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Hebrews 13:4

4. “Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

Marriage, the union of a man and a woman for the rest of their lives (as long as they both shall live), is to be honored by all men. This is the will of God. Today’s Scripture commands us to honor marriage; that is to hold it in the highest regard--to protect and support any and all of the marriages in our community and sphere of influence. (Any nation or community is only as strong as the marriages and families which make it up. This is especially true for the Lord’s Church.)

In today’s text, Hebrews 13:4, God specifies the most important way that we must honor marriage is through marital fidelity. The Scripture uses the phrase: “The marriage bed is to be undefiled.” “Undefiled” here means pure and without sin. And the Greek word translated “marriage bed” is “coitus”, which is a synonym for sexual intercourse in our English language today.

God wants the very best for us, and so He designed sexual union to be the core of the marriage union, in which two lives become one. And so He desires the

marriage bed to be holy and very special, with a uniquely spiritual dimension. Therefore God has called us to reserve sexual relations for marriage alone.

Speaking of marriage relations, I Corinthians 7:4 makes this statement: “The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.” In this sense, our Christian wedding vows are understood to be an exchange of ownership with regard to our bodies: the husband’s body belongs to his wife, and the wife’s body belongs to her husband. Biblically, the married couple promises to reserve all sexual intimacy for one another. And so “forsake all others until death do they part.”

The implications here are that young people who love each other, but are not yet married, should abstain from any sexual intimacy before marriage. We should enthusiastically support and encourage abstinence programs for young people. The book “I Kissed Dating Goodbye” by Joshua Harris is a must read for all teenagers.

Hebrews 13:4 ends with this severe warning: “Fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” The word “judge” used here specifically means “to condemn”. Often God’s judgment comes here and now in this life in the form of sickness, disease, pain, and even physical death for sexual sins. God will hold responsible and guilty all who engage in sexual intimacy outside of

marriage.

So why does God place such a high value on human sexuality, that He only blesses the union of a man and a woman within the marriage bond?

Think about it. The pleasures of sexual intimacy are a taste of heaven itself. The potential for closeness and fellowship between two people is far greater than any other time or place while we inhabit these bodies. But most of all, the marriage bed allows us to share in the joy and exhilaration that God must experience as our Creator. The sexual union allows us to participate in the very act of creating a new human being. When a man and a woman come together within marriage and conceive a baby, there should be no greater celebration on earth or even in heaven itself.

So Lord, help us to honor marriage. And lift up the beauty and design of the marriage bed, that you have given to us as a very special gift of greatest value.

Thank you Lord for marriage and the marriage bed. May we honor you by lifting up the beauty and design You have given to us. And obey Your word to gain the abundant life you want for us.