



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Popularity Without Principle

By Jere Frost

“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets.” (Luke 6:26, KJ)  
“You are in trouble when everyone says good things about you. That is what your own people said about those prophets who told lies.” (Luke 6:26, NIV)

People do not characteristically want unpleasant truths. They prefer comforting lies. The false prophet understands this, and like his political counterpart he seeks out that message he believes most people will approve. Politicians do it by polls. They actually pay people to take samples of what positions and platitudes people most want to hear, and then they go out and say those very things. It is shallow in substance but profound in effect. Preachers do the same thing, except that they do not need polls. Truth unsettles us. We may be comfortable and satisfied, and then truth rebukes us and “unsettles” us. A man of conscience will repent and change his life. But sin-loving, self-willed men will oppose that truth. However, they want to appear to love truth, so they seek out preachers who will preach what they like. As Paul said:

*“. . . After their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.”* (2 Tim. 4:3b)

It is a “self-feeding” process. There are plenty of preachers and politicians who want to say what people want to hear, and there are plenty of people who will reward the preachers and politicians who do it.

So the reality of it is that they are actually looking for each other! It is therefore no compliment to a preacher or politician to be particularly popular, and certainly such should never be the goal. Consider Jeremiah’s comment about his generation:

*“The prophets prophesy falsely and my people love to have it so . . .”* (Jeremiah 5:31) The empowerment and credibility of the false prophet (and politician) is in the fact of his popularity. “Look at his following!” they say. “That many people cannot be wrong!” “He must surely be doing something, or a lot of things, right!” So it goes! It is once again a “self-feeding” situation where preacher, politician and people make each other feel good, all kinds of sin, corruption and abuses notwithstanding.

But do not altogether blame the preacher or the politician. It could not happen if the people did not “love to have it so.” Or if it was not for the fact, as Jesus said, that “men love darkness rather than light.” (John 3:19)

Whatever else is true, popularity is more of a sign of desertion of duty than a rendering of right. Remember, Jesus said, “Woe unto you when all men speak well of you.”

## Why Wait Until Marriage?

Jeremy Sweets

Our society has peddled the sexual relationship to anyone willing to buy it. Commercials and advertisements are filled with lightly clad women. Pornography is freely offered in magazines, movies and the internet. More people are living together outside of marriage. Sex is common. In today’s progressive society, should sex be reserved for marriage? The answer is “yes” for several reasons.

### **It's the right thing to do.**

First and foremost, one should wait until marriage to engage in the sexual relationship because this is God's will. God has declared, "Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). This means that anything outside of marriage is dishonorable and contrary to the will of God. To dismiss God's instruction is to commit sin. Your soul is more valuable than all of the world's wealth, and it is not worth sacrificing for a moment of passing pleasure (Matt. 16:26; Heb 11:24-26).

### **It's the best thing to do.**

God's word does not give instructions meant to hamper us or hurt us. God is not trying to prevent his children from experiencing fun and pleasure. His instructions are intended for our good, and we need to trust our heavenly Father that he has our best interests in mind. God's wisdom can be seen in a couple of areas.

First, God provides for lasting satisfaction instead of passing, momentary pleasure. Sex in marriage enhances the relationship and brings a couple closer together as "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5-6). Sharing yourself with another person is a special gift that should be reserved for your mate. The act of fornication before marriage squanders that gift and denigrates the sexual relationship.

Second, God's plan for marriage prevents sorrow and heartache. Shame, guilt and conflicted feelings are products of sex outside of marriage. Having multiple partners creates a greater risk of acquiring sexually transmitted diseases. Unexpected pregnancies fail to provide the proper environment to raise children. The sinner must travel a difficult path, but God's word provides another way (Prov. 11:3; 13:6, 15).

### **It's the respectful thing to do.**

Having sex outside of marriage is harmful and disrespectful to all the parties involved. It is damaging to your partner in fornication. You are selfishly endangering their spiritual welfare in order to fulfill your lusts. It is damaging to your future spouse when you bring the baggage of your past relationships into marriage. It is damaging to your own body. Christians are to use their bodies in sanctification and service to God, not in fulfillment of lustful passions (Rom 13:12-14; 1 Thess. 4:3-8). The sin of fornication is also disrespectful to God. Joseph recognized that fornication would be a sin against God, and he fled from temptation rather than disrespect his Lord (Gen. 39:9). We need to display the same fortitude of Joseph by making a commitment to wait until marriage.



**A Pew Research Center Survey in 2019** found that U.S. Christians said that sex between unmarried adults in a committed relationship is acceptable:

Always 33%      Sometimes 24%      Rarely 10%      Never 32%

Looking at the data: 54% find it acceptable to have sex outside of marriage in a committed relationship.