Right and Wrong Sex / Biblical Sexual Morality

Tammy: Yesterday, in the news, I heard about a popular band that could no longer perform. The drummer, lead guitarist and second singer all had hard consequences because of the HIV/AIDS virus. The news went on to share that the drummer caught HIV from one of the fans of the band, who he had slept with. The lead guitarist died because his girlfriend had slept with another one of the fans, caught HIV and then gave it to him. And the singer, who had behaved himself and kept himself healthy, had to leave the band to care for his brother's children when their parents died of AIDS.

Hello, you're with Women of Hope, I'm Tammy. Carol and I are so happy to be together with you today.

Carol: Hello friend, that news story Tammy just talked about involved a band that had lost several members because of the disease HIV/AIDS. It swept through their African community, as it has done in many other countries.
And it is just one story, but it certainly represents a lot of other stories of people who have made choices that have impacted their lives tragically. Their choices had to do with their personal sexual purity and the consequences of those choices.

Tammy: I'm sure you've heard of HIV/AIDS. It spreads through body fluids from a person who has it, maybe through getting some of their blood in a cut, or sharing injection needles. You don't catch it just by caring for a sick person, or having social contact, like hugging or kissing. The main ways it spreads are through sexual contact, and drug users sharing needles.

Carol: You know, mothers used to warn their daughters not to have sex before they were married. They knew that there was a danger of getting pregnant when they're not married. And they knew the heartache and hardship their daughter would face. But these days, many young women only think about 'not getting pregnant' so they use contraception and think they are safe - but no contraception is 100% safe.

Tammy: And some people decide it's OK to have a baby without being married. Do you think that's the best way to bring up a child, without a father? I don't think it's a good choice, though sometimes

women don't have a choice in the matter. It's certainly very hard work for the mother, and families without a father often really struggle.

Carol: Sometimes girls get pregnant and think they can solve that problem by having an abortion. I wonder if you think that's a better choice. I think it's a tragedy - to end the life of your child. And it's true, many women bitterly regret making that choice.

Tammy: But the fear of or having a child is not the only reason to wait for marriage and be faithful. Think of all of the other nasty diseases spread by sex, like syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, herpes and genital warts. These are all serious diseases that can kill you or make you infertile so you can't have a baby later. Even condoms don't completely protect you from these diseases.

I think there are some very *positive* reasons to wait until you're married and to be faithful to your partner. It's so good to know that you and your partner belong only to each other. Sex is a very important bond in a marriage that shouldn't be shared with others.

Carol: I agree. I know it makes me feel very safe and secure because I can trust my husband to be faithful. And I want my husband to know he can trust me. We all want to know that our partner loves us, protects us, and puts our needs above their own desires. This makes our marriage strong. When you get married you have years to get to know each other and find out what you enjoy together; you don't have that with a casual sexual partner.

When you're engaged, and your fiancé is willing to wait till marriage, it shows he can control himself and put your needs first. That's a really good start for a trusting marriage. The truth is, long before AIDS came along, we knew that this was the best way to live

Tammy: If you had other partners before, God will forgive you if you're truly sorry. Your husband or wife might forgive you too, but you can be quite damaged emotionally and find it hard to really relax in your married life. You might also feel guilty, jealous, anxious or depressed. It might be hard for your marriage partner to trust you. I really believe that keeping sex within marriage is the happiest way to live.

Carol: And we haven't even started to talk about the most important reason of all; what does *God* say about sex in the Bible? Well, there's plenty!

Tammy: There sure is!

Carol: I wonder, have *you* been thinking about your own life? Maybe wishing you had waited to have sex, or that you had been faithful? Maybe you are feeling sad about your choices or times when you had no choice. Or maybe you're looking ahead and deciding to wait for marriage and be faithful in your marriage.

Well, we have Fran with us today and she is going to share with all of us what God has to say about sex. Welcome, Fran.

Fran: Hello, my friend. Sometimes people talk as though God is against sex, and just waiting to catch us and punish us. That's not true! God made us to naturally desire sex and he meant it to be joyful. Let me read to you from the first book in God's word, the Bible. It tells how God created the first man and made the first woman to be a helper and companion for him. Then it says, 'This is the reason why a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh.' And it says 'The man and his wife were naked, and they felt no shame.' (Gen 2:24-25) Imagine how happy and free they felt in that first marriage! This was what God wanted.

But once people chose to disobey God, he needed to give us some rules. All cultures have rules about sex. They might have different details, but people have always known that sex is too important to just use casually. Women especially know that, because women often are the victims of wrong sex. God knew we needed boundaries for sex.

Tammy: I think women and men need to know how God invented sex and marriage as a good thing to keep special within a marriage. It bonds two people together - the Bible says we 'become one flesh' - and that helps couples stay together and learn to love and support each other through good times and hard times.

Fran: You know, in the Bible there's a series of poems that celebrate the faithful love of a couple. It's called the Song of Songs, and it's quite open about the joy of physical love. A lot of it is spoken by a woman who longs for her loved one. So physical love and desire are not bad things. They help us not to feel alone, and of course they lead to having babies and providing a loving home where children can grow up.

But the Bible is very clear that we should not have sex apart from marriage. That makes sense, doesn't it? If two people aren't fully committed to each other, then sex is just a passing thing. They don't really care about each other; often the woman is just used and thrown aside, babies are born with no secure home, and hearts are broken. If a married person isn't faithful, they are betraying their

partner and breaking their promise. I don't have to tell you the problems that result, do I? I'm sure you see them in your community.

