

## Marriage Matters

Hebrews 13:4

*“Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”*

For those here today born after 1980, this verse may sound strange to your ears. Sexual activity outside of marriage is deemed healthy, normal, and natural by culture. However, it would be wise to remember:

1. Cultural practices in our own nation sometimes stray profoundly from God’s plan.
2. Just because culture says something is right and good doesn’t mean that it really is.
3. Cultural practices that stray from God’s plan wind up hurting people a great deal.
4. It would be helpful if we Christians could bring healing to hurting people, not shame.

Most messages I’ve heard on the subject of sex outside of marriage remind me of a conversation between parent and child. “Don’t do that!” “Why daddy?” “Because I told you so, that’s why!” Other reasons exist.

### I. Marriage is to be “held in honor” because of what marriage pictures.

Marriage is a symbol of something else. When you said, “I do” you became a living, breathing symbol. Marriage is like the American flag. The flag is colored cloth, but it represents something mighty grand.

#### A. Marriage pictures the union between Christ and His people.

We are called the Bride of Christ in the gospels, the epistles, Revelation and throughout the OT. Paul refers to the union of a man and wife as a picture of Christ’s union with us (Eph 5:22-33).

#### B. When the reality is present, there is no need for the picture.

You go on vacation and take pictures. You don’t go to the mountain in order to look at pictures. “During the resurrection people will not marry nor will they be given in marriage” (Matt 22:30).

#### C. Marriage should never be your identity as a Christian.

Whether you are single, widowed, divorced, or in a bad marriage, you are who you are in Christ. William Cary was criticized for remarrying so soon after his wife died on the India mission fields. He responded, “The best evidence that a widower had a great marriage is a quick remarriage.”

### II. Sexual activity outside of marriage is a picture of you forsaking a union with God.

If God designed marriage to be a symbol of the union that you have with Him, then when you move into sexual activity outside of marriage it is a picture that you have gone after other gods (idolatry). “Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body” (I Cor 6:18). The Bible singles out sexual sins from other sins. “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you” (I Corinthians 6:19).

#### A. The sin of sexual activity outside of marriage is spiritual, not physical.

God created the sexual union to be a picture of the ecstasy and euphoria you have in Him.

#### B. The person who looks to sexual activity as a goal forgets there is a God.

“For fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4). What is it that is being judged? It’s not the act. It’s not the enjoyment of the act. It is the separation of God from the act of sex.

### III. To “keep the marriage bed undefiled” means you think of sex in terms of the spiritual.

Beth Moore has said, “There is no high like the Most High.” Think of the sexual union in this manner. If someone doesn’t understand how you can wait for sex until marriage, take time to tell about Him.