

“Answers to Teen’s Questions About Sex and Sexuality”

by Jim Burns, Ph.D.

All teenagers are interested by sex and sexuality. As their bodies develop and mature, and their sexual hormone production increases, sexuality become a topic that teens think about frequently. Virtually all kids want to receive more information regarding sexuality. At YouthBuilders, we believe that parents ought to be the primary source for teenagers to get open and honest answers to their sexual questions. Over the years, we have received literally thousands of questions from teenagers on this topic. And, in order to help prepare you for your teenager’s questions, let me share with you some of the answers we have given in response to teen’s questions.

Q. I have become sexually active with my current boyfriend. I have been raised in a Christian home and I know that sex before marriage is bad. The only thing is that we haven't had sexual intercourse. Am I still a virgin? I have repented and asked His forgiveness many times over for what we have done, but I still stumble. Have I gone past the point of God being able to forgive me?

A. The first thing to remember is that God loves you and is ready to forgive you for anything, anytime! He does desire that we don't just sit back and keep going on in the same direction, but that we repent and seek after purity and what God would want in our relationships.

As for your question about your virginity: Losing our virginity comes only when we have sexual intercourse with another person. Therefore, you are still a virgin. The question though is what course are you heading down. Most likely, if you keep on this course you will end up losing your virginity.

If you are serious about going in a new direction, there are a few things that you need to keep in mind.

- Make a decision as a couple to stop being sexually active.
- Set some boundaries. Find out what leads you to be sexually active and make a decision to keep yourselves out of those situations.
- Remember that it is only through God's power, not our "might" that we can keep in the right direction. Pray together and seek God as a couple!
- Seek accountability. Find others who you will be completely honest and transparent with. Allow those people to ask anything at anytime. If you are tempted, call them and seek support from them!

Seeking purity is one of the most important things you can seek after! It's hard, but well worth the effort.

Q. Does the Bible say anything about having to marry a virgin?

A. Sexual purity is a very important topic in the Bible (Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Hebrews 13:4). The Bible is clear that God intended that sex was to be expressed in marriage, not before.

Still, there is no where that the Bible says only virgins can get married - as if people who sin sexually before marriage - are required to remain single for the rest of their lives. The Bible doesn't say that!

Q. I know, understand and apply God's will concerning sex before marriage. So I know that that's out of the question as far as God's concerned. However, I don't know how God feels about the grey areas between kissing/hugging and sex (eg. touching etc). I've asked a few close Christian friends about it and they said that they had always wondered the same thing. My boyfriend is keen too but I'm not sure how comfortable I am with the idea.

A. What a great question and one that almost every person asks at least once in his or her teen years. You rightly identify that there are "grey areas" in scripture regarding sexual intimacy. God is quite clear that sexual union is designed for the marriage relationship only. So let's take a look at those grey areas.

What you describe (kissing, hugging, touching, etc) fall into the category of "foreplay". They are not designed to be an end in themselves but are designed to increase sexual arousal in a person that prepares them for intercourse. That is why it is hard to walk backwards down the path of intimacy. For example, once a couple begins holding hands, the next logical step is an arm around each other. Once a couple has kissed on the cheek, the next step is the lips...and so on. The human body is designed to respond to these forms of sexual stimulation and is not designed to just stop. That's where we hear the term "hot and bothered" when describing a person who is frustrated sexually.

Now let's talk about the difference between girls and guys. In general, girls seek intimacy and guys seek sexual activity. Again, this is not that one is better or worse than the other, it is the way God designed us. But, you need to realize that guys seek sex to feel loved and girls need to feel loved to have sex. It's almost a double edged sword and that struggle doesn't end, even when you get married.

There is so much pressure for you to enter into sexual activity in your teens. It is one of the most critical decisions you will make. The grey areas aren't so grey when you consider where they lead. It might not seem like it now but it is unlikely you will marry your high school sweetheart. And even if you do, it is statistically shown that people who have pre-marital sexual activity are not as fulfilled in their marriages later in life.

For more questions and answers about sex and sexuality, please visit the "Real Life Answers" section of the HomeWord website at www.homeword.com/FreeAdvice/ .