Although there are numerous allusions to sexuality in the Bible, the Sacred Scriptures are not concerned with sexuality as such. There is no single word for this concept in either the biblical Hebrew or Greek language. The allusions to sexuality, however, are often quite frank. The social importance of reproduction constitutes a basic reason for early biblical teaching on sex-related matters.

At the very outset, however, two important caveats need to be made. The Bible should not be seen as giving absolute prescriptions with regard to sex. Specific culturally conditioned instructions cannot claim validity for all time. The teaching of the Bible must be seen against the background of its time, against the cultural and sociological conditions that characterize its era. The Bible is an historical document bearing the limitations of all historical records. ¹

Furthermore, one should not look to the Bible for a systematic presentation on sex. The Scriptures are not a textbook of ethics. The Bible contains a variety of statements on sex and some concrete demands that have the character of models. Only a few general lines or directions can be abstracted, and these must be interpreted historically, combined with the more adequate scientific knowledge of our times. Simply lining up a catalogue of texts does violence to biblical theology and accomplishes little of value.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

As a document of a thousand-year period in the history of a people and their religious evolution, the Old Testament contains a variety of theologies and attitudes regarding sexuality. The prominence of sex in the pagan cults, at least as viewed by the biblical authors, constrained Israel's prophets and religious leaders to take emphatic stands on any sexual practices that seemed related to cult. Especially after the exile, the preservation and propagation of the chosen people made sexual intercourse more than simply a private affair. Sons were viewed as a gift of God (Ps 127:3) and children as a blessing (Ps 128:4). Although eventually spiritualized within a cultic framework, the very word "blessing" seems to have referred originally to the power of fertility (Gen 1:22).²

GENESIS

The opening chapters of Genesis present two quite different traditions, each with its own theology, anthropology, and attitude toward sex. However, both the older Yahwist tradition (dated circa 950 B.C.) and the later Priestly tradition (dated circa 550 B.C.) take a unitary view of the human race. In contrast to the mythologies of other ancient cultures, the Old Testament makes no suggestion that sexual duality results from some primeval fall. Both creation accounts
assure us that from the very beginning humanity consisted of male and female.

Sexuality is described as willed by God, created as something good, about which human beings need not be embarrassed or ashamed in any way. The creation accounts in Genesis show no trace of contempt for the human sexual nature, as if it pertained somehow to a lower order of nature, inferior to the spiritual or intellectual. Sex is but one aspect of human life, neither despised nor dominant, because never viewed in isolation. Sex is seen in a broader context, together with all the other aspects of human life.

In this regard, the older Yahwist tradition sets the sexual nature of men and women within the framework of our nature as social and relational beings. The Yahwist associates sexuality with the human problem of loneliness. "It is not good that man is alone; I will make him a helper like himself" (Gen 2:18). Solitude is not good. To be solitary constitutes a state of "helplessness," which can be overcome only by companionship. The first purpose of sex, as described by the Yahwist, is mutuality, our belonging to one another. When a man clings to his wife and the two become one flesh (Gen 2:24), their sexual relations are expressive of a union deeper than physical contiguity. For the Yahwist, sexuality was a gift from God, drawing people from loneliness to relationship. Some four hundred years later, the Priestly tradition came to relate sexuality with procreation, regarding the power to propagate as the direct result of God's blessing. The context for the blessing and the command to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28) is the responsibility incumbent upon mankind for stewardship of the earth. Sharing in God's creative activity and dominion over life, men and women are called likewise to share in his providence.

A particularly striking feature of the Old Testament is its refusal to divinize sex. Although God was depicted in human form (Ezek 1:23), the thought of sexuality in God was alien to Israel. Yahweh stood beyond the polarity of sex. Sexual duality belonged to the sphere of creatures, not of the Creator. This view of creation is most "astonishing," when one considers Israel's religious environment. Her Canaanite neighbors regarded the copulation and procreation of their gods mythically as a pattern for the very process of creation. Possibly for this reason, temple personnel such as the kedushim and kedushoth (usually translated as temple prostitutes, male and female) were prohibited in the cult of Yahweh (Dt 23:18-19); to this day, though, their precise function has been difficult to determine.

**CULTIC PURITY**

As in other religions of antiquity, the experience of the awesome holiness of God led Israel to adopt the concepts of pure and impure, clean and unclean. Along with birth and death, sexual discharges were seen as linked with divine power. Unless strictly regulated, they could render a person unclean and hence unfit to participate in the ritual worship of God (Am 2:7; Hos 4:14; Jer 2:20ff). Since uncleanness was an external ritual fault, not a moral failing in our sense, the means of regaining purity consisted of washings and other rituals (Lev 11-15).

Demands for cultic purity in the Old Testament can be explained at least in part by the awe that Israel shared with the ancient world in regard to birth, death, and sexual discharges. In these occurrences, ancient peoples saw themselves as coming into contact with uncanny powers
beyond human control. Possessed by these forces, a person could not enter into communion with God. The awe of blood (Lev 15:19-24) helps to explain the taboo against having intercourse with a woman during her menstrual period (Lev 15:24; 18:19; 20:18). Likewise, the awe manifested toward the male seed can shed some light on the Old Testament prohibition against homosexual activity between men (Lev 18:22; 20:13), with no reference to similar behavior between women.

