

HERS

OPINION

HIS

Sex Before Marriage: Yes or No?

...from the perspectives of a male and a female staff writer

By Vickie Hughes

Wow! I sure got your attention. I guess this topic would catch anyone's eyes. How fitting is it to open this article with a Bible verse, Ephesians 2:3... Among who also we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature, the children's of wrath, even as others. Well, that's a thought-provoking verse! In a time when premarital sex is becoming more and more popular, one must wonder if we can relate to

and of course have fallen in love with. To be able to choose a partner like this, you must be a responsible, mature adult. I stress the two qualities—responsible and mature. As a friend said, many of us are responsible enough to use precautions and lucky enough not to get pregnant! I ask all of you teenagers and young single women "Are you thinking of the consequences that may follow if you engage in premarital sex? If you get pregnant, are you mature enough to handle these consequences? If the

Bible says that premarital sex is a sin, then pregnancy as a result of premarital sex becomes a sin and a mistake, Could you deal with your mistake? As a woman approaching age thirty, I look back and wonder what happened to perseverance and stamina that was present in past generations. Our parents and their parents tell us that years ago, premarital sex and unwanted pregnancies were not condoned. They were told that they would have to wait to have sex. Young girls were even sent away to live somewhere else if they got pregnant and were looked down upon. Today, being an unwed mother is socially acceptable and is even flaunted in some instances.

Why are my generation and teens of today so hard-headed when we are asked to wait. Many of our parents and grandparents waited so why can't we? Is it because today premarital sex has become the norm? If I took a poll to find out how many of us single people are still virgins, I'd get laughed at just for asking the question. And what's so

unfortunate, some of us are still as sexually active as we were before. We have not slowed down a bit or become more selective of our partners. If you are going to engage in premarital sex, it would make more sense to choose one partner to share this act with. And this partner should be one with you have a serious commitment and understanding, have discussed marriage with,

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sad is that some fourteen and fifteen year olds would be laughing too.

"Wouldn't it be nice if some of us would practice abstinence? I recently heard a male say, "Abstinence results in masturbation." That sounds like an excuse to me! Abstinence builds character, perseverance, and patience.

I've heard some people say that sex isn't all it's cracked up to be. I wonder if they ever thought that maybe they have had unpleasant experiences while having sex because they did not wait long enough to experience making love with a compatible person. Having sex just for fun may not be fun.

There is more to a relationship than the physical aspects of it. There are ways to spend time with each other and enjoy each other's company without engaging in sex. Sex enhances a relationship, however, it does not make a relationship. Sharing romantic moments with someone does not always have to mean having sex. Think of those romantic moments we've shared with someone when we listened to the waves crash against the rocks along the beach, gazed at sights in a museum, smelled the roses in a rose garden, enjoyed a candlelight dinner, or talked about life. Those are romantic moments to me. Those are moments that we should always treasure.

The next time you are having a sexual encounter with someone, ask yourself if you truly love that someone. Could you marry that someone? Ask yourself if you are dealing with the emotion called love or the act of sex itself. If your answer is the act itself, then ask yourself, "Am I fulfilling the desires of my flesh or the desires of my mind?" And now I ask you this question. "What is your attitude about premarital sex?"

By Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

"...but fornication, and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be named once among you, as becometh saints..." -Ephesians 5:3

Webster defines fornication as "...voluntary sexual intercourse, generally forbidden by law, between an unmarried man; cf. adultery 2. Bible, any unlawful sexual intercourse, including adultery b) worship of idols."

The topic of sex before marriage has become an increasingly hot topic among single people these days. Actually,

I had never given it much thought over the years because sex has always been a part of my life, at least since I became conscious of what it was all about. Several weeks ago, I published a story entitled, "Stop Flexing Your Sexual Ego", and encouraged readers to make love to someone they love. Needless to say, I received all types of praise, criticism, and comments about what I wrote. However, the comment that stood out the most was one (frankly) directed towards me by a co-worker, who believed that people should not make love at all or at least until they are married. Others reading the column accused me of making their life difficult (because their women questioned their relationship) and some called sex a natural act. Let us explore the pros and cons of this issue.

In today's society, it's tough enough to cope with everyday realities associated with careers, racism, and economics, not to mention sexual pressures in relationships. It is no wonder that women are starting to abstain until marriage. Needless to say, most men have problems with this concept and feel like they do not have to wait that long for

intercourse with their mate. "Why wait when you don't have to?", is the general attitude. Men would prefer to know "up front" about sexual compatibility before getting married to someone. The questions then becomes, is sex the bottom line in building a relationship, and what about growing together? As one gentleman put it, "you don't buy a new car without giving it a test drive, do you...?" It has been suggested by some that going without sex for extended periods of time builds

stronger values, character, and forces personal development in other areas. Unlike most of the men, the women sharing their opinions on this subject did not have a problem going without sex until marriage. One woman, against sex before marriage,

feels that guys do not take her seriously when sharing her values and convictions. Most of them hung around for a few months, but disappeared when sex was not forthcoming. Out of five guys, she said that none of them were willing to wait or even consider the possibility. Another woman decided to stop participating in sex before marriage because most of the men she met were sexually irresponsible and more concerned with jumping into her bed than a future together. Saying no gives her the opportunity to see who is really serious about building a solid relationship. Other reasons for "saying No" before marriage were based on religious beliefs, unsuccessful relationships, and personal choice. It is important to note that several women believed that sex was very important to a relationship and would hate to be married to someone who they were not compatible sexually, the same

opinion shared by some men. So, is sex the real issue or is it a matter of values, religion, morality, or compatibility?

