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## Loving God Through... Sex?

Neal DeRoo

*Dordt College*, [neal.deroo@dordt.edu](mailto:neal.deroo@dordt.edu)

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# Loving God Through... Sex?

## **Abstract**

"Most of us acknowledge, at least mentally, that sexuality is a good gift from God. But what does it mean to *love* God through sex?"

Posting about physical intimacy that honors God from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/loving-god-through-sex/>

## **Keywords**

In All Things, sex, intimacy, man-woman relationships, God

## **Disciplines**

Christianity

## **Comments**

*In All Things* is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

# Loving God Through... Sex?

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▫ [inallthings.org/loving-god-through-sex/](http://inallthings.org/loving-god-through-sex/)

Neal DeRoo

This week, we've been focusing on how to love God with our bodies. [Exercise, eating well, taking care of our brains](#) — these are all important elements of bodily love of God, but they aren't the whole of it. Indeed, talking about "bodily love" reminds us of another area where we are to love God with our bodies: sex.

Most of us acknowledge, at least mentally, that sexuality is a good gift from God. We might even acknowledge that loving our spouse sexually is something that can draw us closer to God (though we probably don't think about that too much while we're actually having sex with our spouse). And we would certainly acknowledge that we can *honor* God through the choices we make about our sexuality (usually having to do with *who* we choose to perform *what* types of sex acts with *when*). But what does it mean to *love* God through sex?

Frankly, I'm not sure I have a good answer to that question. If we keep in mind the [inter-relatedness of all of creation](#) and the [relation of all of our actions to God](#), we can remember that our sexual relations also show something of God (or some other spirit) at work in our lives, and therefore communicate something of God (or some other spirit) to those we come in contact with. Does our sexuality show God's love to other people and to ourselves? If someone was paying attention to the sexual elements of my life, would they come away from that with a sense that I love God and God's creation — or would they find that I love only myself or that I find God's creation shameful and embarrassing?

But this is true of everything we do, not just sexuality. Are there unique ways in which we can love God through our sexuality? There are certainly [better and worse ways to think \(and talk\) about sexuality](#), but we're after more than talk here. We're interested in how I can love God through my embodied sexual activity, not just how I can think better about sex (though the latter definitely has some influence on the former).

So how can we, as Christians, love God through our sexual bodies? Let me offer a few suggestions (and if you want to know a bit more about some of the thinking behind these suggestions, please follow the link in the previous paragraph):

**1. Live as though the orgasm is not the end-goal of sexuality.** Sexuality is about seeking a deeper connection with people, in part through physical contact. Normally, we think that the deepest connection is expressed sexually through the act of intercourse and/or the sharing of orgasms (which releases [hormones that help us feel closer to other people and more satisfied with ourselves](#)). But, not all of our connections need to be headed inevitably toward this type of deepest connection.

Emotionally, we recognize that the connection between spouses is of a deeper and different nature than the emotional connections we have with other people — but we don't expect our spouses to be our only source of emotional connection, and we aren't normally afraid to connect emotionally with others lest that lead us to cheat on our spouse. While the nature of our emotional contact will be different, we still expect to have some kind of emotional connection with friends, co-workers, and family members. We live in the recognition that, while we may want that kind of deepest emotional connection with someone, we don't expect all of our emotional connections to inevitably lead to that deepest level, so we need not fear having surface-level connections with people that we don't want to become best friends (or spouses) with.

Perhaps we should be similar when it comes to the physical expression of connection that is our sexuality. We should expect to have various levels of physical contact with various kinds of people in our lives: we can hug our siblings or kiss our mom, but is it also okay to hold hands with a good friend? To place a hand on someone's arm to show that you care? To playfully tousle each other's hair or give a neck massage during stressful times?

**2. Flirt more, shame less.** This builds on what comes above, for if we acknowledge that flirtation is not a precursor to intercourse, we can see it as an appropriate way of exhibiting and expressing sexuality. Of course, not all forms of flirtation are equally appropriate, but we should perhaps encourage flirtation – both verbal and physical – as a healthy form of sexual expression both among single people and among those who are married (if my kids never see me flirt with my wife, how will they think sexuality is a normal part of married relationships?).

**3. Keep physical touch connected to intimacy.** Again, not unrelated to the earlier examples, but it is important that our physical connection with other people be closely related to the level of intimacy we have with them. We have to negotiate levels and types of appropriate and inappropriate touching as part of our everyday relationships. What is appropriate will shift from person to person and situation to situation, based on people's past experiences, social settings, etc. Some awkward situations may arise, but this is part of the risk of friendship and connection.

**4. Acknowledge that loneliness is (at least) as problematic as pre-marital sex.** As the church, we tend to get a bit hung-up on sexual sins, and this drives much of how we encourage people to interact (or not interact) with members of the opposite sex. Discouraging (and sometimes flat out refusing) people from having emotional or physical contact with other people (lest they be led into temptation) can cause us all to begin to feel lonely and isolated. And while it can cause problems when people's physical contact outstrips their level of intimacy and public commitment, it is equally problematic when people feel distant and unconnected from each other. We can't let our fear of giving in to one side of the problem cause us to act in such a way that makes the other side of the problem worse.

**5. Have fun.** Sexuality is not only a way to connect with people physically, it also ought to be a source of joy for us. Seeking joy is not some kind of hedonistic pleasure-seeking that shows we've given in to our secular culture. Joy is one of the [fruits of the Spirit](#), and the pursuit of genuine joy is as important to Christian living as the pursuit of patience, self-control, goodness, or any of the other fruits. Of course, 'fun' is not equivalent to joy — but learning to have a good time can definitely be one way of experiencing joy and being drawn closer to God.

The above list is only partial, but hopefully it gives you some ideas of ways to love God sexually. That is a task that is not only given to married couples, but to all Christians, as we strive to offer our whole bodies, sexual things that they be, as living sacrifices to God.