Another taboo of the Old Testament was the exposure of the sex organs. Nakedness was shameful and abhorrent to many ancient Semitic groups except under strictly defined circumstances; it was a sign of humiliation and degradation (Gen 9:21-23; 2 Sam 6:20; 10:4). War captives were subjected to it (Is 20:2-4), and a hated nation was described as a virgin whose nakedness will be displayed to all (Is 47:3). The Hebrews also had a horror of deformed sex organs (Dt 23:2), and forbade a priest to function if he was maimed (Lev 21:20).

Along with the prohibitions against sowing a vineyard with two different kinds of seed, plowing a field with two different kinds of work animals, and wearing cloth made of two different kinds of thread, women were forbidden to wear men's clothes and men were forbidden to wear women's clothes (Dt 22:5-11). The taboos against incest (Lev 18:6-16; Dt 27:23) extended even to the excommunication of any offspring from an incestuous union (Dt 23:3). Sexual uncleanness was viewed as polluting not only the offenders but even the land (Lev 18:25, 28; 19:29; Num 5:3; Dt 24:4; Jer 3:2, 9). The motivation of the biblical legislators probably did not involve or imply a morality of sexuality in itself. Rather, their outlook should be interpreted in the context of the ancient view of divine order, closely associated with the Egyptian notion of ma'at (harmony) or even possibly with the Hebrew notion of shalom (wholeness).

PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

Together with the demand for cultic purity, Old Testament attitudes toward sex were influenced by the patriarchal form of marriage and the family. Though women were included in some genealogies (Gen 4), descent was basically reckoned from the father's line (Gen 5). As head of the household, the father usually arranged the plans for marriage on behalf of his son, even to the point of selecting his wife. The role of the bride was that of a passive participant; in return for the man's payment of a bride price (mohar), the woman's father gave her away to become the man's wife (Gen 24:4; 29:23, 28; 34:8). The contracting parties were not the bride and groom but the families of the spouses, specifically the fathers; if the bride's father was dead, her brothers acted in his stead.

As a consequence of Israel's patriarchal society, women were kept in an inferior legal and social position. A blunt indication of woman's status can be found in the Exodus version of the decalogue, which lists a man's wife together with his property (Ex 20:17). Jeremiah, too, classified a man's wife with his chattel (Jer 6:12). The very word for "husband" in Hebrew, baal, also means "owner of property." The verb "to marry" also means "to possess." Terms such as "give in marriage" (Gen 29:28; 34:8; Jos 15:16-17) and "take a wife" (Gen 4:19; 6:2; 11:29) indicate that a girl was an object whose fate was determined first by her father and then by her husband. Further evidence of the subordination of women to men in the Old Testament can be found in the legislation permitting a man to revoke a vow made to God by his wife, if he saw fit to do so (Num 30:10-14).
On the other hand, one of the most significant, and difficult, Old Testament passages dealing with the position of women is Gen 2-3, in which the original condition of woman seems to be described as one of relative equality: a man leaves his father and mother to live with his wife, a "helper" like himself.

More than one view of woman is expressed by the authors of Scripture. Many important biblical figures were women such as the mother of Lemuel (Prov 31), Miriam the Prophet (Ex 15:21), and Deborah the Judge (Jgs 5). In Wisdom literature, women are variously praised for their many "homely" virtues (Prov 18:22; 19:14; Sir 26:1-4) or castigated for their quarrelsomeness, seductiveness, and promiscuity (Sir 25:16ff; 9:3-20; 26:6-12). It is to Sirach, a true misogynist, that we owe the preservation of the midrash on Gen 3: "Sin began with a woman, and thanks to her we all must die" (Sir 25:23); this interpretation was to become much a part of the New Testament tradition (Rom 5:12; I Cor 15:22; I Tim 2:14).

The book of Deuteronomy offers a surprisingly positive approach to women, with important insights into the customs of the day. The passage in Dt 5:21, for example, through a change in the wording of the Decalogue, removes the wife from the list of property and affirms her nature as person rather than chattel. While most Pentateuchal and even many Deuteronomic laws dealing with women were in fact designed to protect the rights of the husband or father rather than those of the woman (e.g. Dt. 22:29), Deuteronomy contains laws designed to some extent in her interest. Dt. 21:15-17 provides for the inheritance rights of an unloved woman's child. Dt. 22:13-19 protects the wife's honor from slander. Dt. 24:5, in granting a draft exemption to a newlywed, shows consideration for a young wife's feelings as well as for the husband's need for an heir. Dt. 21:10-14 is almost unparalleled in the ancient world in the protection afforded the woman taken captive. A comparison of Ex 22:15-17 with Dt 22:22-29 should make this point even more clear. Deuteronomy greatly expanded the terse code of Exodus, by distinguishing the circumstances of rape or seduction and by viewing the acts as a violation of the woman's honor, and not merely a threat to the father's economic interest, as in Exodus.

Deuteronomy thus seemed to raise the legal status of women, both by the changes it made in individual laws and, specifically, by making women legal members of the covenant community. Deuteronomy consistently included women in its listing of participants in covenant ceremonies, often in places where other biblical traditions just as conspicuously left them out of the narrative (Dt 29:10, 17; 31:12; 12:12, 18; 16:11, 14). While the male-dominated customs of the people and much of the legislation remained intact despite the efforts of Deuteronomy, the radical implications of the Deuteronomic approach must be seen as an integral part of the whole biblical tradition.

