

## These are the ten things God forbids:

**1. Fornication:** Fornication is immoral sex. It comes from the Greek word *porneia* which means "unclean." This broad term includes sexual intercourse outside of marriage (1 Corinthians 7:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:3), sleeping with your stepmother (1 Corinthians 5:1), sex with a prostitute (1 Corinthians 6:13, 15-16), and adultery (Matthew 5:32).

**2. Adultery:** Adultery, or sex with someone who is not your spouse, is a sin and was punishable in the Old Testament by death (Leviticus 21:10). In the New Testament, Jesus expanded adultery to mean not just physical acts, but emotional acts in the mind and heart (Matthew 5:28).

**3. Homosexuality:** The Bible is very clear that for a man to have sex with a man or woman to have sex with a woman is detestable to God (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:27; 1 Corinthians 6:9).

**4. Impurity:** These are several Greek words which are translated as "impurity." To become "impure" (in Greek, *molvno*) can mean to lose one's virginity (Revelation 14:4), or to become defiled, due to living out a secular and essentially pagan lifestyle (1 Corinthians 6:9, 2 Corinthians 7:1). The Greek word *rupos* often refers to moral uncleanness in general (Revelation 22:11).

**5. Orgies:** For a married couple to become involved in sex orgies with different couples is an obvious violation of (1), (2), and (4) and needs no discussion.

**6. Prostitution:** Prostitution, which is paying for sex, is morally wrong and condemned throughout Scripture (Leviticus 19:29, Deuteronomy 23:17, Proverbs 7:4-27).

**7. Lustful passions:** First, let us tell you what this does not mean. Lustful passion does not refer to the powerful, God-given sexual desire a husband and wife have for one another. Instead, it refers to an unrestrained, indiscriminate sexual desire for men or women other than the person's marriage partner (Mark 7:21-22, Ephesians 4:19).

**8. Sodomy:** In the Old Testament, sodomy refers to men lying with men. The English word means "Unnatural sexual intercourse, especially of one man with another or of a human being with an animal." Unfortunately, some Christian teachers have erroneously equated sodomy with oral sex. In the Bible, sodomites refer to male homosexuals or temple prostitutes (both male and female). In contemporary usage, the term sodomy is sometimes used to describe anal intercourse between a man and woman. This is not the meaning of the biblical word.

**9. Obscenity and coarse jokes:** In Ephesians 4:29, Paul says, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth." The Greek word for unwholesome is very descriptive and literally means "rotten" or "decaying." In Ephesians 5:4, the Bible warns us to avoid "silly talk" or, as it is called in some versions, "coarse jesting." We have all been around people who can see a sexual connotation in some innocent phrase and then begin to snicker or laugh. This is wrong. However, this does not rule out appropriate sexual humor in the privacy of marriage, but rather inappropriate sexual comments in a public setting.

**10. Incest:** Incest, or sex with family members or relatives, is specifically forbidden in Scripture (Leviticus 18:7-18; 20:11-21).

God leaves much in our sexual relationship with our husbands up to our discretion. In all likelihood, the questions tugging at the back of your mind were not even touched upon. When she read this list, Shelby commented: "It's helpful to know what God says is wrong, but I still sometimes wonder if what my husband and I are doing is right. We have a great time together in bed, but every now and then, this nagging doubt comes—does God approve?"

**Is Oral Sex Permissible?** Oral sex is or oral stimulation of your partner's genitals with your mouth, lips, and tongue. The man may stimulate the woman's clitoris and the opening of the vagina with his tongue or the woman may pleasure the man's penis with her mouth. This sexual stimulation may or may not lead to orgasm for the husband and wife.

What does Scripture say about this sexual activity? Most theologians say the Scriptures are silent about oral-genital sex. Some believe two verses in the Song of Solomon may contain veiled references to oral sex. The first is Song of Solomon 2:3:

*Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men.*

*In his shade I took great delight and sat down, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*

Throughout the Song of Solomon, the word fruit refers to the male genitals. In extra biblical literature, fruit is sometimes equated with the male genitals or with semen, so it is possible that here we have a faint and delicate reference to an oral genital caress.

The second possible veiled reference is found in 4:16 (KJV):

*Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.*

These erotic words spoken by Solomon's bride are at the culmination of a very sensuous love scene. Shulamith asks her husband to blow on her garden (a poetic reference used throughout the Song for the vagina) and cause its spices to flow out. Of course one cannot be certain, but it is possible Shulamith is inviting her husband to excite her by caressing her with his mouth. She then invites him to enter her and feast on the pleasures waiting in her "garden."

Dr. Douglas Rosenau believes Scripture is silent on the topic of oral sex. "This does not make it right or wrong," he says. A key emphasis in the New Testament is Christian liberty. Nothing is unclean in itself, says Paul (Romans 14:14), and this presumably includes sexual variety. Lewis Smedes, professor of theology at Fuller Seminary, amplifies Paul's statement about nothing being unclean.

