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I Know That!

(SEX IS MORE THAN A SINGLE ACT)

Let's be real. We all have questions.

Couples have come to me in tears saying, “Greg, we don’t know what happened. We wanted to wait until marriage, but we were just sitting there kissing and touching—and then it happened!”

It’s like saying, “Something jumped up and bit us.”

I had just finished speaking to a group of about eight hundred teens about sex. Hanging around in the back of the crowd was a beautiful tall blonde—bright blue eyes, tanned, and stylish. She waited till most of the other teens had left. Then she came up and asked if we could talk in private.

We walked over to the side of the room and she said, “This is really embarrassing, but I need to ask you a question.”

She wasn’t making eye contact with me, and I could tell she was uncomfortable. But I assured her she could ask any question, and I’d give her an honest answer.

After taking a deep breath she said, “Well, my boyfriend says that if we have sex standing up then I can’t get pregnant. Is that true?”

I felt like crying and laughing at the same time. Here was this beautiful seventeen-year-old being manipulated by her boyfriend because she was basically ignorant about sex.

I told her that what her boyfriend had told her was not true. She could become just as pregnant standing up as lying down. We then

had the chance to discuss some other areas she was confused about as well. At the end I had the privilege to pray with her as she decided to take a stand for purity.

These days we're a part of the sexually enlightened generation. We're supposed to know all there is to know about sex. Ask the wrong question in sex education class, and the room erupts in laughter.

*"We should never be
ashamed to talk about
what God was not
ashamed to create."*

—Howard Hendricks

The guy in front of you turns around and says, "Didn't you know that?"

With that kind of pressure, we would rather just sit and smirk and say, "I knew that!"

But let's be real. We all have questions. We don't know it all. So let me talk with you about two areas basic to the understanding of sexuality: (1) What is sex? and (2) How does the

opposite sex respond?

WHAT IS SEX?

What is sex? Now all of us ought to know the answer to that question, but let me tell you what I usually hear. A couple will come to see me. We will talk, and after awhile the guy will say something like this:

Guy: *"Greg, we have decided not to have sex until we get married."*

Greg: *"Great! That's fantastic. But let me ask you a question. What is sex?"*

Guy: *"Huh?"*

Greg: *"What is sex?"*

Guy: *"Don't you know?"*

Greg: *"Yes, but I want to hear what you think it is."*

Guy: *"Well . . . uh . . . it's a . . . you see . . . we could . . . I mean, we wouldn't . . . not now . . . later . . . I mean, after . . . after we're married! . . . It's only . . . because . . . well, I . . . Could you repeat the question, please?"*

Greg: *"What is sex?"*

Guy: *"Oh, yeah . . . well . . . um . . . you see, sex is intercourse, and we're not going to have intercourse until we get married!"*

Now what is he saying? He is saying that sex is just the act of intercourse. And that is absolutely wrong! Sex isn't just a single act. Sex is a progression. Sex begins with kissing and then goes to French kissing. After that we begin to touch with our clothes on, and then the clothes come off, and the end result is often intercourse.

The couple that does everything up to intercourse but stops short of intercourse itself is doing something unnatural to both bodies.

Here's what happens. You stop the car in this isolated, romantic spot overlooking the dump. Then you talk for at least thirty to forty seconds. All of a sudden your lips touch.

You begin to softly kiss, and your body says, *This is nice!*

Then you move to French kissing and your body says, *I think I'm getting excited!*

You move into touching over or under her or his clothes, and your body says, *I know I'm excited!*

Then your clothes come off, and your body says, *"This is better than cookie-dough ice cream!"*

All of a sudden you say, "Stop!"

To which your body replies, *"Aaugh!"*

At that point, what happens between you and your body?

