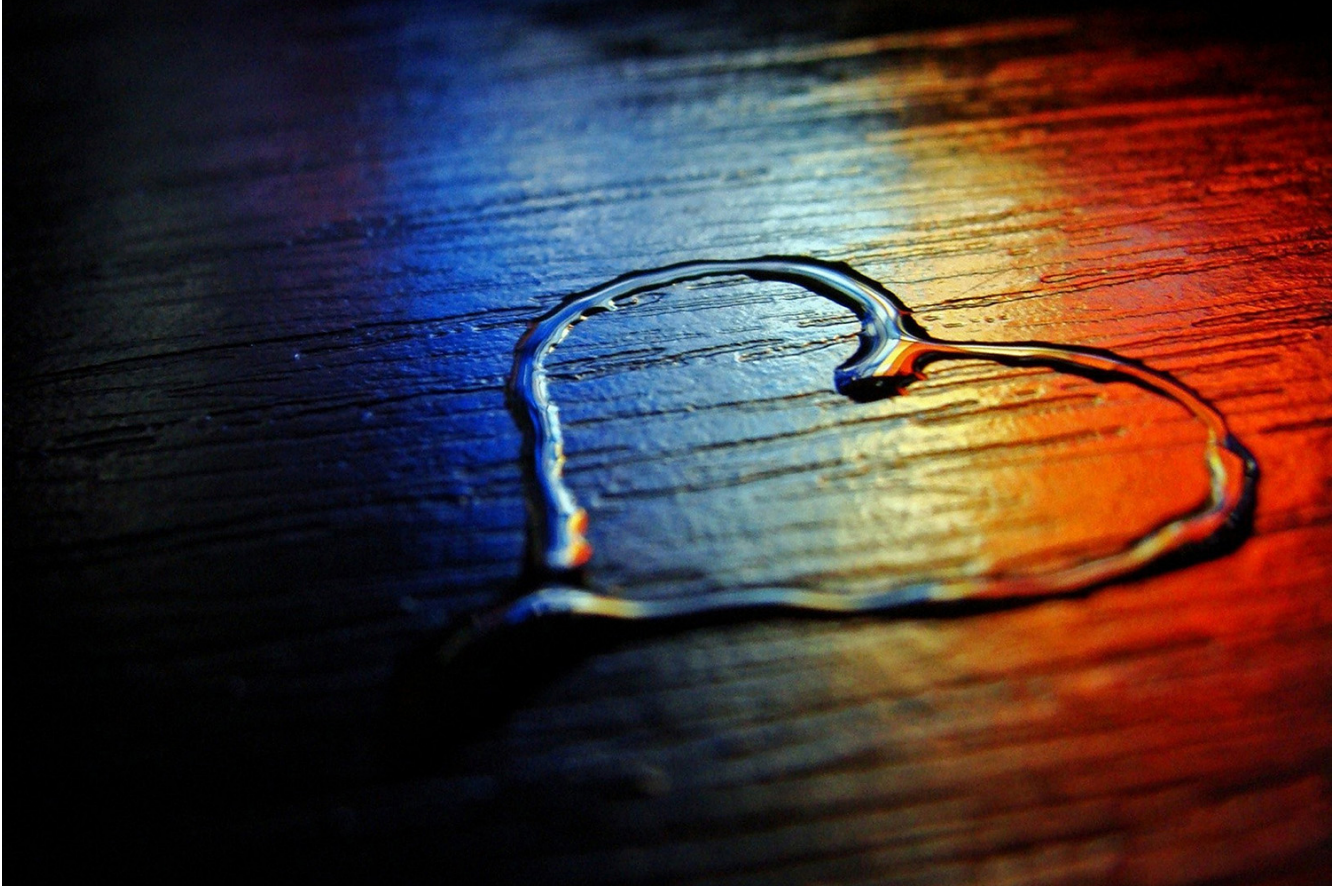


Premarital Sex - Should I Stop When I Come To Christ?

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | October 28, 2010



I have been dating a colleague of mine for almost two years now and as neither of us were devoted to living like Christ, until a few months ago, we have been engaging in premarital sex. Now I am well aware of the traditional Christian views about premarital sex and how it is considered wrong.

