

Sense and Sexuality: The Search for Sexual Sanity in a Confusing Culture

“If we want to know what is most sacred in this world, all we need do is look for what is most violently profaned.”--Christopher West

Sex is a powerful force for either creativity, love, and goodness or destructiveness, deceit, and evil. Sex can give us a taste of heaven or hell. The Bible has a wonderfully high view of sexuality - our sexuality is designed to give us a taste of relationship with God. How are we brainwashed by the vivid and powerful cultural messages about sex and our bodies? What has the Bible to say about how we should care for our bodies? What has the Bible to say about sexuality in a world where “anything goes?” What is the relevance of the incarnation, resurrection and union of Christ with the church to our sexuality? How can we move towards purity in singleness and marriage? Now that the overwhelming flood of pornography is so easily available on the internet, most young men and women are learning about sex, love, women and relationships in all the wrong places. How can we protect ourselves and help those caught in sexual compulsion and addiction?

Richard Winter is one of the leaders of the European Christian Counsellors Network. He is currently Professor of Practical Theology and director of Covenant Seminary’s counselling program in St Louis, USA. He is also a psychotherapist and counsellor who was trained in medicine and psychiatry in England before being on the staff and a director of the English branch of the L’Abri Fellowship for 14 years. He has served in a variety of pastoral and teaching leadership roles in the church. He is the author of *When Life Goes Dark: Finding Hope in the Midst of Depression*, IVP 2012; *Perfecting Ourselves to Death: The Pursuit of Excellence and the Perils of Perfectionism*, IVP, April 2005; *Still Bored in a Culture of Entertainment: Rediscovering Passion and Wonder*, IVP, 2002; *Choose Life, A study of abortion and other reproductive technologies* (Out of Print), and professional journal articles. He is married, with four children and seven grandchildren.

Sex: Agony and Ecstasy!

I. Agony:

Infidelity, sexual addiction, incest, rape, sexual slavery, prostitution, sexual abuse...

1. Legacy of Abuse:

- A. Don’t trust body and longings
- B. Intimacy is dangerous
- C. Shame and guilt
- D. Sex bad
- E. Sex the only way to intimacy

2. Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- 3. Marital conflict, male/female differences, too much/little desire, temptation, lust, single and sexual...

II. Hearing Voices! What is influencing you?

1. Culture

- A. **Biological necessity:** If it feels good do it!
- B. Anything goes
- C. “Beauty” industry
- D. “Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of the **Raunch Culture**”

E. **The Hook-Up Culture**

Casual sex without relationship, attachment or commitment

Unhooked: How young women pursue sex, delay love and lose at both.

F. “**Pornified**” Culture

- a. Laura Sessions Stepp
- b. Sex disconnected from marriage and children
- c. Porn harmless and educational
- d. Anything goes!

G. **Pornification**

H. Women and Porn

I. **The Powerful and Seductive Voice of Pornography**

- a. Harmless and educational
- b. Disconnected from relationship
- c. Lifelong faithfulness old-fashioned
- d. Sex always amazing and exciting
- e. Best sex away from routines of normal domestic life
- f. Real relationships difficult so...
- g. Fantasy easier than reality... create “perfect” world

- h. Release without responsibility
- i. Channeling emotional tension
- j. “Making love” to self
- k. Escalation and demystification
- l. Bisexual, homosexual, group...

J. Same Sex Attraction
GLBTQ

K. Gender Identity Disorder

2. Church:

- A. Distorted teaching:**
- a. Sex dangerous and dirty
 - b. Can't control it
 - c. Don't talk about it
 - d. Shame and guilt
 - e. Fear. Suspicion, legalism

- B. Early Church:**
- a. Neoplatonic/Gnostic
 - b. Body bad/spirit good

- C. Desert Fathers:**
- a. Asceticism

- D. Jerome: “Anyone who is too passionate a love with his own wife is himself and adulterer.” AD 350**

- E. Augustine:**

3. Who are you listening to? What are you watching?

- A. **Agony and Ecstasy**
 - a. Lament “How long, O Lord?”
 - b. Grief
- B. The healing and transforming power of the gospel
- C. **Ashes to Beauty**

III. Sexuality Redeemed

- A. How can a young man/woman keep his/her way pure? Ps 119:9
- B. *Sexuality and Holy Longing*. Lisa McMinn
- C. Marriage a major theme from Genesis to Revelation
- D. Marriage the picture of God and his people

1. The gift and goodness of sex

- A. “Bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 1-2)
- B. Leave... cleave... one flesh.
- C. Covenant language
- D. No shame (2:25)
- E. Right place, purpose and time
- F. Deepest knowledge (4:1)
- G. **“Good” Sex**

2. The Purpose of Sex:

- A. Unitive
- B. Procreative
- C. Sacramental

3. Channels and Fences

- A. Pre-marital sex:
 - a. Exodus 22:16-17, Leviticus 18
 - b. Deuteronomy 22: 28-29

IV. Without God:

1. Looking for relationship in all the wrong places
2. Exchanging truth for a lie (Rom 1:18-27)
3. Losing true sensitivity.... Sensuality ... lust... (Eph 4:17-19)
4. Idolatry of sex

V. Song of Songs: Towards Ecstasy

Spiritual Allegory of Christ and the Church?