You feel: *Anxiety.*

Your body says: *I can't take this kind of abuse anymore. What if I never get a chance to experience intercourse? What if I die tomorrow? What if she dies tomorrow? What if our parents find out? We'll both die tomorrow!*

You feel: *Frustration.*

Your body says: *I never have any fun. You've got me on a diet. You make me run every morning. You never change your socks. And now this!*

You feel: *Pressure.*

Your body says: *You don't understand what this is doing to me. I can't take it anymore. You don't get me enough sleep. I can't hear anything because of those headphones. I haven't even seen a vegetable in six months. I can't remember my locker combination. And this date isn't turning out the way I wanted it to. I'm warning you—I think I'm going to blow up, or if not that, at least I'll throw up.*

You feel: *Anger.*

Your body says: *If you ever do this to me again I'll give you hoof-and-mouth disease!*

You see, our bodies were never meant to build to that point and then stop. That's why we feel all those emotions. And usually what those emotions do is to encourage us to put pressure on the other person. So we begin to give out some stupid line. Let me give you an example of some common lines and some possible answers:

Line: *"If you love me, you'll let me!"*

You: *"If you love me, you won't."*

Line: *"I can't believe you said no."*

You: *"I can't believe that you even asked."*

Line: *"Don't you love me?"*

You: *"Don't you respect me?"*

Line: *"I'll just call someone else."*

You: *"Here; you can use my cell phone."*

Line: *"It's no big deal."*

You: *"It's a big deal to God, and it's a big deal to me!"*

Line: *"But I just want to express my love to you."*

You: *"The best way to do that is to stop pressuring me."*

Line: *"I already told everybody that we did it."*

You: *"Fine; we don't have to do it a second time."*

Line: *"I won't tell anyone."*

You: *"That's because there will be nothing to tell."*

Line: *"Either we do it now, or we'll break up."*

You: *"Bye."*

Line: *"You know I could force you if I wanted to."*

You: *"Either drive me home or to the nearest police station, now!"
(If need be, leave the car, and call someone to come pick you up.)*

Line: *"You tell me you love me, but you don't mean it."*

You: *"Does that mean that you think I'm a liar? If you can't believe what I say, then you can't possibly trust me."*

Line: *"I've never wanted anyone as much as I want you."*

You: *"Let's keep praying that God will bless this relationship."*

Line: *"What's the matter? Are you scared (or gay, or diseased)?"*

You: *"Listen, anytime I choose to I can lose my virginity, and it's sure not going to be to someone who stoops to name-calling."*

Line: *"Nobody is going to care."*

You: *"A lot of people would care—our families, our youth group friends, and God."*

Line: *"But I need to have sex."*

You: *"Sex is a drive that can be controlled. Needs for you would be food, water, oxygen, and a cold shower."*

Line: *"I'm leaving tomorrow, and who knows when we'll see each other again?"*

You: *"Wow! Well, then, let's be sure to keep in touch."*

Line: *"OK. Let's take off our clothes and just be together. We don't have to touch or anything."*

You: *"That sounds like torture, not fun."*

Line: *"Everybody is doing it!"*

You: *"That's not true. I'm not doing it, and tonight neither are you!"
(smile).*

Line: *"Someday we'll get married. I promise."*

You: *"And I promise you that it will be worth waiting for."*

It's so important that you do not allow others to manipulate and pressure you to give in.

Ladies and gentlemen: there are some people who will say whatever they need to say to get you to take your clothes off. You've got to get a lot tougher. When someone is pressuring you, you don't have

<p><i>Anyone who pressures you to take off your clothes doesn't respect you.</i></p>	<p>to be kind! Tell them in a straight-forward manner. Don't beat around the bush. If you want a person to respect you, then you need to demand respect for yourself. You will not get that respect if you allow someone to put their hands all over your body.</p>
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Listen to one young woman's experience:

I was going out with a seventeen-year-old last year for two months. I was fifteen. He broke the relationship off, and I took a lot of things into consideration and came to the conclusion that he dumped me because I would not "make love." Breaking up hurt a lot, and I grieved for quite some time.

A year went by, and he came around again and wanted me to go back out with him. Like a stupid fool I went back to him. From the first day we started going out, he told me he loved me every chance he got. I fell head over heels in love with him, and after going out for

How long do you think it took this guy to get this girl to take off her clothes?

