

Reclaiming a Biblical Celebration of Sexuality  
by Shannon Ethridge, M.A.

I received a letter this week from “Krystal,” who explained...

*My parents never told me anything about sex. I was the daughter of a preacher, and the only thing my dad ever said was preached from the pulpit and I didn't understand it. I asked my mom about what I should do on my honeymoon just prior to getting married, and all she said was, “You'll know what to do.”*

*Years later I approached her crying saying I didn't like sex. I asked if she liked it. She replied, “It's just something women have to do.” So for a long time I've approached my marriage bed like it was a marital duty, but I'm so thankful for your book, *The Sexually Confident Wife*, because it's full of the helpful information I just wish I could have received from my mom. It's helped me come out of my sexual shell and actually ENJOY it, and my husband is enjoying THAT!*

While I'm happy to help women in such a way, I admit that I'm a little angered when I hear of parents shirking their responsibility to educate children about the core element of their being – human sexuality.

Okay, maybe “shirking” was too strong a word. I know we often avoid the topic because we simply don't know what to say, except perhaps, “Good girls don't”... “Keep your legs crossed and your panties on!” (my own father's personal favorite)... or “Why will he buy the cow if he gets the milk for free?” (my mother's personal favorite).

As Christians, we must have a Biblical understanding of God's gift of sexuality! And we must share that Biblical understanding with future generations and with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Here's a few questions I encourage you to carefully consider:

**Q: Was Jesus tempted SEXUALLY? Did He ever have sexual thoughts and feelings?**

A: Hebrews 4:15-16 says, “*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*” Notice there is no asterisk or disclaimer stating, “Well, He was tempted in every way EXCEPT sexually.” Given that sexual temptations come part and parcel with being human, I believe with all my heart that Jesus,

who came to earth both fully God and fully human, experienced the same natural temptations we experience every day.

**Q: Are sexual thoughts and feelings sinful?**

A: Also according to Hebrews 4:15-16, Jesus was tempted in every humanly possible way, *yet remained sinless*. Connect those dots if you will. Sexual thoughts and feelings can't be sinful in and of themselves if Jesus experienced them Himself. We simply can't completely avoid *all* sexual thoughts and feelings this side of heaven because they are so much a part of our human nature. But we *can* choose by the power of the Holy Spirit (just as Jesus did) not to act on them in such a way as to cause God displeasure. In the words of Martin Luther, "You can't keep a bird from flying over your head, but you can keep him from building a nest there."

**Q: Which came first? The fall of man in the Garden of Eden, or sexual intimacy in marriage?**

A: PRIOR to Adam & Eve eating the forbidden fruit, they were commanded by God to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28). Translation: *Have sex, make babies*. Although the fall of man certainly distorted the gift of sexuality (7 different ways just in the book of Genesis alone), the sexual nature of human beings was part of the original paradise God intended for His people. In other words, God LOVES sex, and wants married couples to LOVE it too! Therefore, for us to think (and teach) that our sexual nature as human beings and our sinful nature as human beings are so intertwined that sexual intimacy (even that between a husband and wife) is wrong, dirty, bad, and nasty is nothing short of heresy. Sex outside of marriage is wrong. *But sex within marriage couldn't be more right!*

Q: Could we therefore assume that there is a divine connection between sexuality and spirituality?

A: Only if you are doing it right. Read the Song of Solomon for inspiration!

One more question I want to toss out to really challenge your thinking on this topic. It was originally posed to me by Dr. David Lawson, my Human Sexuality professor when I was working on my master's degree in human relations at Liberty University. Put on your thinking cap, and buckle your seat belt...

Q: How is our relationship with God "sexual?"

At first, this question may sound offensive. I certainly don't intend it to be, and neither did my professor. Our small group spent two hours dissecting this question after class, and some of our answers blew me away. For example,

there is genuine intimacy (in-to-me-see) in our relationship with God... passion beyond what we could comprehend (that's why they call dramas of Christ's crucifixion "passion plays")... we derive great pleasure from time alone together... we can be completely naked before God – spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and yes, even physically -- and know absolutely no shame. He's our Creator, and we can rest assured that He delights in His creation.

How successful were your parents in instilling a Biblical perspective of sexuality in your life? Better question, what can we do to help our children look at their own sexuality through the proper spiritual lens?