Fundamental to the patriarchal society of the Old Testament and the generally inferior position of women was the functional character assigned to marriage. The social purpose of marriage in Israel, as in other ancient societies, was not so much the legitimation or regulation of sexual intercourse as the procreation of children. Romantic, exclusive love between man and wife, of course, is often portrayed, even in the midst of the polygamous setting of the Genesis narratives (e.g., Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Rachel). And those few later passages that give us a glimpse into the intimacy of family life invariably show the wife as loved, listened to, and treated as a person of responsibility, e.g., Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther, Judith, I Sam 1, 2 Kgs 4, and the
Yet the need to bear children, especially male heirs, was so crucial an aspect of the institution of marriage that a barren wife would not hesitate to provide her husband with a concubine to produce an heir in her stead (Gen 30:1-13). By Davidic times, monogamy became the general practice, though it is not clear whether this development was based on moral or merely economic grounds. Kings, on the other hand, regularly practiced polygamy and concubinage, mainly for reasons of diplomacy (2 Sam 5:13-16; I Kgs 11:1-3). It should be noted that the rebuke of this practice in Dt 17:17 is not on grounds of sexual misbehavior, but rather for fear that polytheism may be introduced by the "foreign" wives.

The prevailing double sexual standard in ancient Israel quite possibly resulted from the social functions of marriage: the bearing of children and the maintenance of the household. In Israel's agricultural society, a large family meant a large working force to tend the fields. In a society without a clear concept of an afterlife, sons were a guarantee that a man's name would be remembered. Israelite society thus permitted men great latitude in sexual relations, as long as they respected the rights of their countrymen to a clear line of inheritance. Women, however, were bound to unconditional fidelity. They were not permitted extramarital sex relations, lest they endanger the legitimacy of their husbands' progeny. Virginity in women, but not in men, was considered a prime quality in the choice of a partner, and the marriage fee was fixed accordingly, with laws to enforce compliance. Polygamy, concubinage, and extramarital intercourse with slaves and prostitutes were legally countenanced for the male.

Adultery was prohibited to Israelite men (Ex 20:14.17; Dt 5:18, 21) but only when the wife or betrothed of a fellow Israelite was involved (Dt 22:22; Ezek 16:40). No penalty was attached to having intercourse with a Gentile woman. According to Ex 22:15-16, the man who had intercourse with an unbetrothed Israelite virgin was required to pay the standard marriage price to the father and to marry the woman unless her father objected. Only later, in Deuteronomy, was the injury considered as having been done against the woman as well; the violator was required to marry her (whatever the father's wishes), and could never divorce her (Dt 22:28-9).

Clearly, the motivation behind Old Testament legislation had nothing to do with sexuality in itself. It stemmed rather from social and economic considerations and in some cases from respect for the personhood of women. A reflection of this is to be seen in the flexibility of Jewish practice in both postbiblical and biblical times. Certain communities of Jews in Asia and Africa countenanced polygamy from its Old Testament origins to our own time; in the meantime, Jews settling in Europe followed the laws prevailing in that area and maintained monogamy. While the social position of women, even in the period of the Deuteronomic reform, was in many ways inferior to that enjoyed by women in Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultures, the Elephantine colony of Jews in Egypt accorded the Jewish wife the same civil rights as enjoyed by her Egyptian sisters. She was able to obtain a divorce on her own action, to own property, to be a party to contracts, to inherit in her own name, and to pay taxes. Just how much the Old Testament took polygamy for granted may be seen from Ezechiel's parable, in which he describes God as the husband of two wives, Jerusalem and Samaria (Ezek 23).

The practice of levirate marriage in the Old Testament can also be explained largely by
economics and the desire for progeny. Levirate marriage (levir = husband's brother) required that if a man died without leaving a male heir, his brother was bound to marry the widow and raise up a son, who would bear the dead man's name and his right to the family inheritance (Dt 25:5-10). The exact extent to which levirate marriage was practiced is unknown, but the purpose of the law is clear enough: to preserve the homogeneity of the family group and the name of its male members, as well as to safeguard the family estate and to ensure the welfare of the widow (Gen 38; Ru 4; Josephus). Levirate marriage and the provision of an heir for the deceased Israelite were meant to prevent dispute and litigation, which would be more likely to occur if a widow were to marry outside the family.11

Against this background, one can understand the proper significance of the story of the punishment of Onan, formerly proposed as a divine prohibition against masturbation, birth control, and any "wasting" of the male seed. The sin of Onan, for which his premature death was seen as God's punishment, was not simply the fact that he "wasted his seed on the ground" (Gen 38:9). Neither was he punished simply because he refused to fulfill his levirate obligation to father an heir for his dead brother. The punishment for refusing to perform the obligation was to be degraded and insulted ceremonially (Dt 25:7-10). The issue, however, was ostensibly one of justice. By feigning to perform his levirate obligation, while actually preventing the possible conception of a male heir, Onan was trying to steal his dead brother's inheritance.12

FIDELITY AND PERSONHOOD

The Old Testament paid its highest tribute to marriage when it presented the union of husband and wife as a symbol of the covenantal union and love between Yahweh and Israel. First appearing in Hos 2, the theme was taken up and developed by later prophets. At times the image was used to emphasize the dominion of God and the faithlessness of Israel (Ezek 16:23). In the light of the Covenant, Israel's infidelity was logically equated with adultery (Is 1:21) or with playing the harlot (Jer 3:6). In other passages, the symbolism is that of God's patient and enduring love (Hos 2; Is 54:4ff; 62:4ff; Jer 2:2), in testimony to the fact that love and tenderness were also integral to the Old Testament understanding of marriage and sexuality. Further evidence of this view is offered by the Canticle of Canticles. Although later interpreted as descriptive of the love between Yahweh and Israel, the Canticle is a collection of secular lyrics, affirming and even celebrating the goodness and joy of sexual love.

