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# *Lesson Nine*

## *Five Star Sexuality*

**H**ave you ever dreamed about becoming rich? Imagine you won the lottery or received an inheritance of \$1,000,000. What would you do with it?

Some people who receive a million dollars spend it on buying expensive gifts, parties, fancy cars or clothes or traveling on expensive vacations and within a very short time, most of it is gone. This “spender” kind of person will have a lot of partyseekers around as long as he or she is rich and famous, but after the money is spent, most of the friends will be gone, too.

Other people who receive a million dollars have the idea to invest it so that it grows in size. They may not have as much fun right away, but they are building for the future. They may buy land, renovate an old building or start a new company to create jobs in their community. Or they may spend the funds on advanced education for themselves or ones they love. This “investor” kind of person may not be popular with the partyseeking crowd, but people of value will be attracted to this “investor” as someone with a promising future.

You may say that you'll never receive a million dollars from anywhere and probably you're right, but the fact is that you've already received several things that are far more valuable than a million dollars! (You didn't know that, did you?) What are these six things you've been given which are far more valuable than a million dollars?

They are: Your health which allows you to do things and enjoy life, your mind which allows you to think, to talk, to imagine the future and remember the past, your heart, or your ability to feel, which allows you to love and to be sensitive to others and to have friends, your will, which allows you to be active, to do things, to have the courage to challenge things that are wrong and to make them better, your conscience, which helps you to know right from wrong, good from evil, and how to become someone whom others can trust, your sexuality, the fact that you are male or female with the potential to establish a mature man / woman relationship and the ability to create new life (whether you choose to exercise this power or not). These things are far more valuable than a million dollars. Why? Because if you were missing any of these things and you were a wealthy person you'd probably spend all you had to regain your health, your mind, your heart or ability to feel and to love, your conscience, or your sexual being. Without these things, life just isn't as fulfilling. Of course, just as it would be foolish to squander a million dollars, wouldn't it also be a waste if you misused or squandered any of these six aspects of your life?

## 5 STAR SEXUALITY

If you think about it, mature, complete sexuality includes five parts, *not just the physical one*:

1. Intellectual- involves talking, getting to know each other's plans and dreams, thoughts, hopes, sense of humor, way of looking at the world, attitude about life, etc.

There are different levels of knowing someone. The lowest is just sharing basic facts about yourself. The second is talking about the opinions of someone else. "Did you see such-and-such a movie? My friend said it was really good!"



That way you're protected if the other person disagrees. The third level is sharing your own opinions. The fourth level is sharing about your own background, values and beliefs, goals and dreams. The fifth is where you feel free to share anything, your hopes and your fears. The depth of commitment increases with each level of intimacy.

2. Emotional- involves sharing feelings, heart, truly caring about someone's longterm happiness.

3. Social- involves getting to know each other's families. With sexual intercourse potentially creating a new human being and a new family related to and merging the two lineages (father's side and the mother's side) or creating a family through adoption.

4. Moral / spiritual- all actions have a motivation which are more or less selfless or, alternatively, self-centered. Love, in its true sense, is inherently moral. It involves unselfishly giving, serving, and sacrificing oneself for the sake of one's beloved. Complete sexuality is based on a concern for, and commitment to, the other's well-being more than one's own desires, so it always involves this moral dimension. It also often involves spiritually-based beliefs about the meaning of sexual expression.

5. Physical- includes attraction between mature male or female coming together in sexual union with possibility of creating child, includes several

possible negative consequences if not a committed, lifelong relationship between two people who have prepared for this relationship.

Many people just look at the physical side of sexuality, but that's just the last spire in the 5 part star of complete sexuality.<sup>1</sup> You've heard about the dangers of AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy and you may have heard that using a condom can protect you completely from HIV, sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. Is that true? No. Using a condom reduces the risk for some of these, but not completely. (see appendix C for a more detailed discussion)

But even if using a condom did provide complete protection from potential negative consequences, would using a condom guarantee that you were being protected from the damage of uncommitted, immature sex in these four other areas? (intellectual, emotional, social, moral / spiritual) No, as they say, condoms can't protect your heart. You want to be loved not just for your body, but for your whole self, your mind and your heart. Don't you?

Also, if you think about it, being able to share your sense of right and wrong with someone you're committed to is very important. For example, what if someone you find attractive likes you a lot but is an angry, abusive person who hurts others? Would you want to have an intimate relationship with someone who is destructive in that way? Relationships always involve moral issues.

