

A Biblical Argument Against Premarital Sex¹

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Introduction:

1. Need for the Study
2. Options for Establishing Ethical Propriety in the Christian Worldview:
 - Ethical Standards based in Utility and Consequences
 - Ethical Standards based in Divine Command

Conclusion: While utility and consequences are not to be held in low regard, and often represent the believer's only available guidance, the Christian's ethical "gold standard" takes the form of plain commands in Scripture.

OT Passages That Prohibit Premarital Sex

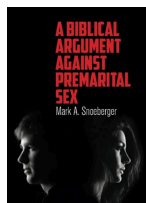
***Excursus on the use of OT Law to inform a NT ethic.

1. Exodus 22:16–17: "If a man seduces a virgin who is not pledged to be married and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price, and she shall be his wife. If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must still pay the bride-price for virgins."

Questions:

- Is this an economic or moral issue?
 - Is this consensual fornication or something else (e.g., rape, prostitution, adultery)?
 - Is there implied guilt or is this simply another path to married life?
2. Deuteronomy 22:20–21: "If [a man takes a wife and accuses her of not being a virgin, and] the charge is true and no proof of the young woman's virginity can be found, she shall be brought to the door of her father's house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death. She has done an outrageous thing in Israel by being promiscuous while still in her father's house. You must purge the evil from among you."

¹For a fuller version of this discussion, see my pamphlet by the same title, available at Amazon.com:



Questions:

- Why is this clear instance of premarital sex a capital crime? Or...
- What is different about this situation?

1 Corinthians 7 and Premarital Sex

1. **Preliminary Question:** What Does Verse 1 mean, and how does it affect our issue?

“Now for the matters you wrote about: ‘It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.’”

Question 1: Who is speaking? Paul or the Corinthians?

Question 2: What is the meaning of the statement?

- Option 1: It’s good literally to not *touch* a woman while dating.
 - Option 2: It’s morally superior not to *marry* a woman.
 - Option 3: It’s morally superior to *practice abstinence*.
2. **Widowers/Widows and Extramarital Sex** (vv. 8–9): Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Questions:

- Is this a universal/binding command, or occasional/utilitarian advice?
- What are the two options for “de-married” Christians?

Answer: to marry or burn with *unfulfilled* passion (no middle way).

3. **Virgins and Premarital Sex** (v. 36): “If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honorably toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if his passions are too strong and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married.”

Questions:

- Is this a universal/binding command, or occasional/utilitarian advice?
- Why is the girl “his virgin” if they are unmarried?
- What are the two options for unmarried Christians?

Answer: to regain control and delay marriage or simply, get married (again, no third way).

Conclusions:

1. **Premarital sex is a sin.**
2. **Premarital sex is a serious sin with devastating consequences.**
3. **The biblical case against premarital sex is not abstract or contrived, but plain and obvious.**