Extending over a period of some one thousand years, the Old Testament represents not only a plurality of attitudes toward sexuality but also a distinct development, particularly with regard to the dignity of the person. Since in the minds of the biblical authors secular prostitution was not easily distinguishable from the cultic practices associated with it, the prophets came to combat both with similar vigor (Jer 3:2). As a result, the original prohibition of sacred intercourse (Dt 23:18ff)13 was interpreted in the Greek Septuagint translation as a general proscription of all prostitution among the chosen people. Wisdom literature equated secular prostitution with practices of ritual intercourse, and the wise men of Proverbs directed their longest and most dire warnings against prostitutes (Prov 6:23-35; 7:1-27; 9:13-18). It is not altogether clear that these warnings were morally based. In fact, as one commentator has observed, "It is remarkable that the entire Old Testament never manages a clear and unambiguous moral condemnation of prostitution."14
But neither does the Old Testament reach the moral neutrality of some ancient societies in which prostitutes were regarded as performing a useful and acceptable service. On the contrary, the Old Testament encouraged fidelity, urging the remembrance of the wife of one's youth and the joy that was shared (Prov 5:15-20). The state described in Genesis, in which a wife was meant to be a helper (Gen 2:18), became in Tobit an ideal to be striven for (Tob 8:1-10); a couple was to approach marriage not in lust but in a spirit of prayer. The mutual love of husband and wife was praised as pleasing to the Lord (Sir 25:1). And Malachi, underlining the personal meaning of marriage, warned against breaking faith with the wife of one's youth, for she is a "companion" and "wife by covenant" (Mal 2: 14).

An underlying theme in the Old Testament, significant for the Christian attitude toward sex, is the notion of the "law of the heart" (Dt 6:4-6). Under the impact of the prophets, cultic notions of purity were interiorized and transformed into profound moral concepts. Without lessening the need to observe all the laws of the Torah, ritual precepts became subordinated to moral requirements (Ps 15:2-5; 18:21-27; 24:4; Job 17:9; Prov 15:26). Jesus entered into and continued this prophetic tradition with his call to purity of heart (Mt 5:8; 23:25-26).

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament, like the Old, does not attempt to provide a complete systematic ethics on sexual conduct. The sayings of Jesus and the writings of the New Testament Church on sexuality are all occasional, conditioned by particular questions arising from particular circumstances. Consequently, St. Paul's moral judgments or statements on sexuality cannot simply be taken out of context and applied to the situations of the present time. They represent the application of the gospel to the circumstances of the first century Christian community within the necessarily limited vision of that time. The lasting value of his directives is paradigmatic. Like the apostolic Church, the Church of today needs to apply the same gospel with its same values to very different circumstances, employing the broader vision and more accurate scientific information that two thousand years have since come to offer us.

It is also important to recognize the influence that natural philosophical ethics had on the New Testament. Just as Greek philosophy had an impact upon Hellenistic Judaism, so the ethics of the Stoics affected the thinking of St. Paul. The morality of the New Testament cannot simply be identified with that of the Old Testament. Cultural and social circumstances and religious viewpoints had changed. The moral directives of the New Testament have distinctive traits. There are values not found in the Old Testament, new insights derived principally from a new horizon, and a new motivation for moral activity. In interpreting the New Testament, therefore, we need to distinguish between what is original and what is derived, between declarations of essential importance and those of a peripheral quality. There is considerable difference between the letter of a law and the intent of the law, between the means used to protect a value in a moral decision and the moral value itself.

The theology of the New Testament regarding human sexuality, like that of the Old, is historically conditioned. The fundamental presupposition for all ethical statements in the New Testament, including sexual ethics, is that the Church is the community of the last days. Jesus preached that the Kingdom of God is at hand (Mk 1:15). St. Paul was convinced that "this world
as we see it is passing away" (1 Cor 7:31).

Any exegesis of the New Testament, therefore, must be historical and critical. The total thrust of the New Testament teaching must be taken into consideration, with special attention given to the values and intentions that lie behind its ethical injunctions. Jesus himself practiced this kind of exegesis with respect to the question of divorce (Mt 5:31-32). He contradicted an explicit divine statute (Dt 11:1-4; 30:16) on the basis of the intent of the law and the fundamental values that it was meant to protect (Gen 1:27; 2:24).

**JESUS**

The gospels witness not only to the Jesus of history but also to the post-Easter Church's faith in him as the Risen Christ. They contain not only factual information about him but also theological interpretation of his significance. Critical New Testament scholarship has come to recognize that it cannot produce a biography of Jesus or even in many instances guarantee his exact words. We do not have an in-depth portrait of him. But critical biblical scholarship is able to discern the outstanding features that distinguished Jesus most sharply from his contemporaries. Among these distinctive features of Jesus' teaching and attitudes, several have particular significance for a Christian ethics regarding sexuality.

