

The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality

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Questions for Chapter 3

Sexual Intercourse: The Natural Word of Love

1. Referring to sexual intercourse, the author claims that “even people without revelation can come to know the meanings that God built into these physical acts through internal likeness and parallelism of structure.” What does intercourse most obviously symbolize?

The Meaning of the Body

2. Describe the characteristics of the male body and how its structure parallels the male psyche and male action in the world.
3. Describe the characteristics of the female body and how its structure parallels the female psyche and female action in the world.
4. Explain what the author means when he says that St. Paul’s commands are “fully in accord with our nature.” What occurs when a husband falls short of this command?
5. Describe the meaning of nakedness for both male and female. How does the experience of nakedness differ before and after the fall?

The Meaning of Intercourse

6. What does the pleasure of sexual union symbolize?
7. What limitations does the interpersonal aspect impose upon intercourse? Include physical and psychic aspects. How do these limitations serve to remind us of God?
8. Describe the natural symbolic meaning apparent (though much muted today) when intercourse “has its total consequences,” for the couple together and for the man and woman separately.

Natural Marriage

9. Describe what is needed for a young person entering marriage to make the full meaning of marriage his own.
10. On what grounds is even natural marriage (with some qualifications) indissoluble?
11. In what ways does the natural symbolism of sexual intercourse point toward monogamy? How is this different for the male and the female? Why is polygamy a highly defective form of marriage?
12. Describe the ways that intercourse is a symbol of marriage not only in its static sense, but of marriage as progress and as growth.