One gentleman stated that he does not have a problem with a women's "choice" to abstain from intercourse as long as it has been her lifelong commitment. He has problems with those women, who all of a sudden, change their minds and expect a guy to conform right away. The question to him, what ever happened to an individual right to change or correct what is perceived as wrong in their life? What about a spiritual revelation, or time to heal from past pain? There is nothing wrong with a person redirecting their values or attitude. No one should be "held hostage" for what they believe in and their position should be respected. For those worried about not being compatible sexually, one woman suggested that couples seek professional help, talk/work it out together, or speak with your pastor. Some women, who were against sex before a marriage, admitted that they engaged in "everything but the act" (oral sex, etc...) with their mates. Several men suggested that these women either totally indulge or not do it at all. Indeed, there are some very mixed opinions and emotions on this topic.

The way it seems now, each generations attitude towards sexual activity has changed over the years. Our parents got away with more than their parents and we currently get away with more than our parents did. I'm almost afraid to think about what our children's children will be doing at the rate society or its values are declining. It's a real scary thought. As stated in another column, you can always find people in the world with the same values as yours, but remember to respect the people who do not share your convictions. Some people would just prefer to wait, what about you?



1990

AFRICAN AMERICAN FESTIVAL

BUFFET BREAKFAST
Sunday, July 8, 1990
8:30 am - 11:00 am

LYON'S RESTAURANT
MLK BLVD.
Portland, Oregon

\$5.00 per person

Schools: Education or Social Services

(Part 2 continued from last week)

Much of what schools do is at the direction of elected officials in Washington, D.C. and Salem.

There are those "little" mandated responsibilities such as encouraging the planning, protection and preservation of trees and shrubs during Arbor Week and commemorating and instructing about activities of women in history during Frances E. Willard Week.

Also furnishing a comprehensive alcohol-and drug-abuse program; maintaining appropriate and accessible alternative programs; educating children in youth-care centers, hospitals and in specially designed programs; furnishing programs for the talented and gifted and in career education; having an age-appropriate plan of instruction about AIDS, ARC, HIV and Hepatitis B.

Plus screening for hearing, vision and immunization; providing a prevention-oriented health services program; administering, recording and reporting on achievement tests; providing a coordinated counseling and guidance program; maintaining a comprehensive safety program and providing a coordinated media program.

At the federal level, schools face Section 504 of the Civil Rights Act. That legislation conveys as a civil right all benefits, programs and activities in the public schools to handicapped students, parents and employees. Public Law 94-142 extends educational services and any related services needed for the handicapped student to benefit from education.

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act requires the U.S. Dept. of Education to set conditions, review and eventually approve management plans from local school districts.

There are 16 state agencies with direct rule-making authority over major activities of local school districts and 35 other agencies with authority in lesser areas.

Responsibilities that once belonged

to the home, to religious training, to various state, county and city agencies have been shifted to local schools and are a fact of current education life as we know it.

But, just to avoid any misunderstanding, we would do most of it anyway if it were within our financial ability. Why? Because society's institutions that have cared for our children in the past are no longer doing so.

It is necessary for schools to back-fill for society's failures so academic, cognitive and affective education can take place. If schools don't do it, who will? What would our community be like if the schools were not there for those services?

A MAJOR SCHOOL REFORM PLAN:

Now for a radical suggestion. I'm almost afraid to make it. I'm worried that it will be ignored as rhetoric, or worse, as pandering. I may even be more afraid that you will know I am serious and take me up on it quickly and in large numbers.

Portland Public Schools developed a major initiative this past year. It envisions the community working with local schools. We call it the STAR Plan. We have seen a plethora of studies, research and quasi-research reports with "new" ideas for how to correct public schooling. There have been so many such reports that there are even a few dozen reports on the reports.

I don't discount those reports, but, really, our children can't use any more innovative or curative ideas right now. We know there are still many reforms that will help improve the education of our children, but what will do the most good now is your involvement.

We want your heart, your energy, you. We don't need your letters or telephone calls or more suggestions, criticisms, blue-ribbon panel reports or legislative mandates.

Instead, we need you to become a part of the STAR Plan. Go to a Portland

public school nearest your home or business and volunteer for an hour a week or an hour a day.

Ask your employer to become a partner in the Star Plan. Encourage your employer to support developing the next-generation work force through a range of company-sponsored activities and by allowing you time to make contributions by becoming involved. We also want the general community, businesses and legal, architectural, medical and other professional firms to step up. We are held accountable for what we do. Are you willing to be accountable for roles and activities in the schools for yourself, your business, your company, your firm?

Here is the important request. If you can represent a business of any size, contact the Business Youth Exchange (BYE), the school district's partner at the Portland Chamber of Commerce. Ask to be placed in the Matrix for Business and Professional Involvement.

The Portland School District's Public Information Dept. and BYE will show you what other companies have done, expose you to models of activities, help you discover what schools need and can use. They then will match what you and your company are willing to offer with particular schools and their needs. It may take some time and negotiation, but we'll help you figure out what fits.

Are the public schools successfully addressing the social needs of our children? I hope so. Schools will continue to urge the federal, state, county and city governments to do what we believe is appropriate to meet those same needs.

We will continue to help parents do what only they can do best. Now, however, we need your direct involvement as individuals and corporations. Together, we can get done what none of us can do alone.

Reach for a STAR.