Also, what if someone likes you, but they don't like your family or have no interest in even getting to know your family? Then aren't they rejecting a part of you, too? Complete sexuality includes this social dimension. You accept and become part of someone's family. If you create a child through a sexual relationship you are creating someone's grandchild or another person's niece or nephew. Sexuality always includes this social dimension.

A study in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family* found that college women rated 1) dependable character, 2) emotional stability and maturity, 3) positive outlook / optimism as the most important qualities they looked for in choosing a mate (education and intelligence also rated highly), more important than a large income or good looks. .

Good character included such things as honesty, kindness, dependability, and willingness to listen. A bad character included shiftiness, moodiness, inflexibility, and difficulty in understanding another's problems.<sup>2</sup>

If you want to achieve anything in life, self-control is important. An athlete has to overcome fear, fatigue, and other obstacles to achieve success. The same thing is true for achieving success in romantic relationships. Developing self-control is part of becoming a mature man or woman because your sexuality is powerful. Used at the right time in the right way, it can create joy and even a new human being. Used selfishly or irresponsibly it can lead to pain and regret.

Does it take self-control to control your sexual desire? Yes. Can it be done? Yes. Are there rewards for exercising sexual self-control? Definitely. As explained in Chapter 14 on Marriage, on average married couples have the most fulfilling sex lives and sense of well-being. Self-control is essential to building trust with someone. And isn't trust, in turn, essential to having a successful marriage?

If you delay having sex until the right time, you're protecting not just your health, but also your heart and mind to share at the right time, ideally with someone who's capable of making a mature commitment, truly cares about you and wants to share life and real, lasting love with you, *and you alone*.

We all want to find lifelong love with someone who will cherish and respect us, but we need to exercise wisdom in order to make it last. Animals are controlled by their hormones. When a dog is in heat, it will just go ahead and have sex no matter what, with virtually any partner. Many other animals are the same. But a human being is able to go beyond feelings of sexual attraction because we don't just want sex, we want love, we want to enjoy sexual intimacy with someone *in the context of lasting love*.

Mature sexuality involves the intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual and yes, physical, dimensions. If you really love someone, would you ever want to deprive that person, or yourself, of having the chance to experience *complete* five-part sexuality?

## WINDOWS AND BOUNDARIES

Did you ever think about the importance of boundaries? Your own body has a boundary. It's called your skin. The skin is designed to keep dust, particles or germs out. Your body does have windows or openings to let things in or out: the eyes, nose, ears, mouth, genital opening and anus.

What would happen if you just put anything in your mouth? Dirt, garbage, spoiled food, anything? You'd get sick pretty fast. Your body has a second line of defense for germs that are able to get inside your body. These are your white blood cells. The white blood cells travel around your blood stream checking the (genetic) "I.D." of anything they encounter. If a germ doesn't have the right "I.D." it gets attacked.

What happens if you receive a gift that's really valuable—do you just leave it anywhere? If someone gave you a lot of money or something that was very important to you would you just leave it on the street overnight? Of course not.

Something that's valuable needs to have a boundary which is a line of protection. What about your mind and heart? Do you value your own mind and heart? If so, then don't you want to protect it, or do you just let anything in? You've heard the expression "garbage in, garbage out." What we put into our minds through what we choose to look at or listen to will have an effect on who we are and who we become.

Someone might say that "I can't help what my eyes see" and in a sense that's true. You can't control what billboards or magazine ads or TV shows are being created. These are the results of the decisions of other people who have their own reasons for creating these kind of media. But you can usually control what you choose to look at and what you allow your mind to dwell on. There's a saying that you can't control which birds fly overhead, but you can decide whether to let them build a nest in your hair! Thoughts of all kinds may come into your mind, but you don't have to let them stay by continuing to think about them!

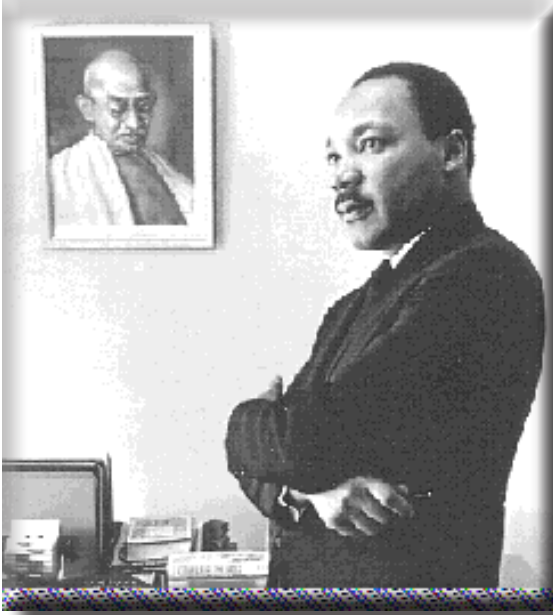
If you see a TV show that you know is bad for you, you have a choice whether to keep on watching it or to change the channel. Or you may hear some friends saying bad things about someone you know. You can choose to keep listening or stand up and say you don't want to listen to gossip or badmouthing behind someone's back.