After going out for three days, we made love. We made love almost every chance we got. I figured by doing this I would keep him. I never did anything to hurt him or get him upset. Everything seemed perfect.

After going out for two months, he just up and decided he didn't want to go out with me anymore. Well, I am very hurt and feel like all

his "I love yous" were a bunch of lies. I have been used, and the hurt has now turned into bitter hate.

Do you think that if this girl had a chance to do it over again she would do things differently? Yes! So don't you make the same mistake. When someone pressures you for sex, remember that you don't have to be kind—be tough!

Where are the men of character and integrity? You need to be the one who is loving—not lusting after—women. If there is one person the girl should be able to count on to protect and care for her, it is the guy taking her out on a date. There is an old adage that says, "Men play love to get sex, and women give sex to get love." Both are wrong and destructive to you and the person you are going out with. To be a man of character means that you want what is best for the woman, and you seek purity in the relationship with her. You should be able to say to her, "You can trust me because I would never take advantage of you."

Women can be just as sexually aggressive as any man. Guys have been laughed at, teased, ridiculed, sworn at, threatened, and gossiped about because they were not aggressive enough sexually on dates. Guys have told me that girls have accused them of being gay because they didn't want to have intercourse. Being a woman of character means that you seek sexual purity, have high standards, and you never force a man to compromise his standards.

Some guys get involved sexually not because they want to but because they have been pressured by the girl, or they think this is what is expected of them.

Men, how do we deal with this situation? The answers are not easy, but let me suggest some things you need to be aware of.

- Don't date a woman who has a reputation for aggressiveness and sleeping around.

Imagine being on a date where the woman takes off her clothes and attempts to undress you! You don't need to be

strong to withstand that sort of temptation—you need to be comatose!

- Date only women who are Christians.

Now this doesn't necessarily solve the problem. Some women who say they are Christians are sexually active. Even Christians can yield to temptation.

But let's say you go out with a woman, and you didn't realize what she thought about sex and purity. You've been studying so hard that you haven't had time to even think about women (sure!). But you're on the date, and suddenly this woman begins to make moves on you. What do you do?

First, try to understand her. This is a pattern she has fallen into. It is something she has learned men like. She may feel this sort of behavior is expected of her on a date. Besides, it's a fast and easy way to feel close to someone.

But let's also understand that this woman needs help. Someone must help her break the pattern. The longer she continues, the more wounded she will become and the more problems she will cause for herself.

What can you do to help her?

Why not be radical? Why not kindly say, "Wait a second! I like you; you're great looking, but I want to get to know you as a person. I don't want to do this now!" Perhaps quite a few guys know this woman's body, but you are saying, "I want to know you as someone, not as just a body."

What if she laughs? She might because she is so shocked. But deep down she is looking for a man who will respect and care about her.

So you can use her and be one in a line of guys, or you can care about her and make an impression she won't forget. I'm betting she is looking for a guy who is willing to try to understand her. Even if she doesn't respond positively, believe me, when she matures she will look back and realize that you were one of those few who really cared about her. That's what you want to be remembered for—not

as one in a long line of lovers. You have the opportunity to give her hope. Now some tips for both genders:

- Don't isolate yourself.

Chances are someone's not going to make moves on you in a public place like a fast-food restaurant. Don't put yourself in a spot where they have the chance to do so.

- Think about the Lord.

He is right there, watching you. Pray to Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you special courage and wisdom, the right words to say and the right actions to take.

- Remember that outside of rape, a person can't make you become involved sexually.

You can be a person of character. If they start undressing in the car, then leave or drive to a lighted public area. If you're at a party, then go somewhere else.

So what happens if the person later says terrible things about you? That you're gay, scared, or a freak?

I guess my response is, "So what?" Your friends are your friends. They aren't going to believe them. Your enemies don't like you anyway, whether you went to bed with someone or not. And other people aren't as dumb as you may think. They know who is more likely to be telling the truth. Believe it or not, most people could care less what went on between you.

