

FEBRUARY 2007—*Human Sexuality*

One of God's good gifts to humanity is the capacity for sexual intimacy between husband and wife. At its best, sexual intimacy is mutual self-giving, emotionally and physically, in the security of a commitment to lifelong faithfulness. Although relatively few people experience this reality, it is part of God's purpose in marriage and possible for those who seek it.

What we too often see in our culture today is an ugly distortion of God's purpose for sex. In pop culture it is often referred to as "hooking up" and seen by some as a form of recreation. Increasingly, sex—like oxygen, food, and water—is seen as a basic need for human flourishing and therefore not to be inhibited by outdated notions of morality.

Of course, this is nothing new. C.S. Lewis was concerned about the same issue in his day and offers some helpful insights for us.

...our warped natures, the devils who tempt us, and all the contemporary propaganda for lust, combine to make us feel that the desires we are resisting are so "natural," so "healthy," and so reasonable, that it is almost perverse and abnormal to resist them. Poster after poster, film after film, novel after novel, associate the idea of sexual indulgence with the ideas of health, normality, youth, frankness, and good humor. Now this association is a lie. Like all powerful lies, it is based on a truth—the truth, acknowledged above, that sex in itself (apart from the excesses and obsessions that have grown round it) is "normal" and "healthy" and all the rest of it. The lie consists in the suggestion that any sexual act to which you are tempted at the moment is also healthy and normal. Now this, on any conceivable view, and quite apart from Christianity, must be nonsense. Surrender to all our desires obviously leads to impotence, disease, jealousies, lies, concealment, and everything that is the reverse of health, good humor, and frankness.¹

In today's sex-obsessed culture, living chastely in mind and body is not easy. Our constant bombardment by what Lewis calls "the propaganda for lust" makes it all too easy to adopt the world's values and buy into the world's lies about sex. The Greco-Roman culture of Paul's day was similar to our own, and he faced this very issue among the churches he oversaw. His advice then is very timely for us today:

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-8 (ESV)

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Touchstone Edition, 1996), p. 93.