

## What the Bible says about Sex before Marriage

All couples who become romantic experience temptation. The world tells us it is ok and even good to have sex outside of marriage if you love someone. The Catholic Church teaches that if you love someone truly, you will only engage in the marital act (sex) within the committed relationship of marriage. To do otherwise is dishonest. Engaging in the marital act before you are married is, in effect, declaring a full commitment with your bodies that you have not yet made in a public ceremony. Research shows that premarital sex results in higher divorce rates. The Bible tells us repeatedly in very clear terms that sex before marriage (fornication) is a serious (mortal) sin that separates us from God and Heaven:

*“Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man...” Matthew 15:19-20*

*“To the thirsty I will give from the fountain of the water of life without payment... and I will be his God and he shall be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, **fornicators**, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, **their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur**, which is the second death.” Revelation 21:6-8*

*“You were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh... walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would... Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. **I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.** ... those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” Galatians 5: 13-25*

*“Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us... But fornication and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints. Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk... but instead let there be thanksgiving. **Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.** Therefore do not associate with them, for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Ephesians 5: 1-10*

*“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away...” Colossians 3: 5-8, 12-15*

**Fornication leads to the spiritual death of both one’s self and one’s “lover.”** It is no act of love to lead someone into spiritual death and possible eternal damnation. Rather, this is an act of profound selfishness, to seek gratification at the expense of another’s soul, as well as your own. St Francis de Sales wrote: “The friend who would lead us into sin, has become our enemy.”

**It can also tempt others to sin through the scandal of bad example.**

*Jesus said: “Temptations to sin are sure to come; but woe to him by whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung round his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin...” (Lk 17:1)*

The Catechism tells us in paragraph 1868 that one can share in the responsibility of another’s sin by approving of it, or in some cases, by merely not objecting to it. The above verse of Scripture continues with this advice:

*“... Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.” (Lk 17:1)*

### **Jesus did not come to condemn us in our sin!**

Jesus said that he did not come for the righteous, but for sinners (Matthew 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32). **He did not come to condemn us**, but rather, to rescue us from the grasp of Hell (John 3:17) and to give to us his **abundant life** (John 10:10). Jesus wants to show us the path to authentic love. **He was merciful** toward the woman caught in adultery and did not condemn her. (John 8: 3-11)

Jesus does not seek to condemn and punish us when we fall short of his commandments (see Ezek. 33:11). He seeks to show us the way out of our sin into the beauty and splendor of true love, according to his plan. His desire is to show us the path to life. This is why he died for us on the cross. But we condemn ourselves if we refuse his mercy and are unwilling to experience the change of heart that leads to a change in how we live. God, in his mercy, wants to *free* us from our sin and those patterns of life that are *deadly* for us. He knows what is best for us because *he created us!* God who *is love*, created us out of love to reflect the goodness of his love. He is the author of human love. It was his idea! He does not condemn the act of premarital sex because sex is *bad*, but because it is so *good and sacred* that we must not distort or cheapen its beauty! Sex is sacred because it reflects something of the very nature of God, who is a loving communion of persons in the Trinity. God is his deepest essence is *family*.