What about your personal space? Do you let just anyone get really close to you or do you set a boundary? Within a family, there's a lot of hugging because you're related to each other. Sometimes girls will hug each other or guys will slap each other on the back. But regarding physical contact between guys and girls, do you let just anyone touch you? Isn't setting a boundary, and only letting a select few in closer, one way to show that you value yourself? And, isn't not entering the personal space of others one way to show that you respect them?

Our society is badly in need of some boundary-setting. Adolescent girls, especially, are vulnerable because of the lack of sexual boundaries in our society. In the past, a girl could depend on strong social back-up when she wanted to say no to sexual intimacy. "My dad would kill me," she could say. At one point in history, she could say, quite truthfully, "My dad would kill me and you both." She could say, "It's wrong and you know it," or "I'm not that kind of girl," and there was some social muscle behind what she said; there were some social norms. That is much less true today. Therefore, every "no" is likely to be perceived less as an easily understood and respected statement of personal conviction, and more as a personal rejection of the boy, harder for her to give and harder for him to accept.

Dr. Mary Pipher, author of *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* and a psychologist, asserts that women are more oppressed by sexual "freedom" at the dawn of the 21st century than she and her friends were back in the much-maligned 1950s. Girls are now growing up in a highly sexualized, media-saturated culture where women are seen as sex objects.

They allow themselves to be treated as such because they believe it is expected of them. It has become the social norm so that girls feel they



have a lot more explaining to do if they don't want to have sex. Dr Pipher sees in her patients "a deadness; an inauthenticity from giving away too much." They've given away too much too easily. They no longer feel they have anything special left to give.

Prior to the Sexual Revolution (period starting in 1960s when cultural values about when it's okay to have sex became more free), most girls set their criteria for sexual intimacy at lifelong commitment. This was supported by religion and by law. When Dr. Pipher asks some of her clients to set criteria before they will have sex with a boy, some of them say things like, "He has to say he likes me. He has to be nice to me—take me to McDonald's or something." What does this say about a girl's self-image and self-esteem? The sexual bar has been lowered so far that we are actually training young men to think they have a right to expect sex if they spend money on their dates! Is this preparing them to be able to have healthy relationships with women in the future? Selfishness in the sexual area has a way of corrupting the rest of one's relationships with the opposite sex.

Dr. Pipher theorizes that eating disorders are an attempt to be sexy at all costs, even at the cost of one's health, in a society that defines sexy as thin and equates a woman's value with her sex appeal. But girls and women are not passive,

helpless victims in this distortion of sexuality. By buying into and accepting false and immature concepts of sexuality they help to perpetuate destructive patterns that lead to unhappiness for both genders.

Men and boys suffer, too, from the loss of boundaries. Even if they want to respect a girl by waiting, they often feel a lot of social pressure to have sex. If they don't, they're afraid their masculinity will be challenged. They'll be called names like "fag" or "punk." But, who is the real "punk?" Who is the real man? The one who takes something that really doesn't belong to him or the one who unselfishly decides that sexual intimacy with someone belongs to the future spouse?

## SETTING BOUNDARIES

What are some of the reasons people refuse sexual advances? Let's list them. Are all of them fair or legitimate? Is it ever right for one person to trick or force another person into sexual contact? Surprisingly, two thirds of teens in one survey said it was okay for a boy to force sex on a girl if they've been dating for more than six months. A large number of boys and girls said that a boy/man had a right to take sex from a girl/woman if he'd spent a lot of money on her. One in three students said it was acceptable for a guy to force sex on a girl if she had been sexually active before.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, there is a lot of confusion about boundaries.

A failure to understand male/female differences in sexual arousal is another part of the problem. A boy and a girl who are kissing or touching each other may have very different views of what they are doing. From the girl's point of view she may feel they are just sharing some pleasurable affection with each other. Since most males are sexually aroused more quickly than girls, he may feel very differently. To compare their respective sexual feelings to the speed of a train, she may feel that they are going at a safe 5-10 miles an hour, while from his point of view they are already going 50 mph. This may be part of the reason for reported cases of "date rape" (although this gender difference doesn't ever make it right or acceptable).