If people ask, "How come you didn't sleep with them?" you can say, "Because I didn't want to. Because I'm worth more than a one-night stand. Because I don't want to be manipulated into having sex with anyone. And it's pretty egotistical on their part to think that if I don't want sex then I must be some freak."

You'll find a lot of individuals agreeing with you, and you will gain respect in the eyes of many. There are whole groups of people who will be very attracted to a person with that kind of character. This will open the door for you to tell them the most important reason you didn't get involved—because you love Jesus.

For you who are reading this and are sexually involved right now, do you want to find out if this person really loves you or not? Try this. Go to him or her and say, "I love you so much. But I want us to work on other areas of our relationship, so I want to stop having sex."

You'll discover really quickly whether the person loves you. Some of you know right now what would happen if you said that. That person would be out the door. Now if you know that and continue to be involved with the guy or girl sexually, you aren't valuing your whole person—which has spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical dimensions. If you want respect, then demand it! If someone tries to touch you where you don't want to be touched, say, "This is my body. This is not your body. Please stop."

Talk with your friends or parents. Make a deal that if you are ever in a situation where you are being pressured, you can call them and they will come and get you, no matter where you are or what time it is.

So, number one, remember that sex is a progression. When we move into touching each other's bodies, breasts, and genitals, one of four things usually occurs:

1. You end up having intercourse, or you bring each other to an orgasm through oral sex or mutual masturbation.
2. You break up, often influenced by all the pressure and problems that result.
3. You get married just in time.
4. By God's grace you are able to pull back on your physical affection and set new standards.

Don't start the progression, and you won't have to worry about where it's all going to end.

HOW DOES THE OPPOSITE SEX RESPOND?

How does the opposite sex respond? Women, do you understand how males respond? Men, do you understand about women?

Researchers brought a group of men into a room. They wired up whatever needed to be wired up to measure their emotional responses and then began to flash pictures upon a screen. They flashed the picture of a . . .

*Why do you go out with
people: love or lust?*

Flower. Yawn. Not much reaction.

Hot car. Mmm. The needle began to move.

Baby. Oops. Very little needle movement.

Naked woman. Wow! All of a sudden there were lights, bells, and buzzers. The needle moved off the page!

Women, you need to understand that a man, generally speaking, is visually oriented. That means by just looking at you he can become sexually excited. He doesn't even have to touch you.

Now some women say to me, "Oh, come on, I don't believe that. That's stupid."

If you women would walk down to a gas station or quick-stop market, you would see a section of pornographic magazines. Now if you picked up these magazines—and I highly recommend you don't do this—you would discover that all of them have one thing in common. They are filled with pictures of naked women.

Pornographic Web sites get more hits than any other type of Web site. I am sorry to say that the pornographic business is a multi-billion dollar business in the US alone. Millions go to these Web sites every day. It's not just men; some women are also attracted to porn. Whether you are male or female, it is very destructive spiritually and emotionally to look at this stuff.

Now why do you think pornographic magazines, videos, and Web sites are so popular? Because a man can buy, rent, or surf; and just

by looking at the pictures he can become sexually excited.

Matthew 5:28 tells us that it is wrong to look lustfully at a woman. Men, we need to practice eye control. When a woman bends over in front of us, we need to look away. When an attractive woman walks by in a little bathing suit, we need to look away. You can't help seeing something, but you can help staring. We need to see women as people—not objects to be gawked at. When we lust after women we are showing them disrespect and treating them like they are objects. This is all about you making good choices. Decide that you will look away when you are faced with temptation. But, women, you can do a lot to help your Christian brothers not to lust. How? By what you wear!

For example, what does your swimsuit look like? If your suit is somewhat revealing—and you know better than anyone else if it's revealing—what do you think the guys are looking at? If you think

*Women, how did
you dress the last
time you went
out with a guy?*

it's your pretty little eyes, then you are wrong. In many cases they are checking out your body and lusting after you.

