

January 29, 1968

PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
(Thirteenth in a Series)

THE BIBLE AND SEX

By T. B. Maston

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Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

An examination of the Bible will reveal a number of very important concepts concerning sex. These can provide guidance for us in an age of chaos and confusion.

None of these concepts is more significant than the idea that sex as such is a good gift of God. The biblical record says that when God saw everything that he had made, which included male and female, "behold, it was very good." The sex urge is no more wrong than the desire for food or drink.

The Bible also reveals that sex, as is true of other good gifts of God, can be expressed in hurtful, self-defeating ways.

The sex urge can properly be compared to fire. The latter may be used to cook our food and warm our houses, but it can also destroy those houses.

We warn our children not to play with fire. Sex should not be played with. Many young people and also older people can testify that like fire, sex can get out of control.

It is also quite evident from the biblical record that God would restrict the full expression of the sex urge to the relation of husband and wife. The experience of the human race has indicated that this is not an arbitrary requirement. It is best for the husband and wife, for the home they establish, and for society in general.

Evelyn and Sylvanus Duvall, leading contemporary authorities on the family, recently said, "If you want a good marriage you have your sexual intercourse after, and not before, you are married." Most marriage counselors can verify from their counseling experience that waiting until after marriage will pay rich dividends.

The Bible also reveals that any expression of the sex urge other than the normal physical union of husband and wife is contrary to the purposes of God. This not only includes adultery and fornication, it also includes homosexuality and other forms of sexual deviation.

In addition to the preceding, the Bible has some helpful words for married couples. It is quite clear that the Bible considers sexual union within marriage as a normal and necessary part of married life. This, which is taken for granted throughout the Scriptures, is plainly stated by Paul (I Cor. 7:3-5).

Furthermore, husbands and wives are to be faithful to one another. The writer of Hebrews says: "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous" (Heb. 13:4, RSV). There is no sin more uniformly or strongly condemned in the Scriptures than sexual unfaithfulness.

Let all, married and unmarried, take seriously the following words of Paul:

God's plan is to make you holy, and that entails first of all a clean cut with sexual immorality. Every one of you should learn to control his body, keeping it pure and treating it with respect, and never regarding it as an instrument for self-gratification, as do pagans with no knowledge of God. You cannot break this rule without in some way cheating your fellow-men. And you must remember that God will punish all who do offend in this matter, and we have warned you how we have seen this work out in our experience of life. The calling of God is not to impurity but to the most thorough purity, and anyone who makes light of the matter is not making light of man's ruling but of God's command (I Thess. 4:3-8, Phillips).



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PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
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THE CASE FOR CHASTITY

By T. B. Maston

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Can a valid case be made for chastity in the contemporary period when there is more sexual knowledge and greater sexual freedom than ever before?

It seems clear that the appeal to the fear of pregnancy and of venereal disease is much less effective than formerly. It is possible that these matters are being dismissed too readily.

In spite of the widespread use of contraceptives, including "the pill," there are approximately 300,000 babies born annually in the United States out of wedlock.

Also, venereal diseases have increased sharply in recent years, particularly among teen-agers.

But what if these more or less negative arguments for chastity could be entirely eliminated? Would there still exist valid reasons for chastity?

These are tremendously important questions not only for youth but also for parents, pastors, and workers with youth.

Some young people, particularly the more intelligent ones, are evidently working out answers for themselves. They believe that the freedom of choice which has been given to them is the freedom to say "no" as well as to say "yes" and they believe to say "no" to sex laxness which is so prevalent requires more character, courage, and strength of purpose than to say "yes".

As young people search for personally acceptable moral standards many of them are realizing that the fullest and best life for them lies along the road of discipline and self-control. They increasingly understand that the best things in life are reserved for those who are masters of their appetites rather than mastered by those appetites.

The more fully they understand the sexual nature of man, the more clearly they realize the complexity of sex. Its full expression involves the total personalities of two people,

Many of them also understand that a person, created in the image of God, is never to be used as a mere "thing" and "it", but rather as a "thou", or another person.

The dean of the chapel at Princeton University closed a recent magazine article with the statement that the case for chastity rested upon the God-given dignity of men and women. He then added: "It is a good case, and it is original in every generation."

All of us should know that when the expression of sex is purely physical and when another person is used as a mere "thing" the experience itself is not satisfying; it is self-defeating.

Let us also never forget that the basic laws that have been written into our natures cannot be violated without paying the price sooner or later. This is true in the area of sex even if the occasions for the old fears are entirely removed.

Many a man or a woman--young or old--can testify that he has paid the price with the loss of self-respect and a continuing nagging, lingering regret.

In other words, the price for unchastity may be psychological as well as physical.

A prominent psychiatrist recently said that premarital sex relations resulting from exposure to the so-called "new morality" has greatly increased the number of young people in mental hospitals.

Erich Fromm, in a relatively recent book, says: "Moral norms are based on man's inherent quality, and violation results in mental and emotional disintegration."

It seems from all the evidence available that chastity before marriage and faithfulness after marriage are good common sense.