As we know him from critical historical examination of the gospels, Jesus vigorously opposed the reduction of Jewish law to mere externals. He interiorized the law. Morality for him was more than the external observance of legal prescriptions (Mt 5:8). It is not by external actions that a person is rendered unclean, but by what comes out of the heart (Mt 15:120). Not only the action but adulterous intention is sinful (Mt 5:27-28). In taking this stance, Jesus stood within the tradition of the Pharisees, with whom the New Testament shows him in constant contact.

Like the prophets and some of the greatest Pharisees, such as Rabbi Hillel and later Rabbi Akiba, Jesus consistently resists the temptation to lose sight of the spirit of the Law amid technicalities and distinctions. For Jesus the intent of the Law was the welfare of people. Jesus subordinated the letter of the Law to human needs: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mk 2:27). This dictum was pronounced by Jesus in a passage in which he upheld the more lenient ruling of Hillel against the stricter interpretation of Shammai on the permissiveness of plucking and eating corn on the Sabbath (Shabbat 7, 2; 128ab).5 Jesus stood for humanizing the law. For him, it is precisely our joy, our healing and wholeness (salvation), the happiness here and hereafter of people that constitutes the will of God (Jn 15:11). Such were the "weightier matters" of the Law on which he insisted (Mt 23:23).

Jesus, the "man for others" (Bonhoeffer), struggled in defense of the defenseless. He championed the cause of the oppressed and despised (Mk 2:15; 3:1-11; 8:2; 10:13-16; Jn 8:1-11). It is in this context that his affirmative attitude toward women can best be understood.16 Jesus openly associated with women (Lk 8:2ff), took compassion on them (Mk 1:29-31; 5:21-43; 7:24-30; Lk 7:17; 13:10-17), spoke of them in his parables (Mt 13:33; Lk 15:8ff; 18:1ff), and numbered them among his intimate friends (Lk 10:38-42; Jn 11). He showed little trace of the common ancient (and modern) assumption that women are inferior. While there is no single statement of Jesus that can be taken as a definite program in this respect, his behavior spoke louder than any words.
Jesus' egalitarian attitude toward women and concern for the oppressed explain his revolutionary stand on divorce (Mk 10:2-12; Mt 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Lk 16:18), one of his most distinctive moral teachings and one of the surest we can ascribe to him. If a man found adequate cause—"something indecent"—the Mosaic Law permitted him to dismiss his wife with a bill of divorce (Dt 24:1). The rabbis argued over what exactly constituted adequate cause for divorce.17 Jesus interpreted the Law in terms of its purpose, which, indirectly at least, was to circumscribe the arbitrariness of a husband and protect his wife; the law prevented a husband from divorcing his wife on caprice, by demanding grounds and orderliness. Jesus' prohibition of divorce was a means of protecting women from exploitation. He forbade treating women as chattel, disposing of them at will and leaving them without financial support. He regarded them instead, as partners in marriage (Mk 10:2ff). As recognized earlier by the prophet Malachi (Mal 2:13-14, 16) and by some rabbis,18 one value which the Law was meant to protect was marital fidelity. Thus Jesus required obedience to the spirit and intent of the Law.19

Jesus did not proclaim a new sexual ethic as such; rather, he centered attention on the best thinking of his day by placing men and women on the same level not merely in theory but also in real life. The golden rule applied to all, not only to men (Mt 7:12). A Talmudic saying likewise posited an equality of male and female before God:

The compassion of God is not as the compassion of men. The compassion of men extends to men more than to women, but not thus is the compassion of God. His compassion extends equally to all (Sifre, Nm, Pinehas, 133).

This divine compassion characterized Jesus' whole ministry. For both Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament, there was to be no distinction between male and female before God (Gal 3:28; Seder Eliyahu Rabbah IX, XIV). Jesus was thus able to break through the androcentric double standard of ancient society.

Taking the insights of Deuteronomy to their logical conclusion, Jesus made the same requirements of both sexes. He placed men and women equally under the same double law of love (Mk 12:30-31, taken by Jesus from Dt 6:4-9 and Lev 19:18). Jesus would have agreed with, and in fact lived out, the principle underlying the Talmudic dictum, which praises the man who "loves his wife as himself, and honors her more than himself' (Yeb 63a; San 76b). Had Judaism and Christianity ever fully implemented such a notion, the ancient world would have been revolutionized from within.

The gospels present Jesus as an ethical model, and the Christian life as one of following Jesus (Mk 8:34; 10:21; Jn 13:15), especially in his unselfish love (Jn 13:34), service (Mk 10:44-45; Jn 13:1-15), and forgiveness (Mt 6:12; Lk 17:3-4). The personalism of Jesus and the primacy that he gave to the law of love (Mk 12:28-34) have profound implications for sexual ethics (Lk 7:36-50).

Jesus' teaching on marriage is limited for the most part to his affirmation of fidelity in prohibiting divorce. The gospels build on this in describing Jesus and his mission with the image of a wedding feast. In the tradition of the rabbis who were accustomed to use the wedding feast as a sign of messianic fulfillment, Jesus is compared to a bridegroom (Mt 25:1-13; Mk 2:19), and the kingdom of God to a marriage banquet (Mt 22:1-14). In viewing the union of man and woman as
a messianic symbol, the gospels demonstrate an affirmation of marriage and of the joy that accompanies it. The same attitude can be seen in the story of Jesus at the wedding feast in Cana (Jn 2: 1-12).

