

Masturbation

Natural Self-Expression or Dangerous Self-Sex

The purpose of this opinion paper is to establish the dangers associated with the practice of masturbation from a purely biblical viewpoint. The scope of this paper is limited to teenage and adult men and women only and is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the topic. It is also not intended to criticize or minimize what varying authors, ministers, doctors or psychologists have to say on this issue.

I firmly believe that when sound biblical theology and the science of psychology bear witness to each other you have a balanced approach that can effectively help the hurting. Psychology that minimizes or ignores biblical truth, no matter how well intentioned, cannot lead to lasting change. While the Bible does not specifically mention masturbation it does set forth the principles of self-control in regard to mental and physical sexual purity.

- All scripture is authoritative and should be recognized as beneficial in addressing matters pertaining to life where there is a desire to bring about meaningful and lasting change.

2 Timothy 3:16 (The Amplified Bible) Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, [and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action),

- Masturbation defined: “erotic stimulation especially of one's own genital organs commonly resulting in orgasm and achieved by manual or other bodily contact exclusive of sexual intercourse, by instrumental manipulation, occasionally by sexual fantasies, or by various combinations of these agencies called also *onanism, self-abuse*”

—*Merriam-Webster's Medical Dictionary*

I. Masturbation fuels sexual desire thus violating God's command for sexual purity.

I would submit that those who engage in masturbation stir up lustful sexual desires, set themselves up for vivid sexual fantasy and “mental infidelity”.

Most conservative evangelicals would agree that God has commanded that no sexual activity should be engaged in outside of a God-ordained monogamous, heterosexual, marriage between a man and a woman. Any form of homosexuality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Genesis 2:24, 19:5-13, 26:8-9, Leviticus 18:1-30, Romans 1:26-29, I Corinthians 5:1, 6:9, I Thessalonians 4:1-8, Hebrews 13:4).

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Matthew 5:28 (NIV) *But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

Matthew 5:28 (The Message) *But don't think you've preserved your virtue simply by staying out of bed. Your heart can be corrupted by lust even quicker than your body. Those leering looks you think nobody notices--they also corrupt.*

“A man who gazes at a woman with the purpose of wanting her sexually has mentally committed adultery.” —*The Nelson Study Bible*

There are some who would defend themselves by saying that they have not physically touched a woman inappropriately and thus have not sinned sexually. In light of scripture this kind of argument is void of truth and is delusional. Any form of pornography, whether in print, video or internet that is used visually will stimulate lust and is a violation of God's word. To allow ourselves to indulge our minds in such activity is sinful and must be rejected.

Thayer Definition: Lust: G1937, 1) to turn upon a thing 2) to have a desire for, long for, to desire 3) to lust after, covet 3a) of those who seek things forbidden

2 Peter 2:14 (NLT) *They commit adultery with their eyes, and their lust is never satisfied. They make a game of luring unstable people into sin. They train themselves to be greedy; they are doomed and cursed.*

“Lust is as much a violation of the law's intent as is illicit sexual intercourse”
—*Holman Bible Dictionary, Michael Fink (Matt. 5:27-28).*

“Masturbation is wrong because it goes against what the sexual powers were designed for, because it is inseparable from illicit fantasies, because these fantasies take on a life of their own, and because it draws the erotic longing backward into Self instead of outward. It doesn't "release" lust, but reinforces it, so that next time the temptation is stronger yet. The hard thing, most people find, isn't figuring out that they *ought* to stop, but *stopping*.” --*Dr. J. Budziszewski*

To read this quote in context go to:

http://www.boundless.org/2002_2003/departments/theophilus/a0000768.html

2 Timothy 2:22 (AMP) *Shun youthful lusts and flee from them, and aim at and pursue righteousness (all that is virtuous and good, right living, conformity to the will of God in thought, word, and deed); [and aim at and pursue] faith, love, [and] peace (harmony and concord with others) in fellowship with all [Christians], who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.*

2 Corinthians 12:21 (NLT) ²¹*Yes, I am afraid that when I come again, God will humble me in your presence. And I will be grieved because many of you have not given up your old sins. You have not repented of your impurity, sexual immorality, and eagerness for lustful pleasure.*

II. Masturbation is a violation of “spiritual mindedness”.

The battle is in the mind. Wrong thinking produces wrong actions. Remember the old saying GIGO, garbage in garbage out?

Philippians 4:8 (NIV) Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.

Romans 8:5 – 8 (NIV) Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

Romans 8:12-13(NIV) Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,

Galatians 5:16-17 (NRSV) Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.

III. Masturbation is an act of sexual self-gratification.

I hear what you are saying. Not everyone who practices masturbation has a problem with lust! Granted there may be some exceptions. That being said I think that we can agree that the practice of masturbation promotes strong sexual urges. The scriptures clearly teach us to resist, abstain from and put off such desires that cannot be fulfilled with in the context of marriage.

Romans 13:14 (NRSV) Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

1 Peter 2:11 (AMP) Beloved, I implore you as aliens and strangers and exiles [in this world] to abstain from the sensual urges (the evil desires, the passions of the flesh, your lower nature) that wage war against the soul.

Ephesians 2:3(AMP) Among these we as well as you once lived and conducted ourselves in the passions of our flesh [our behavior governed by our corrupt and sensual nature], obeying the impulses of the flesh and the thoughts of the mind [our cravings dictated by our senses and our dark imaginings]. We were then by nature children of [God's] wrath and heirs of [His] indignation, like the rest of mankind.

V. Masturbation has negative spiritual consequences.

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Continued sexual self-expression (masturbation) can lead to spiritual darkness, hardening of the heart, shame and defilement.

***Ephesians 4:17 - 19 (NLT)** ¹⁷With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. ¹⁸Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. ¹⁹They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.*

***Mark 7:22 - 23 (NLT)** ²²adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. ²³All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you."*

If this person continues to resist the conviction of the Holy Spirit and persists in sinful behavior the consequences can be eternal.

***Galatians 5:19 - 21 (NLT)** ¹⁹When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, ²¹envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

Conclusion:

I would like to draw a comparison between the debate on the legalization of marijuana and the notion that masturbation is just a normal/natural expression of sexuality.

The proponents of marijuana legalization speak of the "medicinal" benefits that provide proven relief for the user. The opposition argues that marijuana is a "gatekeeper" drug that leads to dangerous experimentation, addiction and death. For those who need the medicinal benefits of marijuana it is readily available by prescription.

There are some in the psychiatric and counseling community who would say that masturbation is a natural expression of human sexuality and that it also provides needed relief for the participant (user). May I submit to the reader that in all the people I have talked with over the years masturbation was a learned behavior surrounded by secrecy. May I also add that in every case (after the initial high) the end result was confusion, guilt and shame. Once was never enough! Further experimentation with the addition visual stimulation was most often the case. What may have begun as curiosity and experimentation for many has developed into full-blown sexual addiction.

Is it natural self-expression or dangerous self-sex? It is my belief that masturbation is self-sex and that continued practice will lead to spiritual bondage, emotional addiction, and mental infidelity and possibly much worse!

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