

60
THINGS
GOD Said
about **SEX**

Other Titles
by
Lester Sumrall

Angels to Help You

The Believer's Handbook

Demons: The Answer Book

The Gifts and Ministries of the Holy Spirit

The Making of a Champion

The Names of God

60
THINGS
GOD Said
about **SEX**



Lester Sumrall



WHITAKER
HOUSE

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. Scripture quotations marked (NKJV) are taken from the *New King James Version*, © 1979, 1980, 1982, 1984 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked (RSV) are from the *Revised Standard Version Common Bible* © 1973, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

60 THINGS GOD SAID ABOUT SEX

Lester Sumrall Evangelical Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 12
South Bend, IN 46624
www.lesea.org

ISBN-13: 978-0-88368-770-3

ISBN-10: 0-88368-770-4

Printed in the United States of America

© 1981 by Lester Sumrall Evangelical Association (LeSEA)

Whitaker House
1030 Hunt Valley Circle
New Kensington, PA 15068
www.whitakerhouse.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sumrall, Lester Frank, 1913–1996

60 things God said about sex / by Lester Sumrall.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-88368-770-4

1. Sex—Biblical teaching. 2. Sexual ethics. I. Title.

BS680.S5 \$93 2002

241'.66—dc21

2002006169

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical—including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system—without permission in writing from the publisher. Please direct your inquiries to permissionseditor@whitakerhouse.com

7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14  15 14 13 12 11 10 09

Contents



Introduction	7
1. The Sex Drive.....	11
2. Why Is God So Protective about Sex?	25
3. Sex in Marriage (Where Else?)	39
4. X-Rated Marriages	55
5. Sex and Divorce.....	63
6. Twenty Laws against Incest.....	77
7. Sexual Perversion Bears a Curse.....	89
8. The Deceptions of Sex	99
9. How Jesus Dealt with Sex Offenders	107
10. Sex and Spiritual Reality.....	117
11. Sex and the Last Days.....	133
My Challenge to You	139
About the Author	141

Introduction



Our modern world is glutted with talk about sex. The entertainment media, commercial advertising, even our schools' textbooks are brimming over with it. Raucous voices chatter about sex nearly everywhere you go. It seems to be the favorite topic of conversation.

Much of the talk you hear is cold and factual, even clinical, because people are fascinated by the simple mechanics of sex. Some are eager to compare notes about sexual techniques. Others like to tell jokes with sexual overtones—jokes that arouse sexual desires or assume that the listener has a perverted view of sex. And quite a bit of the “sex talk” surrounding us isn't talk at all, but a series of subtle allusions to sex: a well-timed pause, a wink, or a furtive gesture.

Most of the people who like to talk about sex ridicule the secrecy of the Puritans or the Victorians; but ironically, they are just as secretive about sex themselves! They can only discuss sex in a cryptic, suggestive way because they don't really know (or can't express) what sex means to them. They haven't come to grips with the real purpose of sex.

60 Things God Said about Sex



They are still like awkward adolescents who giggle and blush when they think about the facts of life. Sad to say, many Christians are still at this stage.

And so sex has become the most discussed but least understood aspect of human life. I think it is fair to say that we at the end of the twentieth century are living in the Sexual Dark Ages. We hear more about sex than our parents or grandparents ever heard, but we understand much less. Why? Because we have forgotten the *raison d'être* of sex, the reason it exists.

Imagine you were a jungle native who found a Cadillac airlifted into the Amazon for a TV commercial. You would talk with your friends about it from daylight to dark. You would touch its shiny finish and peer into its plush interior. You would develop a strange attachment to it, a mixture of both curiosity and fear. *But you would not know why it was there.* You would know just as little about Cadillacs as you ever did—even less, because you would have acquired some strange misconceptions in the meantime!

And so it is with sex. The average person talks sex, sees sex, thinks and dreams sex, but is totally ignorant of God's purpose for sex. And so we have a whole new constellation of "helping" professions that try to untangle the knot of America's confused sexual mores. Family lawyers wade through a morass of hotly contested divorce cases, many of them directly related to sexual problems. Psychiatrists' waiting rooms are full of people agonizing over sexual problems. Social workers offer birth-control devices and free abortions to teenage girls, and their telephones ring twenty-four hours a day.

