

WHY WAIT?

Reason 3: Great Expectations

“She ruined my love life.” Quite a number of years ago I read an article in a woman's magazine. (Yes, I am slightly embarrassed to admit this). The article was based on a comment made by one of Hollywood's most desirable men. He was young, muscular, athletic, and probably one of the highest paid actors of his time. As in any good blockbuster, our masculine hero was paired up with another of Hollywood's biggest names and highest paid actors. I don't need to tell you that she was extremely popular and, of course, very sexy.

The article centred on an intimate scene this hot couple had to do. Both of them were professional actors doing their job. They said there was no chemistry between them, they were just acting. But afterwards he made this complaint about her: “She ruined my love life.” She had done nothing wrong, in fact she had been completely professional and was outstanding in her acting – but that was the problem. After making the film, and in particular this one intimate scene, he came home to find that the love life he shared with his wife had become boring in comparison. His mind kept going back to the Hollywood illusion, and try as hard as he might, his love life with his wife had paled into insignificance. The actress, he complained, was just too good. She had set the bar too high in just one scene – and his normal love life was never going to be the same again.

More than almost any other experience in life, our sexual experiences stay with us like living photos etched on to our memory. This is particularly so with our first or other significant sexual experiences. They set the bar. The level of intimacy they achieve, the excitement, the sensations, the emotional bond, the spiritual bond, and the intensity of the situation, all go to make up a benchmark for our future sexual encounters.

We start out on a great footing in a marriage relationship, where the first sexually intimate moments happen during the honeymoon. Neither of us have done this before. We are beginners. There is nothing in our experience so far to compare it to. Even though we are both new to it all, we may be clumsy and it might not even go very well, it will be the most intimate experience we have ever had. The great thing with a sexual relationship that starts on the right foot like this is that it keeps on getting better. After weeks and years of practice, sexual intimacy just keeps on reaching new heights.

I am going to take a guess here, and say that most of the first time sex outside of marriage – even if it is with the person you are going to marry – has an extra level to the excitement. I am going to call it the Naughtiness Factor.

We know that sex outside marriage is wrong. As Christians, we know that other people know it is wrong too. There are going to be family and friends who will be disappointed, upset or even horrified if they knew the two of you had had sex outside of marriage. So if you do have sex before marriage, at least the first time, it's most likely going to be in secret. That's what gives it the extra excitement and the Naughtiness Factor.

When there is a chance that you might get caught out and you are trying to do it without anyone else knowing about it, a huge dose of excitement is added to what will probably already be an incredible experience.

Someone once said that forbidden fruit has the sweetest taste. It's the most tempting fruit to take because you not allowed to have it. And when you are not allowed to have it, you want to take it

and find out why. Perhaps the forbidden fruit was originally found on the tree in the garden of Eden when Eve looked over her shoulder to see if anyone was looking, and then took a bite.

God tells it to us this way in Proverbs:

The woman Folly is loud; she is undisciplined and without knowledge.

She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city, calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way.

“Let all who are simple come in here!” she says to those who lack judgement.

“Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!”

But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.

(Proverbs 9 v 13 – 18).

You will notice that the woman Folly is not an adulteress or a prostitute or even described as a wayward woman in this context. She is just calling to anyone that has a lack of good judgement to come and take stolen stuff. She was calling to Eve to take the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; she is calling to you to have sex outside marriage. She is tempting us to take anything that is not ours to take. She is calling us to add the Naughtiness Factor to our lives. Why? Because it gives you a thrill. Because it's exciting. Because it gives you an adrenaline rush. But take note of what happens to those that follow her advice: *“But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.”*

Even if it is with the person you think you are going to marry, having sex outside of that marriage bond is a bad idea. Because of the extra excitement that is involved in taking stolen fruit, when it comes to building your everyday love life after marriage, something will be missing. You are going to want to try and achieve that same high you had when you took the forbidden fruit, but it won't be there, because in marriage you are allowed to make love all you like and the Naughtiness Factor will be missing.

Too many people complain that after marriage their sex lives have become boring. Some people find that to make love, even to an incredibly beautiful wife, they have to recreate the Naughtiness Factor that they had before they were married. What a waste! The first question I would ask someone if they came to me with that complaint, would be if they had been sexually active before they were married. Except in some unusual circumstances, I could almost guarantee that the answer would be, “yes.” Remember what we read? *“The dead are there.”* Their love life has died because they stole it before it was ready. Three times in the Song of Songs we read, *“Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.”* (Song of Songs 2 v 7, 3 v 5, 8 v 4). Wait until the time is right.

Outside marriage we tend to focus on the sexual event rather than on the person. The forbidden fruit, the naughtiness, the place, the risk... Those are things that are going to stay etched onto our memory and expectations from our first sexual encounter. But when we have our first sexual experience within the context of marriage our focus is on the person we have married. Outside of marriage our bonding can be more with the activity, but within marriage our bonding is more with our spouse.

The first night together after the wedding is a wonderful and precious time. Even if the sexual act itself doesn't go how you thought it might, you are bonding with your spouse in a way you have never done before. You know that you are not going to get caught out. You know that you have all night together. You know that you can relax and thoroughly enjoy each other at your own pace. And in that relaxed and loving environment you will bond with each other. You are really going to short change your first sexual experience, and the rest of your future love life, if you settle for a cramped, rushed and adrenaline filled session of sex in the back of a car before you get married.

Just like our body building actor, sexual activity outside of marriage – even with the person you think you are going to marry – can ruin your love life. It's all good fun for the moment, but when it is over, there is a price to pay. *“Her guests are in the depth of the grave.”* Don't kill your love life by eating forbidden fruit. Don't raise the benchmark so high with the wrong sort of excitement and sexual expectations that you can't keep up with the pace.

Does that mean that if you have already had sex before marriage that your sex life and marriage will be a disaster? No, not necessarily. But what it does mean is that it will probably be much harder work. You will need to ask forgiveness from your spouse and from God. You may need to have counselling to help you overcome the difficulties you have caused. But together, you, your spouse and God can overcome, and mistakes can be put behind you allowing your relationships to blossom.

Strive for the ideal. What you want is a love life that keeps growing, that keeps getting better and better, and stronger and stronger, the longer you stay married to each other. The best marriage will start with saving yourself for the marriage night.

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