Christian liberty sets us free from culturally invented "moral" taboos; and since there is no rule from heaven, it is likely that the only restraint is the feeling of the other person. For example, if one partner has guilt feelings about oral sex play, the Christian response of the other will be to honor the partner until they adjust their feelings. On the other hand, if the partner has only aesthetic reservations, and if these are rooted in some fixed idea that sex is little more than a necessary evil anyway, they have an obligation to be taught, tenderly and lovingly, of the joys of sex in the freedom of Christ.

In *Intended for Pleasure*, Dr. and Mrs. Ed Wheat says that oral sex is a matter that concerns only the husband and wife involved. If both find it enjoyable and pleasant, then it may properly fit into the couple's lovemaking practices. One goal of lovemaking is to fill a treasure trove of memories with delightful love experiences that will quicken your responses during your future times together.

One woman might feel horrified by the above playful interchange between a husband and wife. To her, oral sex is repulsive. Another may think the minister and his wife have a gloriously free, creative, and fun sexual relationship. She sees that oral sex adds a beautiful dimension to this couple's lovemaking.

Before we go any further, let us clarify our intent. Are we suggesting you incorporate oral sex into your love play? No. We are not making recommendations. Instead, our purpose is to set out for you what Scripture prohibits and to encourage you to seek God's wisdom concerning His personal recommendations for your marriage.

Each couple is different. Each husband and wife is unique. Because Scripture is either silent—or veiled—concerning this practice, the only way to discover what God allows for you is for you to ask Him. If you've never talked to God about your sexual relationship, now is a good time to start. You will not shock God. Remember, sex was His idea. God is a God of wisdom (Daniel 2:20). He promises that when we lack wisdom, if we ask Him, He will give it to us (James 1:5)

- As you seek God's wisdom, you might find it helpful to ask these three questions about any sexual practice you and your husband are considering:
- Is it prohibited in Scripture? If not, we may assume it is permitted. "Everything is permissible for me," (1 Corinthians 6:12, NIV).
- Is it beneficial? Does the practice in any way harm the husband or wife or hinder the sexual relationship? If so, it should be rejected. "Everything is permissible for me—but not everything is beneficial." (1 Corinthians 6:12, NIV).
- Does it involve anyone else? Sexual activity is sanctioned by God for husband and wife only. If a sexual practice involves someone else or becomes public, it is wrong based on Hebrews 13:4, which warns us to keep the marriage bed undefiled.

Let's see how these questions can help when it comes to making decisions about certain sexual practices that are not specifically spelled out in Scripture.

**Are Vibrators Permissible?** Some couples enjoy incorporating the use of sexual aids such as vibrators into their lovemaking. To find out if the use of vibrator is right or wrong, let's apply the three questions. Is the use of a vibrator prohibited by Scripture? Is a vibrator beneficial in lovemaking? Does the use of a vibrator involve anyone else?

As we look at the list of ten prohibitions, we see that there is no scriptural reference that would prohibit the use of a vibrator. So if a vibrator enhances a couple's lovemaking and is used exclusively for the couple's private enjoyment, then it is permitted. Does this mean we are suggesting you run out and buy a vibrator? No. Again, we are not recommending any sexual practice. We are only trying to help you discern what is best in your marriage as you seek the wisdom of God.

**What about X-Rated Videos?** Obviously videos did not exist during biblical times, so we will not

find "Thou shalt not watch X-rated videos" in Scriptures. (The same is true for vibrators.) But as we read through the list of the ten prohibitions, a red flag is raised. In number two on the list, adultery is defined as "looking on a woman to lust" whether the woman (or man) is on a video, in a picture, or in the living flesh. Secondly, number four on the list describes impurity as "moral uncleanness." X-rated would qualify as "morally unclean," thereby making them something God would disdain.

Now let's apply the questions:

- Are X-rated videos prohibited by Scripture? Yes, based on (2) and (4).
- Are X-rated vides beneficial? Anything that promotes "moral uncleanness" is not beneficial.
- Do X-rated videos involve someone else? Yes. You bring the man or woman on the video into your lovemaking.

Based on these answers, we could conclude that God wants us to stay away from X-rated videos.

We have considered three "gray areas," oral sex, vibrators, and X-rated videos. There are many others. We encourage you and your husband to prayerfully seek God's wisdom, study the list of ten prohibitions, and use the three questions to help you discern what to do in your specific situation.

As Christians we are simultaneously free and responsible. We are responsible to seek the best of the one we love, to think more highly of him and his desires than our own (Philippians 2:3-4). But we are also free to explore new territories of sexual delight.

According to Dr. Lewis Smedes, "The Christian word on trying out a sexual practice that is not prohibited in Scripture is 'Try it. If you like it, it is morally good for you. And it may well be that in providing new delight to each other; you will be adventuring into deeper experiences of love.'"

God has given you great freedom in your sexual relationship with your husband. Remember His words to Solomon and Shulamith: "Eat, friends; drink and imbibe deeply, O lovers" (Song of Solomon 5:1).