On the other hand, the New Testament shows Jesus as unmarried and presenting as an ideal to be emulated those who have "made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom" (Mt 19:12). There is a long-standing tradition in the Church of interpreting these words in Matthew as an invitation to consecrated virginity. The context for the saying, however, is Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce. A good case can be made for interpreting this dictum on celibacy for the kingdom not as an insert, but as a continuation of the preceding teaching on divorce, referring to those who have separated from their wives because of adultery. 20 Jesus' call, in this case, is not to consecrated virginity but to marital fidelity. If this interpretation is correct, the reason for the amazement of Jesus' hearers becomes clear: the ideal of loyalty and dedication to one marriage partner should withstand even infidelity and separation. This interpretation fits into the tendency in Matthew to omit anything like a call to virginity. 21

Unlike Matthew or Mark, Luke speaks explicitly about renouncing marriage. To the list of home, brothers, sisters, and parents, who are to be renounced for the sake of the gospel (Mt 10:37; 19:29; Mk 10:29), Luke adds the wife (Lk 18:29). In doing so, the evangelist cannot be accused of falsifying the mind of Jesus. Even though Jesus' immediate disciples were married (Mk 1:29-31; I Cor 9:5), marriage could only be seen as this-worldly (Mt 24:37-39). With the advent of the kingdom, a new age was in the offing. Marriage was seen as only a temporary condition of a world that was passing away (Mk 12:25).

ST. PAUL

Following the events of Jesus' death and resurrection, the disciples became the Church. The messenger became the message, and the preaching about the kingdom became a preaching about the Christ. Jesus' followers regarded Easter as the divine affirmation of his gospel, but only as a beginning (I Cor 15:20); the Church looked forward to a final consummation with Christ's second coming, this time in glory. In its eager anticipation the New Testament Church expected the consummation to come quickly (I Thes 5; 2 Thes 2). The time was short (I Cor 7:29ff).

It is important to keep in mind this expectation of Christ's imminent return in order to understand the teaching of St. Paul on sexuality. St. Paul has been unfairly accused of a Hellenistic antipathy toward the body and its sexuality. But regarding sex St. Paul was very much a Jew of his day: sex is a fact of creation, and hence it is good (I Cor 7:5). It was his conviction that this world was passing away (I Cor 7:31); as a result, St. Paul encouraged the unmarried to prepare for Christ's impending return without the encumbrances of marriage (I Cor 7:26-27).

Another factor to be kept in mind in interpreting St. Paul is the moral climate that constituted the background of his ministry and the context of his epistles. The Greeks of the ancient world distinguished between love and sexual pleasure. Theirs was a depersonalized and depersonalizing attitude toward sexuality, summarized succinctly in a citation out of Attic Greece:

We have prostitutes for our pleasure, concubines for everyday needs, and wives to raise our
Prostitution was rampant at the time of St. Paul. Men, married and unmarried, could have sexual intercourse with slaves and prostitutes without qualm or scandal. The degeneracy of the Hellenistic-Roman world explains the many New Testament allusions to prostitution and warnings against it (Rom 1:24; Gal 5:19ff; Eph 5:3, 5; Col 3:5; 1 Thes 4:3ff) particularly in St. Paul's epistles to the church at Corinth (1 Cor 5:9-12; 6:9; 6:15-20; 2 Cor 12:21). Even to the pagans of the time, the harbor city of Corinth was notorious for vice. Its temple to Aphrodite was serviced by a thousand prostitutes, and a common Greek name for a prostitute was a "Corinthian girl."

The Greek word for prostitution (porneia), derived from a verb meaning "to sell," was a term used especially of slaves; Greek prostitutes were usually purchased slaves. Although its original meaning was limited, the term broadened gradually and came to be identified with extramarital relations, adultery, sodomy, unlawful marriage, and even sexual intercourse in general without further precision. At times in the New Testament (Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; 1 Cor 5:1ff), the word is used to prohibit marriage within the degrees of kinship forbidden by the Old Testament (Lev 18:6-18). Elsewhere (1 Cor 6:9; Gal 5:19; Eph 5:5; Col 3:5; Heb 13:4; Apoc 2:14), the condemnation referred to intercourse with prostitutes. In each of these instances, however, the Greek porneia was translated into the Latin vulgate as fornication, a translation which led many to interpret the New Testament condemnation of prostitution as including all forms of premarital sexual intercourse. Only in two instances (1 Cor 6:9; Heb 13:4) does the New Testament distinguish prostitution from adultery. The two concepts had become closely identified already in Old Testament wisdom literature (Prov 2:16ff; 6:26ff). In Malachi, God demanded that husbands be faithful to their wives (Mal 2:14). And Jesus wiped away the Old Testament double standard altogether: infidelity is adultery for husbands as well as for wives (Mk 10:10-12). But not only extramarital intercourse constitutes adultery. Fidelity for Jesus is a value to be maintained in attitude as well as in action, a matter of the heart (Mt 5:28).