All this agony, all this confusion, all this ignorant babbling about sex just breaks my heart. I find myself saying, "Lord, help me tell these people the truth about

Introduction



sex.” *Let me show them what your Word says about it. Open their eyes to the joy and fulfillment of sex as You meant it to be.*

Our country needs to hear what God says about sex. He has not changed His moral standards to suit a profligate generation. He has not changed His plan for men and women to find sexual happiness in marriage. God made us sexual creatures, and we ought to understand the pattern He intended for us to follow in our sexual relationships. God says, “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*” (Hos. 4:6). Sex is a perfect example of the truth of this statement; we desperately need to seek God’s purpose in this area of our lives.

God’s Word includes an amazing abundance of information about sex. Nearly every book of the Bible mentions sex, either directly or indirectly. In the following pages, we will look at sixty key Scriptures concerning sex and sex-related morals. This study is by no means exhaustive, and I encourage you to dig into the Word to learn more of what God says about sex. But I hope you will be enlightened and challenged by the studies in this book, just as I found new insights by preparing them. I believe they can help you find a happier, more meaningful life.

—Lester Sumrall

1

The Sex Drive



Sex should be used, but in its proper place and time, according to God's plan. Within that plan the sexual instinct is a good thing, a powerful source of life and unity between two beings. Outside of God's plan, it quickly becomes a means of division, a source of cruelty, perversion, and death.

—Walter Trobisch¹

The Bible is a book about sex. It is a book about God's creation of humankind and His ongoing relationship with us, touching every aspect of our lives. It is a book about birth, growth, maturity, and death; a book about love, hate, despair, and hope; a book about hunger, pain, pleasure, and ecstasy—and a book about sex.

The Bible talks honestly about the human sex drive. In fact, it is more forthright and honest in describing the sex drive than many of the so-called sex manuals published in recent years. For example, take a look at Judges 14:1-2. This passage describes how a young

60 Things God Said about Sex



Israelite named Samson visited the Philistine territory of Timnath. Notice what happened when Samson went back home. As soon as he met his mother and father, he said, *"I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife"* (v. 2).

Doesn't that sound familiar? A young man sees an attractive young woman and on first impulse he says, "I want her!"

It reminds me of the story about an old hermit and his son who lived far back in the mountains, away from any other human beings. The boy had never seen another person besides his father. Finally, the old hermit decided to take the boy into town on his birthday to give him his first taste of civilization. Walking down the street, they passed a couple of pretty girls and the boy said, "What in the world are those?"

The old hermit was caught off guard. "Er, uh...That's nothing, Son," he said. "Just a couple of geese."

The boy seemed to accept that explanation, so they went on.

The pair spent a full day browsing around town, visiting the different shops. Some of the places they stopped were the livery stables, the sawmill, and the blacksmith shop. At last they decided to head for home. But before they left, the old hermit said, "Son, I'd like to get you a birthday present. Did you see anything here that you'd like to have?"

"Sure!" the boy said. "I want a couple of geese!"

No matter who you are, no matter what your background is, something inside you draws you to the opposite sex. God made you that way. All of His creation is interrelated. All of His creatures have mates designed especially for them.

Consider the plant kingdom. Any farmer will tell you that plants must have male and female organs

The Sex Drive



in order to reproduce. Unless the pollen touches the stamen, unless the sperm reaches the seed, the plant cannot reproduce itself and there will be no crop the next year.

Or consider the animal kingdom. For every male there is a female, and vice versa. When you find a peacock in the wild, you can expect to find a peahen nearby. When you find a lion, a lioness won't be far away. The two sexes live together, protect one another, and bring new life into the world. This is the pattern God established when He created the world.

The same is true of human beings. God created us as males and females, and He intended for us to be attracted to one another. God gave each person an endowment of physical forces—psychologists call them “drives”—that enable him or her to live and grow. One is the drive for *self-preservation*, the compulsion to protect oneself, find food for oneself, and find shelter from bad weather. Another is the drive for *religion*, a way to satisfy one's awareness of the spiritual realm. Yet another strong drive, and perhaps the one that is most misunderstood, is the human desire for *sex*. This is the compulsion to seek out and mate with a member of the opposite sex, to enjoy the physical pleasure of sex, and to produce offspring.

Many Christians believe that the sex drive is evil, so they attempt to repress or ignore it. Some even believe that sexual intercourse was the original sin. That idea deserves special attention, because it has affected the sexual behavior of Christian people for centuries.

St. Augustine, one of the great theologians of the early church, felt that sex was sinful. Augustine believed that the account of Adam and Eve's sin against God (see Genesis 3) uses symbolic language and that the “forbidden fruit” actually stands for sex. He thought

60 Things God Said about Sex



that Eve conceived and bore children in pain (Gen. 3:16) because sex is sinful, and any kind of sexual activity brings pain. According to Augustine, human beings should ask God's forgiveness for even thinking about sex and abstain whenever possible. In fact, Augustine said, men and women who want to be righteous in God's sight should live in celibacy (that is, without any sexual contact); his adherents believed their leaders should live in church monasteries and convents, without even conversing with the opposite sex.

