



sex

Scott Petty

sex

What's the deal with sex anyway?

Is it basically just a physical need that we should satisfy whenever and however we please? Or is it something dirty and sinful that a good Christian person should have nothing to do with?

According to Scott Petty, God has a design for sexuality that is much better than both of these options. Scott also deals with some of the common questions young people have about sex:

- How far can I go physically with my girlfriend or boyfriend?
- Is the Bible anti-homosexual?
- What about pornography?

Like all the Little Black Books, this short book is a fun read and gets straight to the point.

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Scott Petty

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Email: info@matthiasmedia.com.au

Internet: www.matthiasmedia.com.au

Please visit our website for current postal and telephone contact information.

Matthias Media (USA)

Email: sales@matthiasmedia.com

Internet: www.matthiasmedia.com

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Introduction

Whenever I need to get the attention of the guys and girls in my youth group I just say the word 'sex'. Sometimes it makes the junior youth groupers giggle (they laugh at everything), but I know that this word cuts through every rowdy conversation that's going on, and the hall always falls deadly silent. That's because teenagers are interested in sex, and Christian teenagers are no exception. They're not necessarily all interested in having sex, but they are interested in knowing about sex and learning about sex.

In the chapters that follow we are going to look at designer sexuality, by which I just mean sex as it was designed by God, who invented sex in the beginning. We will cover the topics of marriage, Christian dating, homosexuality and pornography. It should be interesting. My hope is that by the end you will not only know what God thinks about designer sexuality, but will trust that what he says is good, and is for our good.

CHAPTER 1

Where to find the best sex

You are bombarded by sexual messages even more than you realize. And you probably realize it quite a lot. It is estimated that the average person is exposed to about 14,000 sexual messages per year (just under 40 a day), and less than 200 of those 14,000 advise caution or hesitation about sex.

The vast majority of these sexual messages promote some version of what we might call ‘the boy band view of sex’. Every generation has its own particular version of this view of sex, and actually it cuts right across musical genres—you’re just as likely to hear the boy band view of sex from rock ‘n’ roll, R&B, dance, hip hop and even country music artists as you are to hear it from boy bands. But we’ll stick with calling it the boy band view of sex because that’s often where it can be seen at its clearest. You might be humming along to a really catchy tune that sounds as sweet as pie; and then all of a sudden you realize you’re singing about

taking a random girl home for sex. Consider this classic boy band song called ‘Sin Sin Sin’:

Don't let your eyes tell your brain you should feel ashamed.
Everyone needs it baby and I feel the same
Didn't quite catch your name
Hush, hush, hush don't say a thing
Let's see what the night will bring
It might be everything.¹

According to these lyrics, sex is just a physical need. Just a physical need that everyone has. So don't feel ashamed about it, because it is just a physical need, like eating. That's pretty much all it is—just physical—and it's not about relationship at all. The singer doesn't even know the girl he's going to have sex with; didn't quite catch her name. Doesn't matter though, he says, let's just see what the night will bring—it could be everything. Probably not though, if he's honest, because if he doesn't even know the name of the woman he's sleeping with then it's hard to imagine how he will find a glimmer of love and life deep inside, which is what he hopes for in the song.

The whole point of the song is that casual sex is not sin sin

sin, but just a normal physical need. He doesn't think he needs rescuing. In fact, he even says that a one-night stand—sex with a stranger—is just what Jesus would do. I'd like to see a Bible verse for that!

But rather than shaking your head, you have to understand why this song became a hit. It's not just about the catchy tune that you cannot get out of your brain. It's that these lyrics pretty much sum up our society's view of sex. Sex is just a physical need to be met, and should be taken and given freely. I used to think that this was just the guys' view of sex, but surveys suggest that over half of Australian women have made a 'booty call'—that is, calling a man they know for casual, non-committed sex—at least once. In other words, the boy band view is about as mainstream as the most popular TV shows. You can see it in teen dramas, in prime-time comedies, and in the highest-rating shows in the country. It is more common than not for characters on TV to sleep with each other on the first date. That is the common view of sex. Not much more than a physical need.

Now you may already be guessing that I'm not especially fond of the boy band view of sex. And you'd be right. But what's the alternative? Maybe you're thinking that I am about to suggest that

sex is sinful, and that you should STOP IT. Maybe you think that the only real alternative to the boy band view of sex is ‘the Ruth Smythers view of sex’. Here’s a quote from Ruth Smythers’ article, ‘Instruction and Advice for the Young Bride’:

To the sensitive young woman who has had the benefits of proper upbringing, the wedding day is, ironically, both the happiest and most terrifying day of her life. On the positive side, there is the wedding itself, in which the bride is the central attraction in a beautiful and inspiring ceremony, symbolizing her triumph in securing a male to provide for all her needs for the rest of her life. On the negative side, there is the wedding night, during which the bride must pay the piper, so to speak, by facing for the first time the terrible experience of sex.

At this point, dear reader, let me concede one shocking truth. Some young women actually anticipate the wedding night ordeal with curiosity and pleasure! Beware such an attitude! A selfish and sensual husband can easily take advantage of such a bride. One cardinal rule of marriage should never be forgotten: GIVE LITTLE, GIVE SELDOM, AND ABOVE ALL, GIVE GRUDGINGLY. Otherwise what could have been a proper marriage could become an orgy of sexual lust.

Now if you think this sounds too ridiculous to be true, you'd be right. This quote, supposedly written by a minister's wife in 1894, is one of those hoaxes that are spread so easily by the internet. It's an over-the-top send up of what is supposedly the 'Christian' approach to sex—that sex is dirty, distasteful, and only to be endured for the making of babies.

But perhaps this is not as ridiculous as it looks when it's put down in black and white, pen on paper, Ruth Smythers style. Young people who have grown up in the church, who have often been told that sex is something that Christians don't do, at least not until they're married, and who are constantly encouraged to be 'children of the light' who stand out from their non-Christian peers by their godly living, just might harbour negative views about sex. There's a decent chance that some young people, somewhere in their minds, think sex is somehow wrong, dirty or a no-go zone, even though they are probably at the same time fascinated by sex and intrigued by sexuality.

And if Ruth Smythers was the only alternative, I could understand why people might side with the boy bands.

Is there room for designer sexuality?

In light of the two options before us, that sex is either dirty or just physical, I want to offer a third alternative: that sex is a profound gift from God for our benefit. It is not dirty, because it is designed by God himself, who gives only good things (1 Tim 4:4). And it is not just physical, because God designed it to be intensely emotional and profoundly spiritual as well. The sex that God made is something very valuable and precious, and not worth cashing in too cheaply.

When I was 19, I had a real job that paid real money, at least more money than I had ever seen before. And one day I saw this black leather motorcycle jacket in a second-hand shop in a trendy part of town. I thought it was great—it was in good condition and looked pretty bad-boy (as opposed to boy-band)—so I paid a couple of hundred dollars for it. The problem with motorcycle jackets is that they are only comfortable when you are in the “I’m riding a motorcycle” position, leaning forward, white-knuckling the handlebars. In other positions, it’s not really that easy to move your arms. So I only ever wore this great jacket that I had paid hundreds of dollars for three times. I eventually took it to another second-hand shop, kind of a 1990s equivalent to eBay, hoping