

27 TWO SHALL BECOME ONE

They looked across the room at each other and smiled. Each was remembering all the joy their 25 years together had brought them. It was good to be surrounded by their family and friends on their anniversary.

Not all of those 25 years had been easy, but from the very start they were committed to staying together. When things were hard they worked on their relationship. They prayed for each other and their life together. A few times they went to talk to a counselor about their marriage.

Over those 25 years, their love had deepened. They didn't always feel that giddy "in-love" feeling that comes with the first months of romance. But now they loved each other more than either of them would have ever thought possible. Everything about their relationship was getting better. Through their shared experiences they had grown closer to one another physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

And as they caught each other's smile across the room, they shared a silent excitement. They were both looking forward to later when they would be alone to celebrate.



3 STATEMENTS

- There are many ingredients in an intimate relationship; sex is just one of them.
- Sexual intimacy brings physical, emotional, and spiritual changes, so choosing your partner is important.
- God created our sexuality as a way for us to build and strengthen a marriage relationship.

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Source

HUMAN COMMUNITY

In the beginning, the Bible tells us, that Adam longed for human companionship. So God created a woman.

They were wonderfully alike. And yet they were wonderfully different. They were different sexual beings, created for intimate partnership.

They were naked and were not ashamed. They became one flesh. "Becoming one flesh" is the Bible's beautiful way to describe how a man and a woman literally join together in intercourse.

In this session, the beauty of marriage will be discussed. Marriage is a wonderful thing. But many people who choose to be single have wonderful lives. When discussing marriage, it's important to remember that single people can lead equally joyful lives in God's presence.

God created us male and female and has given us sexual activity to deepen relationships. *There are many ingredients in an intimate relationship; sex is just one of them.*

Intercourse and marriage go hand-in-hand. Together, a woman and a man can continue God's creative process as new life is created again and again. Intercourse can keep the marriage relationship fresh and exciting. God loves you and has good reasons for keeping intercourse within a marriage relationship. As always, God wants to protect relationships.

WHEN SOMETHING GOOD BECOMES BAD

God gave us sexual activity as a powerful gift of pleasure to deepen our relationship with the person we love. When that powerful gift is misused, it can become a powerful source of pain. That pain is what God wants to protect you against. God does not want to see you hurt.

In the movies and on TV, people end up in bed with near strangers. In the time it takes to see some movies, the main character has often had intercourse with two or three different people. That looks fun, but the media rarely shows the hurt that happens when people break the Sixth Commandment: "You shall not commit adultery." For instance, you rarely hear about sexually transmitted diseases in the movies. You need to know that there are some diseases that are only spread by having genital contact with someone who already has the disease.

Some sexually transmitted diseases can be treated and cured. Some can't be cured and people who get them have to live with the effects the rest of their lives. AIDS is a disease that can be transmitted sexually. And it can kill you. AIDS is not a homosexual disease. Men can give it to women; women can give it to men.

That's one of the reasons why God tells us to keep intercourse within a marriage. God wants you safe. There is one way you can be sure to avoid contracting sexually transmitted diseases. If you and your spouse come to your

wedding night as virgins, you will be free from that kind of worry. (A virgin is someone who has never had intercourse before.)

If you choose not to wait, you must accept the responsibility for a number of possible consequences: physical, emotional, and spiritual. When you say "yes" to intercourse, you may be choosing to create a child. Are you ready to be a parent? A baby is a blessing. But with an unwanted pregnancy, what should be a joy becomes a problem. God wants to protect that child you may create, so God gave you a Commandment to remind you where intercourse belongs: in a marriage. God wants to protect you from the emotional strains of dealing with an unwanted pregnancy. So God tells you, "If you want to be free, keep intercourse inside a marriage relationship."

There is another reason for waiting. Intercourse is a precious experience that is an expression of the oneness that is a marriage. As two people walk toward marriage, they walk toward a promise of deep, lifelong sharing. They become one emotionally, with the same goal of serving one another. *Sexual intimacy brings physical, emotional, and spiritual changes, so choosing your partner is important.* That intimacy comes to full physical expression as partners physically join in the beauty of intercourse. If intercourse is something you share with more than one person, where is the oneness? If intercourse is something casual, just for fun, where is the depth? If intercourse becomes common, where is the beauty?

It's not easy. God has given you powerful sexual drives, and then tells you that you have to wait. But God un-

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derstands these things. God knows what is best for relationships. Let your sexual activity gradually mature until you are ready to express your love fully with your spouse. *God created our sexuality as a way for us to build and strengthen a marriage relationship.*

This Commandment specifically tells us not to commit adultery. Adultery is the sin that happens when married people engage in any sexual activity with someone who is not their spouse. This kind of behavior leads to agony.

People try to live the lie, living with their spouse and cheating with their lover. Emotions get torn in two directions. The lie takes so much energy. Then when it is found out, trust is broken, relationships are shattered, and families are divided—children and all.

God wants to protect you because what was meant to be a gift of pleasure could become a source of pain. With this Commandment, God says that anyone who would hurt others sexually is living in sin and separate from God. When any older person abuses a younger person sexually, God says "No!" And anyone who rapes has sinned against two Commandments. Both of these instances combine sexual sins with violence.

Do you see why God has given you this Commandment? God is trying to free you from sexual sins that will only hurt you. And one day—if you choose to get married—God wants you and your spouse to be free and safe as you become "one flesh."

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THROWING STONES

Some people brought a woman to Jesus and told him she had been caught in adultery. According to their law, she could be stoned to death for this sin.

Jesus knelt down and wrote with his finger on the ground. Maybe he wrote the name of the man she had been with, for he too was committing adultery. Maybe he was writing down the names of other people in town who were sinning.

