

Is Sex Dirty and Sinful?

By Barrington H. Brennen, March 20, 2013

Is sex dirty and sinful? If sex is dirty and sinful, why are so many people doing it? Is it because it is a “force” we seem unable to control? The conundrum is that if sex is dirty to many it is because they are having free and wild sex, and the dirt is glorified as freedom of expression. On the other hand, some believe that sex is dirty because it was the sin the first couple, Adam and Eve, committed in the Garden of Eden about six thousand years ago. The latter could not be further from the truth. Sex itself has never been sinful and God intended it to be the highest expression of love between a married man and woman. Sex becomes sin is when it happens out of a marital relationship. Hebrews 11:13 states: “Hold marriage in high esteem, all of you, and keep the marriage bed pure because God will judge those who commit sexual sins.” *The Voice translation*

The idea that sex is evil started a long time ago by Greek philosophers. The ancient Greeks first could not accept the divine existence of Jesus and taught that Jesus only assumed human appearance. Thus, this teaching led to a disbelief in the resurrection. It also led to two extremes that were gradually impacting the teachings of the Christian faith. The two extreme teachings were all about sex or no sex. These two extreme teachings were **licentiousness**—Immorality (dissolute indulgence in sensual pleasure), and **asceticism**—non-indulgence (strict self-discipline and avoiding any sensory pleasures or luxuries). There was no middle road. If you engaged in any form of sex, even in marriage, it was immoral. Therefore, do not have sex, because it was sin. This was the teaching during the Apostle Paul’s time and he was doing his best to change the minds of the new Christian believers by telling them that sex in the right context was holy and a gift from God.

Then sometime later, Saint Augustine developed his own views about sex, of course, influenced by the Greeks. He "equated original sin with concupiscence and sexual excitement. Marital sexual intercourse he considered **a necessary evil since** it is the means of procreation — "the satisfaction of lust is transformed into the performance of necessary duty. Nevertheless, the act itself still remains the channel by which concupiscence and guilt on account of man's first transgression are transformed and transmitted from parent to child; hence the need for baptism, in which the guilt is washed away—though the lustful impulses remain."

This teaching continued down through the centuries until it became a natural part (in some people’s mind) of the Christian beliefs—the belief that sex is sinful. Then in the 18th century, these teachings mushroomed into what is called the **Degeneracy Theory**. “Degeneracy theory was first suggested by the 18th-century French clinician Simon Tissot who claimed that sexual activity depleted vital bodily fluids and led to feebleness and vice. He taught that too much sex "was what made people sick. It drained away their strength and debilitated them." He prescribed changes in regimen-- health plans, diets, exercise--together with

abstinence as medical palliatives for a culture that appeared to be losing its vitality and virility. Tissot's Degeneracy Theory influenced two men: Sylvester Graham and John Harvey Kellogg. Who were these men? They were the creators of some of the most famous food products ever--- Graham Crackers and Kellogg Cornflakes. Sylvester Graham died in 1851 and John Harvey Kellogg died in 1943, but their influence still lingers on not just on the shelves of our grocery stores but in the minds of many people (mostly Christians) through their beliefs about sex.

These men taught that the desire to have sex was sinful and bad to the mind and body. They also taught that meat eating increases the sexual desire. Their idea was that since meat causes sexual desires which are believed to be sinful, we should stop eating meat. This is why Dr. Kellogg invented Cornflakes. The idea was that cornflakes would be a good protein substitute for meat, so if eaten instead of meat, it will lower the "sinful sexual desires" or the libido.

In 1839, Graham said in a lecture on the Science of Human Life: "Sexual desire disturbs and disorders all the functions of and can lead to general debility, effeminacy, disordered functions, and permanent disease, and even premature death. . ." Similarly, Kellogg wanted to prove that "sexual activity is not necessary to health, and in fact can retard growth, weaken the constitution, and dwarf the intellect. His roasted corn flakes were part of his health regimen designed to cure original sin by reducing the force of sexual passion." Interestingly, Dr. Kellogg was a married man for 67 years to his wife Ella. It is reported that he never had sex with his wife but they were foster parents to children and adopted seven of them. On his honeymoon night, Dr. Kellogg stayed up late writing his book on the sinfulness of sex.

Now we know why we have cornflakes. I have never eaten meat, but my choice of being a vegetarian has nothing to do with sex. God did invent sex. I love it and enjoy having lots of it with my wife. In Genesis 1:20 after God had finished creating Adam and Eve, he told them to go ahead and have sex, lots of it. He said "Be fruitful and multiply." Sex is far from dirty or sinful. People are dirty and sinful. Sex out of context is what makes it dirty and sinful. While on one hand sex out of context seems to be the most powerful force on earth that drives people to ruin, even more than guns; on the other hand, sex between a married man and woman is the most beautiful expression of love, passion and compassion in the entire universe. Sex in the right context is, when climaxed in the great orgasmic explosion, cannot be compared to any other force or energy on earth. Let's keep sex in the right context.

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