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**Chowan College Okayed
For Federal Aid Project**

By Toby Druin
Associate Editor, Biblical Recorder

RALEIGH, N. C. (BP)--The General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina has approved participation by Chowan College in the Title III portion of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Under the Title III program, the Baptist college in Murfreesboro, N.C., will enter into contract with a university where Chowan professors will enroll for postgraduate study. The university will provide teachers to replace those who leave Chowan for additional study.

Funds for the program are provided by the federal government which pays the university professors who will teach at Chowan, and provides scholarships to those who leave for study.

Chowan President Bruce Whitaker told the state Baptist board that participation in the program for faculty development is necessary if the college is to remain accredited.

The college will be reviewed by an accrediting committee of the Southern Association of Junior Colleges and Schools next fall.

Whitaker explained that the college does not now meet the agency's broadened faculty requirements for accreditation. With Title III help, some 10 to 15 professors will be able to work on advanced degrees, enabling the college to meet requirements.

The approval by the state Baptist board came only a few months after the state convention meeting in Asheville, N. C., had approved a similar request by Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, N. C. The proposal came from the Chowan board of trustees, and had already been approved by the executive committee of the General Board.

The board debated the proposal for about 20 minutes, with several negative votes cast after the debate.

Whitaker said that the contract would be for about \$125,000 to \$150,000, on the basis of 10 to 15 participating professors.

Describing it as "a real emergency situation," Whitaker explained that accreditation standards had been strengthened and that the accrediting agency had recommended that the college spend \$100,000 on non-teaching areas in addition to strengthening its faculty.

Both Whitaker and Fred Bentley, president at Mars Hill College, were questioned about the Title III program by Beamer Barnes, attorney from Lexington, N. C.

Bentley explained that under the Mars Hill contract with the University of Georgia, the government pays Georgia professors \$6,500 annually to teach at Mars Hill, while Mars Hill professors receive \$4,000 annual scholarships to study at Georgia.

Bentley said that no more conditions are attached to participation in Title III than previously have existed in such programs as National Defense Education Act scholarships for students in which all the state's Baptist colleges have participated.

One board member asked following the favorable vote on the Chowan request that the decision be made applicable to all future similar requests, but the motion was withdrawn at the urging of Board President Gilmer Cross, who said he felt it best to consider each request on its own merits.

Cross was re-elected president of the board. The board also elected chairmen of six committees, named five members at large for the board's executive committee, and approved some \$225,000 in assistance to the convention's associations for purchasing church sites and supplementing salaries for both urban and rural areas.

New State Convention Begins
Rocky Mountain Paper Edition

RAPID CITY, S. D. (BP)--The newest Baptist State Convention of the Southern Baptist Convention here has started a twice-monthly page for its readers through the Rocky Mountain Baptist, official publication of the Colorado Baptist General Convention.

The Northern Plains Baptist Convention which covers Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota, previously was affiliated with the Colorado convention before becoming the 30th state convention in the SBC on Jan. 1, 1968.

A Northern Plains Baptist Convention edition of the Colorado paper will be published twice a month and sent to most of the 10,500 Southern Baptists in the four states. Most of the readers are already subscribers of the Rocky Mountain Baptist.

John Baker, the new executive secretary of the Northern Plains Convention and former state missions director for Colorado Baptists, said that the special arrangement with the Rocky Mountain Baptist afforded numerous advantages.

Advantages included the low cost, the ease of publication, the use of an existing publication to reach the same audience, and the elimination of a need for an editorial staff.

Baker said that the convention plans to continue the arrangement for the remainder of 1968, and probably will continue it longer if it works out.

Under the procedure for publication, Baker sends the copy for the page to Editor O. L. Bayless of the Rocky Mountain Baptist on a pre-arranged schedule. Bayless and his staff edit and lay out the page, and include it usually as the seventh of eight pages in the tabloid-size Rocky Mountain Baptist. The Northern Plains edition goes only to Rocky Mountain Baptist subscribers in the four-state convention.

Baker said the cost was \$800 a year, much less than it would cost to send his own state paper to the Baptists in the state.

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Northern Plains Convention
Buys Office in Rapid City

1/29/68

RAPID CITY, S. D. (BP)--The Northern Plains Baptist Convention has purchased a building in downtown Rapid City to house offices of the newest state convention affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

The new office is located at 703 Fourth Street, just across the street from the Rapid City Court House.

Mailing address, however, will be Post Office Box 1232, Rapid City, S. D., 57701.

The building, a former residence, was purchased for \$13,850, and will be paid for through the monthly rent allocation in the convention's budget.

John Baker, executive secretary of the Northern Plains Baptist Convention, said that the building includes six rooms on the main floor, a full basement, and a floored upper story. It will provide parking space on the premises.

Motels, hotels, restaurants and other facilities are located within a two-block area of the building.

The Colorado Southern Baptist Church Loan Corp. has indicated a willingness to loan \$15,000 to the convention to pay for the building, and a local bank is providing interim financing, Baker said.

At present, there are two other staff members of the new Northern Plains Convention-- Religious Education Director Robert M. Lawrence, and Woman's Missionary Union Executive-Secretary Nicy Murphy.

The Northern Plains Baptist Convention is comprised of about 10,500 Southern Baptists in Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota.

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