

## Appendix #3: Sexual Purity

God calls us to live sexually pure lives. To be sexually pure is to live according to God's boundaries for sexual expression, not those of our own making or according to our desires or what the world around us says.

The standard is set by God and Jesus teaches us what this is in Mark 10:6-9. He said, "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." The positive standard for sexuality is one man and one woman in a lifelong marriage relationship.

### Sexual impurity or "Porneia"

The Greek word for sexual impurity is "Porneia." It is usually translated as "sexual immorality" or "fornication." It doesn't just refer to premarital sex as is sometimes thought. It actually means "every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse." It is a word that covers every category of forbidden sexual activity. In some cases the context defines a particular meaning – adultery or incest, but often it is used generically for all kinds of sexual immorality.

### Kinds of Porneia:

**1. Incest** – This refers to sexual relations with close relatives. (See Leviticus 18:7-18 and Deuteronomy 27:23). That this still applies to us can be seen from: Mark 6:18, I Corinthians 5:1-3 and Acts 15:28-29.

**2. Prostitution** – This is, of course, sex for payment. Paul forbids this. He says, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!" - I Corinthians 6:15.

**3. Pre-marital sex** – or engaging in sexual relations before you are married.

- ♦ In Deuteronomy 22:20-21 the death penalty was applied to the non-virgin bride.
- ♦ In John 8:41 pre-marital sex is called Porneia.
- ♦ According to I Corinthians 7:2, 9, Paul says the answer to burning desire is marriage, not premarital sex. It is called Porneia here as well.

Pre-marital sex is akin to prostitution - Genesis 34:31. It is treating the woman as a prostitute.

**4. Adultery** – This refers to breaking your marriage commitment by having sexual relations with someone who is not your spouse. Exodus 20:14 – "You shall not commit adultery." Matthew 15:19 – "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, *adultery*, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander."

**5. Adulterous remarriage after a wrongful divorce** - If your first marriage is not already broken by sexual immorality, and you consummate another marriage (even if you are legally divorced) this is considered an act of adultery because the first marriage is still intact in God's eyes. Matthew 19:8-9 – "He said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.'"

Things are a bit different if your spouse was an unbeliever and left or divorced you. In this case you are free of the marriage, even if the marriage is not broken by adultery – I Corinthians 7:12-16.

**6. Homosexual practice** – or same-sex activity. Leviticus 18:22 – “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.” That this still applies can be seen in Romans 1:26-27 and I Timothy 1:8-11.

**7. Sex during menstruation** – This is sexual intercourse during a woman’s monthly cycle. Ezekiel 18:5-9 – “If a man is righteous and does what is just . . . and does not defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her time of menstrual impurity, does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment . . . he is righteous . . .” Leviticus 18:19 teaches this. Acts 15:28-29 tells us to observe the regulations of Leviticus 18.

**8. Bestiality** – This has to do with sexual contact with an animal. Leviticus 18:23 - “And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion.” Again, Acts 15:28-29 tells us to observe Leviticus 18.

**9. Other:** Anything else that falls outside of one man and one woman in a committed life-long relationship. This would exclude, among other things, polygamy and pedophilia.

### **Other Concerns**

**1. Not just the outward act is wrong, also entertaining the inward lust for Porneia is forbidden.** Matthew 5:27-28 – “You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Mental fantasies and the use of pornography are Porneia of the heart. Also, seeking to seduce someone into Porneia is Porneia of the heart. This last has to do with the way we dress, act and talk, both men and women (I Timothy 2:9-10).

**2. We must also beware of stumbling blocks that lead to Porneia.** That is, putting ourselves in situations or relationships that pressure us or encourage us to Porneia. Matthew 5:29 - “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.”

### **The seriousness of Porneia**

Porneia, in any of its forms, defiles us – Mark 7:23. It brings God’s judgment upon us – I Corinthians 10:8. And it will exclude us from the coming kingdom of God. I Corinthians 6:9-10 says, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the *sexually immoral*, nor idolaters, nor *adulterers*, nor *men who practice homosexuality*, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.” (Also, Galatians 5:19-21).

### **Scriptural calls to refrain from Porneia**

- ♦ Romans 13:13 says, “Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.”
- ♦ 1 Corinthians 6:13 says, “The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.”
- ♦ 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 says, “Flee from sexual immorality. . . . Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”
- ♦ Colossians 3:5 says, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”
- ♦ Ephesians 5:3 says, “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.”
- ♦ I Thessalonians 4:3 says, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality . . . .”

### **On a related topic: Only marry (date) a fellow believer**

Scripture teaches that we are only to marry believers:

- ♦ Paul tells the widow who is considering remarrying “she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord” – I Corinthians 7:39, that is to another believer.
- ♦ Paul’s words in II Corinthians 6:14-15 certainly apply to marriage and dating. “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?”

To be married to an unbeliever is to yoke yourself together in the most intimate way possible with someone who does not share your faith; your deepest life values. So they will not be particularly interested in giving you encouragement in your Christian faith and the danger is that they will pull you away from it (see Deuteronomy 7:3-4).

There is also the issue of how to raise the children. Whose values will be taught? One of the purposes of marriage, according to Malachi 2:15, is to raise godly children.

It is one thing if you are already married to an unbeliever before you become a Christian (as is the case in I Corinthians 7:12-16). It is another to knowingly choose to do this.