A couple who wants to avoid sexual intercourse needs to be aware of this gender difference and decide what limit to set on sexual intimacy in advance. To be effective wouldn't it be wise to set the limit a good way before the "point of no return" not just for one partner, but for both?

Efforts to reduce sexual misunderstanding are made more difficult by the fact that our culture floods us with sexual messages. Billboards and magazine ads show half-naked women who are used to sell products and to draw quick visual interest to video games and movies. Rap groups push sick images of what women want and like. If a man were to base his view of women on these media alone it would be easy for him to believe that women are—lustful, seductive, dangling something in front of him that he is supposed to rush out and get at any cost. Women are not the only victims. Men are bombarded with sexual images by the culture, but then when they try to approach a real woman and she is not as receptive as they have been led to think she should be, they feel rejected, even angry.

Guys and girls need to see through media manipulation and to become more discerning about what it means to build a truly loving, respectful relationship with a man or a woman. Mass media feeds an immense worldwide market and is extremely profitable. While it's hard to accept their self-serving statements that their constant use of sexual and violent images are merely reflecting society and has no effect on people's behavior, it's also true that all of us who are consumers of their products are not helpless victims. When we consume their products we collaborate with them in creating a culture which cannot help but reduce men and women to the status of objects to be used, or discarded, rather than full-fledged human beings.

## KARINA: 16 @ WAR

Ain't no daddies where I'm from,  
It's just mad mothers,  
And eyes that still seem,  
They can't look past color.  
Why am I disrespected by  
Someone I should call brother?  
And why girls feelin' pretty  
And constantly hate each other?

Bad air in my lungs,  
Man I can't breathe.  
My eyes burnin' from all the dirt in the debris.  
And it's third degree.  
Emotionless on the scene.  
It's like a disease  
The way y'all killin' me.

Around here cool is another word for fool  
If he smoke then she smoke,  
I gotta smoke too.  
Now what would I do if I didn't have a clue?  
I'm 16 why, oh  
If my clothes ain't tight,  
Then he ain't gone like me.  
Eyes on the prize,  
So the next girl dress just like me.  
I'm so full of promise,  
But why promise if I'ma just be rewarded  
By bad actions.  
To him I'm just a transaction.

I want you to love my mind,  
My smile, my style  
I want you to know the best of me  
I want to belong without being treated  
Like property  
Why does this seem like fantasy?

I'm 16 and I shouldn't have to feel like this.  
I'm 16, every young boy out here wanna kiss.  
I'm 16, and me and my mama goin' through it.  
16 on the block, 16 on the block

Written by Terius Nash/ Christopher Stewart  
Warner/Chappell Music, Inc.

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## CHAPTER NOTES

- 1 Adapted from an essay by Marline Pearson, used with permission.
- 2 Buss, Shackelford, & Kirkpatrick. (2001) *Journal of Marriage & Family* 63 (May 2001): 491-503.
- 3 National survey of 1,700 sixth-to-ninth grade students, presented at the 1988 National Symposium of Child Victimization in Anaheim, California.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Clip out ads from magazines, or select video or audio clips from TV shows or popular music that use sex to sell products or portray women as sexual objects. How does this affect the man/woman relationship? Do these media mention or portray the physical or emotional damage that can come with uncommitted sex?

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2. What is your opinion of the girls who said that if a boy spent some money on them they felt obligated to provide sex or the belief of the students who think that it's okay for a boy / man to demand sex a) if a couple has been going together for six months, b) if a boy spends "a lot" of money on a girl during a date, c) if a girl had been sexually active before. Do you agree? Why, or why not?

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3. Discuss—why is it sometimes difficult to communicate perfectly legitimate reasons not to have sex to other people? Are these difficulties really good reasons to say nothing or just follow along passively?

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4. Discuss the concept of personal boundaries. Is it an old-fashioned concept that's out-of-date? Why, or why not?

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5. What are ways to get to know someone without the risks of uncommitted sex?

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6. What limits can dating couples set in advance to avoid a progression to sexual intercourse?

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7. We all know that an overly passive response to unwanted sexual attention is unlikely to be effective. An overly hostile response could lead to an equally hostile, bitter, or aggressive response. Assertive responses are strong and clear, yet respectful. Come up with three ways of dealing with unwanted sexual attention: passive (weak), hostile, and assertive in response to such lines as:

a) "What's wrong with you? Everyone's doing it."

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