Structure: Story or Anthology of love poetry?

1. **Lessons in Love Making**
 - A. No shame

 - B. Communication – non-physical
 - a. Creativity
 - b. Imagination/Fantasy
 - c. Knowledge

 - C. Communication – physical
 - a. Kissing
 - b. Touching/caressing
 - c. Delight in sensuality and eroticism
 - d. Learning to dance!

VI. Enjoying difference:

1. Thoughts
2. Visual attraction
3. Separate sex and relationship
4. Speed of arousal
5. Mood and distractibility
6. But what is

- A. Created?
- B. Fallen?
- C. Cultural?

7. Women more hurt by casual sex

VII. Proverbs: Lessons in Living and Loving

“Life lived inside the context of God’s law humanizes us and makes us beautiful. It makes us creatures living well within the created order. It gives us the opportunity to become what we are meant to be.” Lauren Winner

1. Proverbs 5

A story of alluring pleasure, dangerous poison, places of temptation, the problem of instant gratification v. long term consequences, and the possibility of faithfulness and self-discipline.

2. Proverbs 6:20-35

A story of seductive temptation that is destructively dehumanizing and scarring, producing disgrace, shame, jealousy and anger

3. Proverbs 7

The fool goes to wrong places, is seduced, impulsively surrenders and the trap snaps shut.

VIII. David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11-12, Ps 51)

A story of looking, lusting, falling, cover-up and denial and eventually confession and forgiveness

1. The Rape of Amnon (2 Samuel 13)

A story of lust, seduction, rape and the horrendous consequences for both victim and violator

2. Job’s Covenant Eyes. Job 31: 1, 4

IX. Jesus, Paul and Sex

Mutual love and service (Eph 5:25-33)
Leave... cleave... one flesh.

1. What about Singleness?

- A. Not honored in the Church
- B. Paul’s high view of singleness and marriage (1 Cor 7:25-35)
- C. “Porneia” all forms of sexual immorality (1 Thess 4:3-8)

2. Paul's Plea for Purity (1 Cor 6:12 – 7:9)

- A. (Masturbation, premarital intimacy, pornography...)
 - a. Is it helpful?
 - b. Does it build up?
 - c. Is it addictive?
 - d. Does it cause lustful fantasy?
 - e. Does it reflect original purpose?
- B. Not meant for immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body (13)
- C. Not for destruction (14)
- D. One with Christ's body (15, 17)
- E. Temple of the Spirit (19)
- F. Flee! Run! (18 + 1 Thess 4:3-4)
- G. Not your own, bought with a price (19)
- H. Honor God with your body. (20)

3. Marriage (1 Cor 7:1-7)

- A. Mutual
- B. Faithfulness
- C. Responsibility
- D. Ownership
- E. Consent
- F. Submission (Eph 5:21)
- G. Realism about temptation

4. Back to Singleness: The Dance of Desire

Soul Virgins: Redefining single sexuality. Doug Rosenau et al.

A. Sisters protecting Brothers

- a. Know your power/allure and the male sexual turn-ons to “Eve-ness”
- b. Care with physical affection and erotic touching
- c. “Do not arouse or awaken love until...”

B. Brothers protecting sisters

- a. Keep sexual desire and visual nature under control. Don't feed it.

- b. Caution about paying focused attention – deep connection is a turn on!
- c. Care with physical touch and affection.

5. Discipline and Suffering in singleness and marriage

- A. Longings unfulfilled
- B. Patience and Groaning
- C. Long obedience in the same direction
- D. “Celibacy may close some doors but it is about opening others...” Lisa McMinn

6. No more sex in heaven?

Neither marry nor be given in marriage... (Matt 22:23-33)

A. “Profound Mystery”

“The permeation and penetration of what is essentially human with what is divine will then reach its peak” Pope John Paul

“Singleness finally trumps marriage”! Lauren Winner

B. Sex takes us to the heart of God’s purposes for us

Relationship and intimacy

A higher ecstasy?

