or dancing. Sex is an intermingling, or a blending of two entire personalities - body, soul, and spirit.²

Tearing The Heart

I Corinthians 6:18 says, *Flee fornication* (sex outside of marriage). Every other sin that mankind commits is outside of the body, but the one who commits fornication sins against his own body (or being). What in the world does this mean? Preachers get up and say, "You kids out there committing fornication are going to ruin your bodies!" Don't try to tell a medical student you can damage your body through sexual involvement. It's a function that God created your body for, for goodness sake. So, what is Paul trying to say? He is trying to show that we are an integrated being, that you can't do something with your body that doesn't touch your spirit.

We damage our being in every sexual act committed outside of God's limits because we become one with someone else. Blended and intermingled. And then in a few minutes we tear that oneness apart into two beings again. It doesn't rip our body, but it rips our mind, will, emotions, and spirit.

The mind is now damaged because it has memories and knowledge it was not equipped to cope with apart from a lifetime commitment. The will is damaged because it has been bent like a wire against our conscience saying "no," and is made weaker. The emotions have been traumatized by the pulling back that comes after being intermingled. And we get a deep wound in our spirit, because death is ministered to us instead of life.³

God screams to us "No" and we say, "God, you just don't understand how much we love each other. It seems so right." God *does* understand. He invented the whole process. He is *for* us, but in His love He tries to prevent us from damaging our lives.

How does this sound, "Oh, I love you so much. I need to damage you." That doesn't sound like love to me. The reason we say, "It's so hard to contain myself when I love him soooo much," is because we haven't understood what God has known all along. We damage each other. Without exception, your inner being is damaged in every case regardless of how mature you are, how committed you are, or how long you've been going with each other. There is always damage and God doesn't want us to be hurt.

Marriage - Not Just A Ceremony

Another reason sex outside of marriage is wrong is because there's a lack of commitment. One girl said, "I see nothing wrong with it if you know you love each other and you're really committed. What difference does a piece of paper and a ceremony make?" My answer: If you are not married, you are not committed, because marriage is the commitment.

Marriage is the legal, publicly witnessed and binding commitment between a man and a woman. Nothing else is. In marriage, God fuses two into one.⁴ The Bible doesn't say, "What therefore sex has joined together" but "What therefore *God has joined together...*" (*Matt. 19:6*) So it's not just a physical joining, it's a spiritual joining of two people.

In sex outside of marriage there is an intermingling which is ripped into two again. It's the difference between tying branches on the Christmas tree for looks, and the ones that grew there. It's not smart or loving for you to intermingle your whole being together with someone who is not committed to you for life. Anything less than marriage is not commitment.

God also says no because you're not protected. Protected from what? Protected from the devil. Oh... we forgot about the devil. Wouldn't it be great if we could get carried away in our little sexual things and there was no devil, or he would just turn his back? That would be nice, but it's just not true. Have you ever asked yourself why Satan is so interested in sexual things? Why he pushes this sin so hard, worldwide? It's because sex is not just physical, it involves the spirit realm.

In Old Testament times, people worshipped the devil through sexual involvement. It's the same today in witchcraft and the occult. Satan becomes a participant. He receives an honor, or a worship, from rebellion against God's truth and protection. When you back away from the Lord, you naturally back into the hands of the devil.

God has known this the whole time. In marriage, I believe God has not only supernaturally joined you, but He also puts a ring of protection around you. This keeps the powers of darkness from messing around in what God wanted to be private, relaxed, guilt-free, and fulfilling. Outside of marriage (even the day before), Satan still has access to bring guilt, tension, bondage, etc. God's ways are so much more loving and logical.

How Many Can Share Intimacy?

Sex with someone other than your marriage partner destroys a certain amount of intimacy. Intimacy is defined as: that which is alone or shared by a maximum of one other person. The enjoyment of taking a lovely, hot shower would be lost if we had to do it in front of a

crowd of people. Being alone with our beloved somehow loses its preciousness when our little brother comes around the corner. This is another thing that separates us from animals and sex according to instinct. We love and need intimacy. God made us that way.

If we share ourselves with more than one, in nakedness and sexual pleasure - petting included - we have diluted the intimacy our whole being craves. God wants the highest pinnacle of fulfillment for us. We settle for less. Less than a totally unique and creative experience with only one.

Sex outside of marriage will also have an adverse effect on your marriage - even if you marry the *same* person. I have never heard of one couple having difficulties in marriage because they lacked experience. Some have problems from lack of knowledge, and if you are going to marry, you need to know some things. But you don't need experience. However, thousands of couples are having difficulties in marriage *because of* previous experience. It's a lie of the enemy that you should arrive at your wedding night experienced. It puts a weight on you that you can well do without, and marriages fail every day because of that weight. Some of the effects on people are:

- *Guilt*: "I feel dirty and used. I just can't feel right about it. We got off on the wrong foot." It's not enjoyed because it's associated with wrongness.
- *Fear*: "I just know something is going to happen to this baby because of what I used to do." Or "Will my teenager do what I did?"
- *Lack of Trust*: He told you when you were dating, "I don't know about other guys, but I'm just too much of a man to contain myself." Since he broke the rules with you, now that you're married you wonder if he can control himself on his business trips. The fornicator *before* marriage can more easily become the adulterer *during* marriage because he has learned to cross the line of his conscience.
- *Flashbacks*: Memories of being with others that can't be forgotten.
- *Comparisons*: "I wonder if I'm like the others?"
- *Lack of Relaxation*: You can't condition your responses for eight years in tense times of wondering if someone will "catch you" and then just all of a sudden relax with your husband or wife.
- *The "Bad is Exciting" Syndrome*: We develop an excitement in doing wrong. "Oh, don't." "We shouldn't." We've perverted our responses, and we now look for something else that's wrong to excite us. "Now that we're married everything is okay and it's become boring."

Because sex is a sharing of entire beings, the more partners and experiences we have outside the marriage container, the more pieces of ourselves we give away, and the less fulfillment we end up with. The wounding brings a shallowness in our emotions, and we have trouble finding depth of fulfillment. This can bring disinterest, lack of satisfaction, and frustration. We don't draw as much from the "well" as we expected, or as God intended.

A River Of Beauty And Joy

God's intention was depth, satisfaction, and fulfillment. He limits our behavior before marriage, not to take away, but to channel this beautiful flow like banks channel a river. It is stupid to knock down the banks of a river to give it "freedom" or "liberation." If the river said, "I'm going to flow where I want to flow when I feel like flowing," we would end up with a flood instead of something beautiful. Say "no" to destruction and "yes" to God and His logical and loving limits. Once we understand why God said what He said, it won't be as hard to control.

What If It's Too Late?

If you've already violated any of these areas, your life is not over or ruined. God is a redeemer. He will forgive, cleanse, heal, and restore. You can have a great marriage and future, so don't despair. I've heard women who were once prostitutes say that on their wedding night it felt like the first time. God can do a mighty work in your life! Come to Him and admit that He really knew what He was talking about, and you were wrong to second-guess Him. Repent and then by faith let Him reverse the damage and set your feet on a road with guardrails. He'll give you a bright future. Nobody has gone too far. He'll make all things new. Let Him direct the river of your sexuality as a river within its banks, and it will become a thing of beauty and fulfillment in your life.

1) See I Cor. 6:13-20.

2) Some verses about God's standard for us are Rom. 13:13, I Cor. 6:9-11, Eph. 5:3-5, Col. 3:5, Heb. 13:4, Rev. 22:13-15.

3) See Proverbs 5:3-6; 6:26-29, 32-35; 7:21-23.

4) Matt. 19:5