Women have said to me, "Oh, I just love it when guys lust after me. It's so exciting!"

If that's your reaction, then you don't understand what goes on in the mind of a man. When a man lusts after you, you become a piece of meat! He could care less that you have hopes, needs, dreams, and desires. All he wants to do is get his hands on your body. *Lusting* is not a complimentary term. Sometimes a guy will see you, get turned on, and that evening you will become the object of his masturbation. I believe you are worth far more than that; and, remember, if you want men to respect you, then you must demand respect. What you dress like on the outside communicates to men what you must be like on the inside—whether it is true or not.

Women, I know some guys would lust after you if you wore a bathing suit with long sleeves, pant legs, and a turtleneck. That's not your fault. That's the fault of the guys. What I am saying is, look good, be stylish, but don't become an object.

Stay away from tight clothes, revealing clothes, short skirts, low-cut tops, as well as running around braless, etc. Listen to your mother when it comes to the question, “Will this turn a guy on or not?” Dad also ought to be able to give you some insights. Men think much differently than women do, and your dad will be able to give you insight into the mind of a guy.

Put on your outfit, stand in front of the mirror, and ask yourself, “What am I trying to emphasize and draw attention to?” If it’s just your curves, then in many cases you’re going to be treated like an object. Doesn’t it make sense that if you seek to emphasize certain parts of your body, then you will attract men who are primarily interested in those parts of your body?

Guys, there is something that really bugs women. When you talk with a woman it’s important that you make eye contact with her. *Stop staring at her chest.* You don’t think she notices, but she does.

Again, males tend to be visually oriented, but I am speaking in generalities. You could say, “Well, that isn’t true of my Uncle Joe!” OK, bless Uncle Joe’s heart. But generally men are attracted by what they see.

Understand also that the male usually reaches his sexual peak—when the sexual drive is strongest—sometime between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. But in most cases a woman does not reach her sexual peak until she’s between twenty-five and forty-five. For that reason there may be a big difference in the way men and women act. For the woman, the sexual drive may not be strong during her teen years, but for the guy it may be powerful. If you are not aware of these basics, you will find yourself in trouble.

Guys ask me, “How come we reach our sexual peak so early when we can’t do anything about it?” It is because God wants to develop character in your life. He wants you to be a man with self-control. Remember that the Lord is always more interested in your character than He is in your comfort. I know it is hard to wait, but it is good for you and will help you in the future. You honor God by waiting and show Him that you are a man that He can trust.

Stay away from alcohol. Drinking can set you up so that you are

more easily seduced. When you've been drinking, it's much easier for someone to get you to take your clothes off.

Now what about those researchers and the women? They wired up the women and began to show them pictures of a . . .

Flower. Nice. Needle moved a little.

Hot car. Huh? Not much movement.

Naked man. Hardly any movement. What a blow to the male ego!

Do you know what got the biggest reaction from the women? The cute little cuddly baby. (One guy came to me after I shared this and said, "Boy, from now on I'm carrying around baby pictures." Obviously he got a lot out of my talk.) Not all women feel this way about babies, but the difference is notable.

The woman, generally speaking, is touch oriented. It is usually not until the touching stage, when her body is being caressed, that she gets turned on.

That's why people have said, "Women, it's your responsibility to handle the physical part of the relationship. If things get carried away, it's your fault." Now I say that's garbage! Men, we need to take responsibility in that area and seek to love a woman, which means not to use or abuse her.

But the reason people have said this to women is this: If you allow the relationship to get to the place where he is touching you all over your body and you lose control, chances are that the guy's lost control a mile down the road. If you don't say no, then he won't say no, and you'll end up having intercourse.

So understand these two basics—(1) sex is a progression, and (2) men and women respond differently. Apply them to your dating relationships, and you will be saved a lot of trouble.

Questions to ask yourself:

1. How have I dressed around the opposite sex?
2. How would I define sex now?
3. Honestly, how much of a temptation is sex to me right now?