But sex apart from marriage isn't just a social problem. It's disobeying God's instructions. Long ago God gave ten basic commandments to his people, and one was 'You shall not commit adultery' (Ex 20:14). Adultery means having sexual relations with someone else's husband or wife. This idea is repeated in various ways throughout the law of God. Men were forbidden to have sexual relations with someone else's wife (Lev18:20) or to defile a virgin. Women were expected to be virgins until they were married. Once a couple had sex their community considered that they were married (Gen 24:67). Marriage was a covenant, a binding agreement between a couple, and often, their families, in the sight of God and the community. That's still true: when you get married it's a public thing, a commitment you make before witnesses.

The Bible also has some strong words about women who set out to seduce men. In the book of Proverbs a father warns his son to avoid a woman like this. She might say 'Come, let's … enjoy ourselves with love while my husband is away on business.' (Prov 7:18-20) But the father warns, 'Don't let your heart turn to her... she has brought down many victims… her house is the quick route to the graveyard.' (Prov 7:25-27)

Tammy: God meant for men *and* women to *both* be responsible to control their sexual desires and not stray outside their marriage.

Carol: I just want to add here that a person who is raped or sexually abused—they're not responsible – it is not their fault. All of this is according to God's word. (Deut 22:25-27) It's always wrong to force someone to have sex. Sex itself isn't the sin; it's *wrong* sex that is the sin, when you choose to disobey God's standards.

Fran: Our Lord Jesus Christ himself mentioned the law against adultery, and he took it further. Jesus said that holding onto lustful thoughts is just as bad, because you *want* to sin. He wanted his followers to keep their *thoughts* clean, not just their *actions,* because he wants us to act out of true love, love that protects and cares for another person. That's what God's love is like. God himself gives us such a good example of how to be faithful. He keeps his promises, he never turns his back on us, he always cares for us and loves us. So whether we are married or single, God wants us to love faithfully, like that.

Carol: It's not just about keeping *rules* about sex, is it Fran? It's also about really being *faithful in our hearts*, to God, and to our partner if we're married. And, if we're not married we can treat others with care and respect. Jesus was a single man and he treated women with the greatest respect.

Fran: That's true, Carol. Let me read you some words from the Bible written by Paul, one of the early Christian leaders. He wrote: 'Since you are God's dear children, you must try to be like him. Your life must be controlled by love, just as Christ loved us and gave his life for us. …Since you are God's people, it's not right to even talk about things that are sexually immoral or indecent, or greedy. It's not appropriate for you to use words that are dirty. Rather, you should use words to give thanks to God.' (Eph 5:3-5)

Carol: If you have ever had wrong sex, you might be feeling quite guilty right now, but I want to tell you, God can forgive any sin. Paul also wrote to some of those who believed in Jesus. They used to be bad sexual sinners, but God washed them clean and put them right with him by the Lord Jesus Christ and by God's Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:11) So don't despair; turn to God and ask him to forgive you and give you hope and a new start. Friend, change is hard and you need the power of God's Holy Spirit to live God's way, and to be pure in your relationships from now on.

Tammy: I'm so glad that God has shown us clearly how to live, and I know we will be happiest if we follow his directions. After all, he loves us!

Fran: We've talked about some serious things today, and maybe you need to think hard about them. If you want to live God's way, start by coming to God and confessing the wrong things you have done, and ask him for his help to make changes. God has promised to forgive you and he will be faithful to his promise. (1 John 1:9)

Carol: If you would like to, pray and ask God to help you. You can pray something like this:

Father, you have told us in your word the Bible, how we can live in a way that is best for us and pleasing to you. Help us to do that. Help us to be sexually pure, in our mind and with our body. Please, forgive us and wash us clean. Help us to start new with the help of your Holy Spirit. We pray this in the name of your Son who died in our place. Amen.

Tammy: *Before we leave you for today I would love to share with you hope from friends just like you living around the world:*

From the Philippines *we hear – I am crying at the moment, ma'am! Thank you for the message, it is so beautiful. I need your prayers. I got very sick due to my wrong decision in life. I admit I was*

wrong and now I am suffering from a sexually transmitted disease. I thought the man that I fell in love with loved me but he only used me. The worst is he knew that he has that kind of sickness but he did not inform me. I am so lonely and I am regretting, but I have no choice. What happened already happened. But, I'm thankful because I came to know the Lord in my life. Thank you so much.

A friend in India *shares with us: I listen to your program regularly. As a result, there has been a lot of transformation in my life. In my life I was looking for true peace and meaning to life, in various other places but your programs have helped me to understand that in Jesus alone there is real peace and eternal joy. I have experienced the Love of God and want to constantly dwell in His love. As I grow I the Lord, with more knowledge of His word, I want to be committed to serve Him. It is my determination to be His Witness wherever I go!*

Our Women of Hope strives to encourage, teach, and share love with each of you. If we can help you please write to us with any questions. You can contact us in care of this station or at Women of Hope. The address: TWRWomenofHope@twr.org. That's TWRWomenofHope@twr.org.

Carol: If you have missed a program or would even like to listen to one again you can do that on our website twrwomenofhope.org that's twrwomenofhope.org. or by visiting us on our Facebook page.

Tammy: Remember, with God's help, you can start to live a new life today; one that is the best for you and pleasing to God. Goodbye, and God bless you.

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