And in retrospect I can see how waiting until marriage would have been the better option but now that we have already been engaging in this activity I am quite unsure of what to do. When I became a Christian I automatically thought that I should stop having sex with my partner and I actually felt quite guilty about the issue. But on further investigation I couldn't find a logical explanation of how ceasing to have sex with my partner would benefit our relationship with each other or our relationship with God. I Guess I would just like to know your insight into the situation and I would also like to know if and how continuing to have sex outside of marriage is damaging the mind or distancing us from God. I want to follow God completely so if the evidence does in fact support the notion that it is a "sin" and detrimental for us to continue with a sexual relationship then I will stop. I just didn't want to take this action and put strain on our relationship unless there is sufficient evidence to

support this option.

Thank you for your time Dr Jennings. I would greatly appreciate your insight into this matter.

D

You have raised an interesting question, and it sounds like the Spirit of Truth is working on your heart, but before I answer, let me ask you a few of questions. You said, "in retrospect I can see how waiting until marriage would have been the better option..." why? Why do you think waiting would have been better? Do you believe that premarital sex is outside of God's will? Do you believe that premarital sex is damaging in some way? If yes, do you believe that if one has been engaging in activity that is damaging and outside of God's will prior to coming to Christ, that when one comes to Christ such activity is no longer harmful nor outside His will?

Do you have the idea that it was wrong, but the damage is already done so what difference does it make now? If so, consider you had been gossiping and ruining someone's reputation before coming to Christ, would it be okay to continue such behavior after Christ? What if the damage to the person's reputation was already done would it be okay to persist in the gossip?

There are several layers to your question. First, what constitutes sin? Why is something sinful?

Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government. {GC 492.2}

All sin is selfishness. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 3}

God's law is the law of love - this law is not a mere feeling of affection, but a principle of beneficence, giving, selflessness, promotion of the good of others. It is the law upon which life is constructed to operate. Sin is "lawlessness" or violating the law of love. Thus all selfishness is sin.

Consider the motivation of the heart in the relationship in which you are currently engaged. What is in the best interest of the young lady with whom you are involved? What happens to the character when a person continues practicing behaviors they believe are outside of God's will? Can we have peace with God, peace with self, if our consciences are convicting us of guilt?

Our brains rewire based on the beliefs we hold - when our beliefs change but our behavior doesn't this causes a dissonance which increases firing of anxiety/stress circuits. Over time this can result in activation of sympathetic nervous system, activation of immune system, increased inflammatory factors, which negatively react upon brain and body increasing risk of metabolic disorders and depression.

On the other hand, if your beliefs have changed but your partner's beliefs have not, as you attempt to implement abstinence into the relationship this will cause relational stress. The relational stress, if not resolved, can also cause activation of inflammatory pathways. Therefore, one must be

very discerning in such situations. If your convictions lead you to want to move toward abstinence, but your partner doesn't, would your partner's behavior demonstrate sensitivity to your beliefs, concern for your eternal welfare and genuine love for you?

Another layer of concern is that when we are sexually active our brains rewire causing a neurological bonding with our sexual partner. This results in less objectivity in our assessment of the relationship. The brain's reward center (nucleus accumbens) is more profoundly stimulated by our sexual partner than other individuals. This means we experience a greater sense of pleasure at the sound of their voice, touch of their hand, or even a thought about them than any other person. Additionally, we tend to forget the negatives and remember the positives and therefore lose objectivity in dealing with our sexual partner. For a fuller exploration of the neurobiology of sex please listen to my lecture on this titled, **Human Sexuality**.

From a Scriptural perspective, consider the woman caught in adultery. She was brought to Christ immediately from the adultery bed and He revealed God's attitude toward us when we are still in sin - "neither do I condemn you." This is incredibly important to realize because many think the problem with sin is that God condemns or God gets angry, and if we get forgiveness then what is the problem? But the problem with sin is that it damages the sinner. If a patient smokes and God is not condemning, does that make smoking okay? It is very freeing to realize that Christ didn't condemn the woman, but He didn't stop with His loving acceptance, He also said, "go and sin no more" or "go and live a better life" or "go and leave that destructive life."

When we come to Christ we come in our sin, with all our defects, and we can have certainty that, just like the woman caught in adultery, God does not condemn us. But, God does something more, He leads us to a better way of living. He gives us wisdom, insight, instructions to leave a life of sin, a life that is unhealthy and He invites us to walk with Him, living in harmony with His principles. It is only in harmony with His principles that we can have genuine health and happiness. God accepts and guides and then leaves us free to decide whether we will walk as He has directed or whether we will go our own way.

God longs for your health and happiness and if you and your partner trust Him, seek His wisdom in how you relate, and follow His methods in your lives, you cannot help but experience His blessings.