Augustine was a keen theologian, and his ideas were well-respected. His understanding of sex became a standard church doctrine, and we are still feeling the effects of his teaching. In his book on Western sexual morality, C. W. Lloyd says:

Augustine's writings have probably exerted more influence in the West on love and sexual practice than those of any other man. The clearest expression of the innate evil in sexual passion, even within marriage, is set forth. These teachings...gave theological structure to feelings of guilt and shame in a biological drive. However, the enforcement of the doctrine of sexual guilt was difficult. The struggle to impose celibacy on the clergy...was only moderately successful until well into the Middle Ages.²

In other words, Christians had a hard time accepting Augustine's ideas about sex. They weren't certain that God wanted them to live in celibacy. The church had to struggle to keep its leaders obedient to this rule; in fact, the sexual prohibition was one of the first doctrines that Martin Luther and the other great Reformers broke away from. (Luther himself left a monastery to marry a nun.)

The Sex Drive



Either Augustine was wrong, Luther was wrong, or both of them were terribly confused about sex. Was sex the original sin? Is the sex drive something evil? Notice what God says:

1. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth....And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.

(Gen. 1:27–28, 31)

This passage indicates that the creation of man was very special in God's sight. God used His hands to make man (Gen. 2:7), which also manifests how important and precious we are to God. Everything else He created by giving His command: He spoke the stars into existence; He spoke the sun, the moon, and earth into existence; He spoke the plants and animals into existence. But He made man with His own hands, shaping him out of the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into man's nostrils. He created a beautiful garden where man could live (Gen. 2:8). Obviously, God was pleased with the person He had made. He set out to make man in His own image, and He was satisfied with the results; He felt that man was "very good."

What else does the Bible tell us about this person whom God created "*in his own image*"? We learn that He created *two* people—people of opposite sexes. And right after God created the first man and woman, He told them, "*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*" God *commanded* the man and woman to have sexual relations with one another to bring children into the world. It

60 Things God Said about Sex



would have been sinful for them *not* to have intercourse. They would have been disobeying a direct order from God if they had not conceived children through sex.

No other creature in the universe can bring another human being into existence. Angels cannot do it, animals cannot do it, no creature of any kind can do it—except man and woman. God gave us this special distinction. We are the only creatures who can bring into this world another creature with an immortal soul. We are God’s partners in spiritual creation. Isn’t that awesome? And it should impress us once again with God’s divine purpose in giving human beings a sexual nature, a sex drive.

Never forget: The sex drive is God-given. You did not create your own sex drive. It was not made by TV, the movies, or dirty magazines. God made it! And God made it “*very good*”!

Controlling the Sex Drive

Even though the sex drive is good, it must be controlled. This is true of any biological or psychological drive that God has given us. Imagine what would happen if you did not control the drive to eat. You would be eating constantly, indiscriminately. I’ve heard it jokingly said that some people “eat anything that doesn’t eat them first”; well, if you didn’t control your drive for food, that would literally be true. You would pile your plate high repeatedly, and you might even try to eat the plate itself. You would be obsessed with eating. Even though hunger is a healthy drive—a drive we must satisfy in order to survive—it can destroy us if we let it run out of control. The same is true of the sex drive.

Carnally-minded humanity would like to give free rein to the sex drive, as can be seen in much of society

The Sex Drive



today. Nearly every town has a strip of massage parlors, peep shows, and brothels—where people go to indulge themselves sexually without inhibition or control. They would let their sex drive run wild day after day, twenty-four hours a day, if they could. One British writer wistfully concluded:

It would be much easier if, like our monkey relatives, we...were more truly biologically promiscuous. Then we could extend and intensify our sexual activities with the same facility that we magnify our body-cleaning behaviour. Just as we harmlessly spend hours in the bathroom, visit masseurs, beauty parlours, hair dressers, Turkish baths, swimming pools, sauna baths, or Oriental bathhouses, so we could indulge in lengthy erotic escapades with anyone, at any time, without the slightest repercussions.³

God's Word condemns this kind of thinking. An uncontrolled physical drive will destroy the body. At first such indulgence may seem enjoyable; in the end, it will destroy you.

We will come back to this matter of promiscuity—letting the sex drive run uncontrolled—in a later chapter. For now let us consider why the sex drive should be controlled and how it can be controlled.

