

*sex*

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*Little Black Books: Sex*

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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 I

# *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 Robbie Williams View of Sex. In 2006, Robbie Williams released a song called 'Sin Sin Sin'. It has a really catchy tune; the kind of song that you find yourself singing along to until you realize that he is talking about taking a random girl home for sex. That's pretty much what most of his songs are about. In the first verse of the song he says these interesting things:

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.<sup>1</sup>

For Robbie Williams, 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. He doesn't even know the girl he's going to have sex with; didn't quite catch her name. Doesn't matter though, says Robbie, 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 before you start 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 head. It's that Robbie Williams' 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 guy's view of sex, but some recent 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 Robbie Williams view is about as mainstream as the most popular TV shows. You can see it in teen dramas like *Neighbours*, in prime-time comedies such as *Just Shoot Me*, *Two and a Half Men* and *Will & Grace*, and in the highest-rating shows in the country, including *Desperate Housewives* and *Grey's Anatomy* (not to mention TV shows whose titles even focus on casual sex, like *Sex in the City* and *Californication*). 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 don't think a whole lot of The Robbie Williams 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 Robbie Williams 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 Robbie Williams.

## **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—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 an early 1990s equivalent to eBay, hoping to make most

of that money back. But the shop would only give me \$30. And stupidly I took it. I traded in something that was valuable way too cheaply. I reckon that's what many young people do with sex and their sexuality. They trade in something that is valuable and precious as though it was just something common, something cheap, something that's not worth much at all.

So you need to know why sex is worth not trading in too cheaply. And you need to know how to use your sexuality in line with the design of its creator, who is also our creator, the living and true God. To get to the point, I want to explain why it is worth the wait for marriage, for that is God's design for sex. Marriage is where to find the best sex.

### **Marriage is the place for the best sex**

Straight up, it is clear from the Bible that marriage is the place for sex between human beings. By the way, when I say *sex*, I'm talking about intercourse, I'm talking about foreplay, I'm talking about oral sex. If you think anything looks or sounds or smells like sex, it most likely is, and that's what I'm talking about. When the Bible talks about the first marriage—between Adam and Eve in Genesis 2—it says this:

So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called ‘woman’,  
for she was taken out of man.”

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.  
(Gen 2:20-25)

So here are a few quick things about marriage that we learn from this first marriage between Adam and Eve.

Firstly, man and woman are built for each other. The animals are not the answer to the man's loneliness, because no suitable helper can be found from among them. Giraffes are cool to look at, but

not cool to be with for very long. God had to make something like a man but different from a man to find a companion for the man. Man and woman are built for each other.

Secondly, sex is intended to be used within a binding relationship. In these verses, that's defined as the point when a man and a woman leave their families and unite to become one flesh (Gen 2:24). It is the context of marriage, a relationship in which the man and the woman bind themselves to each other—the fancy Bible word for this is a 'covenant' relationship. It is not passionate relationship, not loving relationship, not even committed relationship, but covenantal marriage relationship—a relationship in which a new family unit is formed, where a man leaves his father and mother and unites (that means sexually) with his wife. That's what all the bone of my bones stuff is about. It's where the man says, "Together we are a new family". It is intentional and significant, not casual and loose. And what it basically means is that if you're not ready to leave Mum and Dad and home, you're not ready for sex.

Look at what Adam says to set up the covenant, the binding promise, with Eve. She is part of me, we are one. We belong, we are tied together. I will not separate from you. And that is why you will hear the minister say at weddings, "What God has joined

together let not man separate”. In a marriage, a man and a woman bind themselves to each other. Now it doesn’t always work out right, because men and women are sinful, but that deep binding commitment of marriage is what sex was designed for. That also means it’s the best sex, because that’s where our designer God says it belongs. (Incidentally, research also bears this out. In their book, *The Case for Marriage*, Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher show from extensive research that married people have more sex and better sex than unmarried people.<sup>2</sup>)

When you see that sex is designed for this deep relationship, you realize that sex is not just a union—they will become united in one flesh—it’s almost a *reunion*. The woman was made from the man, and in sex they are once again joined. That’s a level of deepness that Robbie Williams won’t understand if he insists on sleeping with strangers. In marriage, a man and a woman become one flesh; they become a part of one another, bound together by love, expressed in the supremely powerful union of sex.

The third and last thing to say from Genesis 2 is that married sex is unashamedly good. I think marriage is under attack in our society. People see it as a boring, restrictive and passionless arrangement. In fact, when was the last time you saw some hot or

romantic scene on TV that featured a married couple?

But in the first marriage, the man and woman are together, naked and unashamed. Sex didn't happen *after* the fall, as if it was what got them into trouble. On the contrary. They are united in marriage and sex as part of God's good creation. Not ridden by guilt and repressing themselves but unashamedly in love, unclothed, and into each other. Not passionless but passionate, not restrictive but committed, not boring but sexy. Hot, heterosexual, married sex.

And why wouldn't it be hot, because that's what sex is like when it's used the way it was designed to be used. Not just physical and certainly not dirty, but between a man and a woman who have bound themselves to each other under God for the long haul. That's always going to be better than just seeing what the night will bring in the vain hope for a glimmer of love. The Bible doesn't just command us to wait for marriage rather than trading in our sexuality cheaply. For those with ears to hear, it tells us why it's worth the wait; why it's deep and profound; and why marriage is the place for the best sex.

## How do we wait well?

I hope that it has been clear enough that having a sexuality in line with God's design means waiting until marriage—a binding relationship—to explore sex and your sexuality. But what do you do in the meantime? I realize that waiting sounds unusual in our culture and society. We have a movie like *40 Days and 40 Nights*, which is about whether a guy can wait 40 days to have sex. Or *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* (what's with all the 40s!), where it is just ridiculously funny that a man could make it to 40 years of age without having sex. Hilarious! It is not really acceptable in our society to wait for sex. But we can wait; the question is how do we wait well.

The first way is to be careful of the ways we *think* about sex. This is going to be hard, because we hear tons of messages about sex every day, and virtually all of them fall well short of designer sexuality. Thinking righteously about sex, thinking God's way about sex, will mean training our minds to think differently from how the world wants us to think. For example, we want to see members of the opposite sex as people made in the image of God, with dignity and worth because God made them and Jesus died for them, rather than as objects of sexual desire or fantasy.