X. Ashes to beauty

- A. Grace, mercy and forgiveness
- B. Sexuality redeemed and restored
- C. The power of the gospel of grace
- D. Agony to Ecstasy!
- E. “Sex, like other aspects of created reality, is unable to transport us back to Eden. Yet, when marital sexuality features a dance between its unitive, procreative, and recreational functions, it bears witness to the redemptive forces at work in the world and anticipates the kingdom of god.” Janel Bakker
- F. “With eyes wide open to the mercies of go, I beg you, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable to him. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let god remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of god for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.” Romans 12:1-2 (J.B.Phillips paraphrase)

XI. Appendix on Pornography Addiction

1. The Power and Poison of Porn

“Seeing the world through porn tinted spectacles”

- A. Devaluation of women
- B. False intimacy
- C. Narcissism and Callousness
- D. Lack of commitment

2. Progression

- A. Tolerance and escalation
- B. Withdrawal symptoms
- C. Time
- D. Desensitization
- E. Dissatisfaction and boredom
- F. Dysfunction
- G. Deception and denial
- H. Addiction

3. Compulsive Cycle

- A. Emotional pain
- B. Dissociation
- C. Fantasy and preoccupation
- D. Ritual and acting out
- E. Pleasure or numbness
- F. Shame, disgust, regret, anxiety

4. Pain

- A. Secrecy and Split life

- B. Self-loathing and Shame
- C. Debt
- D. Marriage problems
- E. Career
- F. Distance from God

5. Vulnerability

XII. Addiction and Scripture

Slavery (Gen 4:7, Acts 8:23)

Adultery (Jer 2, Hos 2)

Idolatry (2 Kings 17:41, Ezek 14:7, Jer2:20, 2 Tim 3:2-4, Romans 1, Eph 4:17-19)

1. Steps towards Healing

A. The Prescription

Admission, confession, repentance (1 John 1:9), disclosure

- B. May need tough love and intervention
- C. Abstinence
- D. Education about sex
- E. Realism re lapses
- F. Fantasy
- G. Boundaries
- H. Blocks
- I. Money
- J. Travel accountability
- K. Time
- L. Feelings Heart issues

M. Honesty with spouse and others

N. Accountability and support www.covenanteyes.com

O. Small group

■ **Acceptance and grace...** **Accountability...** **Different relationships**

P. Prayer

Q. “Victim work”

2. Summary of Healing Principles

- Heart issues and vulnerability
- Behavior and thought life battles
- Honesty in relationships
- Dealing with shame, guilt and fear
- Learning healthy sexuality

3. Freedom

- A. If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free... Everyone who sins is a slave to sin... If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:31-36)
- B. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners. (Isaiah 61:1)
- C. “This life, therefore, is not righteousness but growth in righteousness, not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise; we are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it; the process is not yet finished, but it is going on; this is not the end, but it is the road.” Martin Luther

© Richard Winter

Books and Resources

On Sexuality in general

Divine Sex: A Compelling Vision for Christian Relationships in a Hypersexualized Age, Jonathan Grant, Brazos Press, 2015

God Loves Sex: An Honest Conversation about Sexual Desire and Holiness, Dan Allender and Tremper Longman, Baker Books, 2014

On Sexuality and Singleness

Real Sex: The Naked Truth about Chastity. Lauren Winner, Brazos Press, 2005

Soul Virgins: Redefining Single Sexuality, Doug Rosenau, Michael Todd Wilson, 2006.

Holding Hands, Holding Hearts: Recovering a Biblical View of Christian Dating, Richard and Sharon Phillips.

On Sexuality in Marriage

A Celebration of Sex: A Guide to Enjoying God's Gift of Sexual Intimacy.
Douglas Rosenau, Thomas Nelson, 2002 (Revised and updated edition)
Sheet Music, Kevin Leman, Tyndale House, 2003. Good, frank and practical
The Gift of Sex: A Guide to Sexual Fulfillment. Clifford and Joyce Penner. Word, 2003
Sex 101: A Guide to Intimacy for Newlywed Couples, Clifford Penner, Thomas Nelson, July 2004
Secrets of Eve, Archibald Hart, Catherine Hart Weber, Debra Taylor, Word 1998
Very helpful for women (and for men) to understand female sexuality.

On Pornography and Sexual Addiction

Faithful and True, Mark Laaser, Zondervan, 1999.
Shattered Vows: Hope and Healing for Women who have been Sexually Betrayed. Debra Laaser, 2008
An Affair of the Mind: One Woman's Courageous Battle to Salvage her Family from the Devastation of Pornography, Laurie Hall, 1998
The Pornography Trap: Setting Pastors and Laypersons Free from Sexual Addiction. Mark Laaser and Ralph Earle, 2002
False Intimacy, Harry Schaumburg, Navpress, 1992
CyberSex Exposed: Simple Fantasy or Obsession, Jennifer Schneider (anything by Schneider is good for wives)
No stones: Women redeemed from sexual shame. Marnie Ferree

On Talking to Children about Sex

Angry Birds and Killer Bees: Talking to your kids about sex, Todd Bowman, 2014
Talking to your Kids about Sex. Mark Laaser. 1999
How and When to Tell Your Kids About Sex: A Lifelong Approach to Shaping Your Child's Character, Stan and Brenna Jones, NavPress

© Richard Winter 2016