And then Jesus said, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7).



Then he went back to writing on the ground.

One by one the people left. And Jesus was alone with the woman. Jesus told her that he did not condemn her and added, "Go your way and from now on do not sin again" (John 8:11).

Some people have the mistaken idea that they are better than other people. It seems especially so when it comes to sexual sins.

But if we're honest with ourselves we have to admit that none of us has a right to throw stones. We are all guilty of sins, including some sexual sins. There is no room for pride.

Thanks to God, there is plenty of room for forgiveness. Look up the Bible passages below and place the correct letter in front of the best description.

- a. Matthew 5:27-28
- b. Matthew 7:1-5
- c. John 8:7-11
- d. Romans 14:10-12
- e. 1 John 1:8-9

___ 1. We're just fooling ourselves we think we aren't sinners. But if we confess our sins, God will forgive us.

___ 2. Jesus reminds all the stonethrowers that they are sinners, too.

___ 3. Jesus says looking at someone lustfully is just as bad as adultery.

___ 4. Don't judge and you won't be judged. How can you criticize someone else's little sins when you have such huge ones?

5. Why pass judgment on someone else? Each of us will have to answer to God.

I THINK

Jesus said that a husband and wife "are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Matthew 18:6).

Jesus said it. Divorce is wrong. And it is wrong because it causes so much hurt. Divorce means the death of a relationship. But as we have seen before, life doesn't always offer clear right-and-wrong choices. Sometimes we have to try to choose the lesser of two or more evils.

You know people who are divorced—perhaps your parents are divorced. What you perhaps do not know is what pain may have led to that divorce. Don't throw stones at divorced people. Love them.

Can you imagine a situation when divorce might be the best choice? Can you give some examples of when divorce should not be an option? Married people have promised to be faithful until death. If you were married, how would you work on a marriage through good times and bad in order to keep that promise?

Shaping life

LOVE NEVER PRESSURES

Joseph was a slave in Egypt working in the house of a man named Potiphar. One day Potiphar's wife asked Joseph to come to bed with her.

Now Joseph was in a difficult situation. He certainly didn't want to sin. But if he said no, she could make life miserable for him.

He said no anyway. He told her that he didn't want to break the trusting relationship he had with Potiphar. He said, "How then could I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Day after day, she kept pressuring him. He kept refusing.

One day they were alone in the house and she grabbed him to pull him into bed with her. He pulled away and ran out of the house, leaving his coat in her hand.

As he feared, she was so angry that she accused him of attacking her. She used the coat as evidence and had Joseph put in prison.

Joseph had been under a lot of pressure. But he chose to do the loving thing. He chose to do what was right (from Genesis 39:6b-23).

Your friends may tell you that everybody is doing it, and you are stupid for still being a virgin. Ignore that pressure. Do what is the loving thing to do.

But what if your boyfriend or girlfriend pressures you to have intercourse by saying, "If you loved me, you would do it." Does that make it the loving thing to do?

Wait a minute! If it feels like pressure, it isn't love. If your boyfriend or girlfriend really loved you, he or she would not pressure you.

To find out more about love, read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

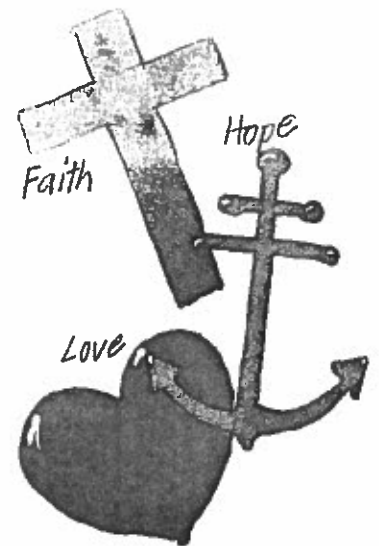
1. Make two lists of what love is and what it isn't.

Love is	Love isn't
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Give an example of a time when you were under peer pressure and it was a good and positive thing.

3. Give an example of a time when you were under peer pressure and it was a bad and negative thing.

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FURTHER

opportunities

Bible Reading

Our bodies are precious in God's sight. We need to respect our own bodies. They are, after all, God's creation. Read 1 Corinthians 6:15-20. What does verse 15 call your body? What does verse 19 call your body? What does that tell you about sexual sins? Write down any thoughts you have as you read this passage.

Memory

Memorize the Sixth Commandment and its meaning. As an additional challenge, memorize one or more of the following: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

Activity 1

Talk to your parents about their dating life before marriage. Find out about what kinds of decisions they made. What would they recommend that you do? Did they make any mistakes they'd like you to learn from?

Activity 2

If you have any questions about sex (and so many people do!), talk to your parents. Or if you would feel more comfortable, talk to your pastor or some other adult you trust.

Activity 3

AIDS is a serious health concern in our world. Go to your library and read three articles about AIDS. Decide which is the most informative and photocopy it for your teacher. He or she may want to share it with the rest of your class.

FOCUS

ON LOVE

The New Testament was written in Greek. In the Greek language there is more than one word for love.

Philos (PHIL-aas) is the love that dear friends and family members share.

Eros (ER-aas) expresses passionate love and desire.

Agape (a-GA-pay) is the special

kind of love that God has for us. It is the kind of love that is willing to serve—willing to give all. When Jesus told us to love God and others, the Bible uses the word *agape*.

For a marriage to work, all the levels of love have to be present. If a couple only functions on the eros level of love, their relationship is only physical and will not last. The marriage relationship needs all kinds of love. But the greatest of these is *agape*.

Agape is a committed act of the will that keeps on loving. *Agape* gets a couple through hard times and deepens the relationship in good times.