Jesus interiorized the Law, and his interiorization of fidelity finds a parallel in St. Paul's use of the concept "passion," "lust," or "desire," expressed in the word epithumia. Originally the word denoted the direct impulse toward food, sexual satisfaction, or simply desire in general. This usage is frequently seen in New Testament references to hunger (Lk 15:16), longing (Lk 22:15), and even a desire for God's word and revelation (Mt 13:17). Under Stoic influence, however, passion and desire took on pejorative connotations. Indifference, aloofness from the sensual world, apatheia, became the virtues of the true philosopher. The wise man was counseled to struggle against his passions, which were regarded as the source of sin.23

The Old Testament was not unaware of the need for discipline of the senses (2 Sam 11:2; Job 31:1); after the exile, an emphasis on bodily discipline was conjoined in Hellenistic Judaism with Stoic moralism (4 Mac; Philo). The merger finds expression in St. Paul, who, like the Church after him, saw the Stoics as allies against libertinism. The alliance was a fateful one for Christian ethics, particularly in its evaluation of pleasure and the emotions. In the tradition of the Stoics, St. Paul warned against the passion of desire (1 Thes 4:5) and summed up the tenth commandment with a simple "You shall not covet" (Rom 7:7; 13:9). Unlike the Stoics, however, St. Paul saw obedience to the will of God, not reason, as the antithesis of epithumia. Often
translated in the Latin as concupiscencia, passion was shown as arising from sin (Rom 1:24) and leading to sin (Rom 7:7ff). Although paralleled with the desires of the will (Eph 2:3), passion was related to pleasure (Tit 3:3): passion is seeking of pleasure, and pleasure is the satisfaction of passion. The Stoic aversion toward both has influenced Christian ethical thinking from the time of St. Paul to our own.

In St. Paul's mind, sensual license (aselgeia) and impurity or uncleanness (akatharsia) were associated with prostitution (Gal 5:19; 2 Cor 12:21) and passion (1 Thes 4:5, 7). The opposite of Christian holiness (Rom 6:19; 2 Cor 12:21; 1 Thes 4:7), aselgeia and akatharsia were listed among the works that prevent entrance into the kingdom of God (Gal 5:19; 21). But impurity is not limited to the sexual domain; it can pertain to motivation as well (1 Thes 2:3). Although the concept was derived from the Old Testament cultic views of clean and unclean, the New Testament continued the tradition of the prophets, in which purity pertains to interior morality. Impurity for St. Paul denoted the condition of unredeemed man, whose commitment is to his own desires instead of to God (Rom 1:24; Eph 4:19).

Likewise open to misunderstanding, are St. Paul's warnings against inclinations of the flesh (Rom 8:6) and the works of the flesh (Gal 5:19). The word "flesh" (sarx) meant something quite different to St. Paul than it does to us. The Old Testament used the term to designate all that is temporal and passing, all that is weak, corruptible, and therefore mortal. Standing in the Old Testament tradition, St. Paul included among the sins of the flesh not only immorality (porneia), impurity (akatharsia), and sensual license (aselgeia), but also jealousy, anger, and even an exaggerated zeal for the Mosaic Law (Gal 5:19; 3:3). Similarly, among those who will not enter into the kingdom of God, he listed not only those who engaged in prostitution, adultery, and homosexual behavior, but also the intemperate and greedy (1 Cor 6:9-10).

The biblical notion of flesh embraces the total human person with all his physical and moral corruptibility. St. Paul's references to the flesh are by no means synonymous with the body or its materiality, as if contrasted to the soul, the spiritual component of human nature. This reading of Platonic dualism into the biblical ideas of spirit and flesh has led in the past to a false ascetical ideal, in which the body was despised and spirituality or holiness were identified with a rejection of physical pleasure, including the pleasure of sex.

The most extensive teaching on sexuality in St. Paul, and in the entire New Testament is found in 1 Cor 7, dealing with problems of marriage and celibacy. The whole chapter is dominated by St. Paul's expectation of Christ's imminent return in glory. Another possible influence on Paul's views may have been the new ascetical movements at Corinth, which required complete sexual abstinence even for the married (7:1). In the light of Christ's impending return, Paul prized celibacy above marriage (7:7; 34:38, 40); the time was short (7:29), and he would have the Corinthian Christians free from care (7:32). Paul recognized, however, that not everyone had the gift of celibacy (7:7), and, for those who did not, marriage was preferable to "being aflame with passion" (7:9). Paul rejected the contention of those zealous ascetics who held that marriage is a sin and that the married should abstain altogether from sexual relations (7:2-3). If a husband and wife mutually agree to abstain from sexual intercourse for the sake of prayer, it should be only for a time (7:5). Recognizing that prolonged continence can lead to temptation, Paul encouraged regular intercourse within marriage.
In the same passage Paul acknowledged Jesus' prohibition of divorce. Fidelity is a command of the Lord (7:10-11). In the light of that command, Paul counseled Corinthian Christians to remain together with their spouses, even if they were non-Christian. There were certain other values, however, which Paul considered of equal importance with marital fidelity. "If a peaceful life together is not possible, then the Christian spouse is no longer bound" (7:12-16); the marriage may be dissolved Paul did not say whether, in such a case, remarriage was to be regarded as permissible; he took it for granted.25

After encouraging maintenance of the status quo in socio-economic as well as marital matters (7:17-24), St. Paul gave his reasons for preferring celibacy over marriage. Both Jewish and Christian apocalypses (Mk 13:5ff; Apoc 6:8-9) invariably described the tribulation that would precede the beginning of the messianic age. This "impending distress" (7:26) led Paul to counsel detachment, for the world, as they knew it, was passing away (7:27-31). In such a state of affairs, Paul considered marriage as a distraction from service to the Lord (7:32-35). Yet, despite his personal preferences, he acknowledged the lawfulness and goodness of marriage (7:36-38). Widows likewise could remarry if they wished to do so (7:39-40). St. Paul refused to lay down restraints curtailing Christian liberty (7:35). The champion of the freedom of the sons of God (Gal 4) refused to make his opinions into ordinances. Everyone had his own gift from God (7:7), and God's gifts cannot be legislated.