We have already seen that God says sex is a very beautiful and wholesome thing. He intended from the very beginning for us to have a sex drive. But He also tells us that the sex drive must be used for the purposes He intended:

2. If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with

60 Things God Said about Sex



her, and they be found; then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her. (Deut. 22:28–29)

Here God deals with sexual intercourse between two unmarried people who mutually agree to have intercourse. Today we hear some people say that “consenting adults” should be free to engage in any kind of sexual activity they want, even though they are not married; but God says no. Why? Because this kind of sexual relation “humbles” the woman. (The Revised Standard Version translates the word as “violated”; it would be just as accurate to say that the woman is “humiliated.”) Her integrity is destroyed; her self-worth is cheapened by having sexual relations with a man who is not her husband and who refuses to become her husband. Such a man treats her as just another morsel for his sexual appetite. He does not love her; he loves the pleasure he gets from her. God says this is not what He expects a man and woman to do with their sex drives.

Dwight Hervey Small, a pastor and counselor who has taught for many years at Wheaton College, sheds more light on the problem:

Sexual intercourse is an act which affects the whole personality, a personal encounter between a man and a woman in the depths of their being, which does something permanent to each, for good or for ill. Hence it cannot be treated merely as a sensual indulgence, the effects of which pass with the act.⁴

God intended sex to be this kind of personal encounter, a kind of interaction which is only proper in marriage.

The Sex Drive



“But,” someone may think, “Who’s to say what is ‘proper’? Why is intercourse in marriage the only ‘proper’ use of sex?” God made sex for the purpose of marriage; any other usage perverts this purpose. You can use a claw hammer to scrape ice off your sidewalk, but that’s not the proper use of a claw hammer. The hammer wasn’t made for scraping ice, and using it that way will ruin it for its intended purpose. The same is true of sex: There is one proper use of sex and many improper uses. God says we should control our sex drive for its proper use.

Realizing the proper use of sex is the first step toward controlling the sex drive. When you know how God wants you to use the sexuality He gave you, the goal is set. The standard is established. You then know that anything that undermines or hinders the proper use of your sexual powers should not be done; by the same token, anything that helps you fulfill or enrich the proper use of your sexual powers should be done. Like any other human drive, the sex drive can be trained and enhanced by new experiences and skill. You can learn techniques that will make your sexual relationship more enjoyable and rewarding, and in so doing you honor the Creator who gave you this wonderful ability we call “sex.”

The Sex Drive and the Total Person

As Reverend Small noted, sexual relations involve the total personality. We need to understand the full-orbed nature of the sex drive and how it interacts with other components of the personality. We need to appreciate the spiritual effects of the sex drive, as well as the physical effects. Otherwise we will be unable to control and utilize the sex drive to its utmost potential.

60 Things God Said about Sex



We might say that the sex drive functions in three worlds, or in three different planes of the human personality. In my book *Ecstasy*, I explain how each person is three-dimensional: Each person has a body, a soul, and a spirit.⁵ These three components make up the whole person.

Sex and the Body

We know, of course, that sex involves the *body*, the physical component of our being. A sexual relationship is the most intimate physical bond that can exist between two human beings, as a man and woman use their bodies to express their love and appreciation for one another. All five physical senses are involved:

—*Seeing* the physical charms of your loved one.

—*Hearing* your mate's words of endearment and desire.

—*Smelling* the scent or fragrance that uniquely belongs to your mate.

—*Tasting* the sweetness of each kiss.

—*Feeling* the caresses of your loved one's hands.

A sexual encounter is probably the most remarkable experience any person can enjoy on this earth, because it involves every aspect of the physical self. Howard and Charlotte Clinebell, a husband-and-wife team of Christian marriage counselors, have well expressed the physical joy that many couples have found:

Sexual intimacy is more than the bringing together of sexual organs, more than the reciprocal sensual arousal of both partners, more even than mutual fulfillment in orgasm. It is the experience of sharing and self-abandon in the merging of two persons, expressed by the biblical phrase "to become one flesh."⁶

The Sex Drive



They are referring to one of the most candid statements God's Word ever made about sex. It comes just after the Bible tells us how God created woman as a "fit helper" for the man:

3. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (Gen. 2:24)

In other words, the physical tie of a man and woman through sex is even stronger than the physical tie of a child to his parent. The bond of sexual intimacy takes a higher priority than the affection you have for your father or mother. So far as God is concerned, a man and woman who enter into sexual union have become "one flesh"—they are one physical person. And if you must choose between honoring your parents or honoring your mate, God makes it crystal-clear that your mate comes first.

Many marriages fall apart because one or both mates fail to realize this! They are unwilling to put Mom or Dad in the proper place, below husband or wife. But God's Word says that a person who marries should leave his or her parents and set up housekeeping somewhere else. A house isn't big enough for two men, and it's not big enough for two women. If you want to have sexual relations with someone, you ought to get married; and if you are to get married, you ought to leave your parents and find a place of your own. That's the only way you can have physical intimacy.

Sex and the Soul

The sex drive also involves the *soul*. Your soul is composed of your mind, emotions, and will; all three of these are affected by the sex drive.

60 Things God Said about Sex



The *mind* weighs everything that goes into decisions. It considers the facts; it measures the pros and cons; it evaluates your feelings. Some conscious decisions are made about your sexual desires; but sex influences many of your everyday decisions, whether you realize it or not. Your mind acts like a referee in the midst of your will, your emotions, your opinions, and many other competing influences—including your sex drive.

The *emotions* are very clearly affected by the sex drive. Sexual motives can cause a person to swing from one emotion to another. Perhaps you've seen your mate turn from happiness to disappointment, or even to anger, because of a sexual problem between the two of you. It can happen very easily, and you may not discern the reason for the sudden change. At a time like this, you need to have a heart-to-heart talk with your mate to learn what's behind his or her feelings.

The *will* is also strongly influenced by the sex drive. The will is your self-guidance system; it asserts what you want to do, regardless of what the mind may objectively tell you to do or what the emotions may try to sway you to do. The sex drive can persuade your will to desire sexual satisfaction.

These three components—the mind, the emotions, and the will—comprise the soul, the element of your nature that gives you your own unique identity. Your soul may be dedicated to God or it may be unregenerate and sinful. Either way, the sex drive influences your soul, and your soul directs how you will use your sex drive.

Sex and the Spirit

You are also a spirit. God created your body and soul; but the God-breathed, eternal essence within you

The Sex Drive



is your spirit. The spirit is the divine element that reminds your soul of God's will for your life. Your soul will be held accountable for the decisions it makes, for the Bible says, "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die*" (Ezek. 18:4). The spirit, though, does not die; it returns to God. (See Ecclesiastes 12:7.)

Is the spirit involved in sex? Yes! The ecstasy of your spirit, your consciousness of faith in God, and all the other aspects of your spirit are involved in the sex act. Your spirit can employ the sex drive to honor God—if your soul permits it.

A Serious Matter

The sex drive, as we have seen, touches every component of the person. For that reason the sex drive must be handled with care and respect. If abused or allowed to have its own way, the sex drive can destroy you completely. It can not only debilitate your body, it can corrupt your soul and alienate your spirit. Our handling of the sex drive is a very serious matter.

I am afraid that our generation has played with the sex drive as if it were a toy. Men and women have pretended that the sex drive is just basic instinct that should be freely gratified, like the animals gratify theirs. This is a fallacy. The human soul is immortal, and anything that affects the soul should be taken seriously.

God has given us in His Word some very direct, explicit commands regarding sex. If we keep His commands, we will enjoy happy lives on this earth; we will have beautiful children and grandchildren; we will see generation after generation of our descendants cross the stage of human drama. If we ignore what God says about the sex drive, we place ourselves under

60 Things God Said about Sex



His judgment. He tells us what the penalties will be, and we must expect to pay them if we disobey. God's spiritual laws are just as immutable as His physical laws. You might jump off a cliff and say, "Look! I'm defying the law of gravity!" You will still fall. The same thing happens when you defy God's spiritual laws. It is not your opinion about sex that matters. It is not the opinion of a cheap novel or magazine that matters. Only God's law matters. You can either conform to His law and enjoy sex as He intended it to be enjoyed, or you can defy His law and bring suffering on yourself.

The sex drive is not dirty. The sex drive is not sinful. The sex drive is a precious gift from God, to be used for His glory and our enjoyment. We need to respect it, control it, and obey God's laws concerning it.

Notes

1. Walter Trobisch, *I Loved a Girl* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 3.
2. C. W. Lloyd, *Human Reproduction and Sexual Behavior* (Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1964).
3. Desmond Morris, *The Human Zoo* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 121.
4. Dwight Hervey Small, *Design for Christian Marriage* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Spire, 1971), pp. 92-93.
5. Lester Sumrall, *Ecstasy* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1980), pp. 21-31.
6. Howard J. Clinebell and Charlotte H. Clinebell, *The Intimate Marriage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 29.