Even after the time of St. Paul and not only in Corinth, the New Testament Church was constrained to uphold the honorableness of marriage against an exaggerated asceticism (Heb 13:4). John the Baptist was an ascetic, and Jesus spoke of him with high regard (Mt 11:7-14). But Jesus was not noted for strenuous asceticism himself (Mt 11:19). His Jewish faith emphasized the goodness of creation (Gen 1:31). In going out to the Gentiles, however, the early Church had to confront ascetic currents, probably Gnostic in origin (Col 2:8, 16, 20-23). The deutero-pauline letters indicate that there were Christians who required abstinence from certain foods and prohibited marriage (I Tim 4:3). The New Testament Church resisted these demands in the name of the goodness of creation (I Tim 4:4; cf also 2:15; 5:14); but the trend continued. St. Irenaeus in the 2nd century spoke of false teachers who maintained that "marriage and procreation are spawn of the devil" (Adv. haer., 1, 23, 2).

Against those who would disparage marriage and sexuality, the epistle to the Ephesians exalted married life into a symbol of the union of Christ and the Church (Eph 5:22-33). That a man and his wife become one is a great "mystery," not in the sense of an enigma, but as a revelation of profound significance. The unity pronounced by God in the beginning between a husband and wife was taken as prophetic of the unity between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:32; cf also 2 Cor 11:2). This comparison enjoined upon every Christian couple the task of witnessing by their mutual love and respect the abiding presence of Christ in the Church. "If celibacy is the sign of the Church's expectation of her Lord, then one can and must say of marriage that it is the sign already present of the already realized union of Christ and the Church."26

Besides unity and love, however, the comparison of marriage to the relationship of Christ and the Church also speaks to another aspect of sexuality: the subordinate position of women. As Christ is the head of the Church, a husband is "head" of his wife; wives are to be "subject" to their husbands as to the Lord (Eph 5:21ff; Col 3:18; I Pet 3:1-6).
There is evident in the early Church a growing divergence between theory and practice in the matter of woman's status. The New Testament Church accepted Jesus' revolutionary attitude toward women in theory. Women were "co-heirs" of the grace of life (I Pet 3:7). St. Paul's affirmation that there is no difference between male and female is the clearest statement of the dignity of women in the entire New Testament (Gal 3:28). Women took an active role in the life of the New Testament Church, rendering practical assistance (Acts 9:36ff; 16:15), instruction (Acts 18:26), and diaconal leadership (Rom 16:1ff). Social custom, however, militated against the original feminist impulse in Christianity, and Jesus' revolutionary personalism toward women was gradually submerged. Silence and submission came to be imposed on women (I Cor 14:34; I Tim 2:11ff). Marriage in the first century was too patriarchal to allow for any other outcome. With the elevation of marriage to a symbol of Christ and the Church, the socio-cultural status of women became canonized into an ideal; a state of affairs was seen as sanctioned by the divine will. Women were to be honored, but precisely as the "weaker" sex (I Pet 3:7).

If the Bible is characterized by conflicting motifs with respect to women, it is no less so in regard to humanity in general and sexuality in particular. There is a tension in Scripture, not only regarding specific issues, such as celibacy or asceticism, and not merely because of extrinsic influences, like those of Greek philosophy or cultural forms. Together with the clear development toward personalism, fidelity, and the primacy of love, there are also opposing principles lying at the very heart of biblical anthropology.

On the one hand, the Bible pronounces the world and all that is in it as good, including humanity and its sexuality (Gen 1:31). It is not good for a man to be alone (Gen 2:18). Sexual fertility is a blessing (Gen 1:28). Humankind is created in the image and likeness of God, sharing in God's dominion over the earth (Gen 1:26). Although dominion is the original significance of humanity's likeness to God, it does not exhaust the meaning; Scripture reveals a God who is not only Lord but Love (Dt 7:8; I Jn 4:8). Humanity mirrors God not through individuals but precisely through men and women in relationship (Gen 1:27). Incomplete in themselves, men and women are made for relatedness; human sexuality is a dramatic expression of that relatedness (Gen 2:18).27

While the biblical doctrine of creation affirms sexuality and sexual pleasure as good, biblical eschatology, on the other hand has led sexual pleasure to be viewed as problematic. Christianity looks forward to a fulfillment in which sexuality and sexual pleasure are explicitly excluded (Mk 12:25). As adopted sons and heirs (Rom 8:17), partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4), Christians see themselves called to a happiness greater than any that can be conceived (I Cor 2:9), a happiness utterly transcending pleasure of any kind, particularly sexual pleasure. Ever since St. Paul, abstinence from sexual pleasure has been seen as an anticipation of that future fulfillment (I Cor 7), and passionate desire for pleasure as contrary to holiness (I Thes 4:5). As a result, Christian tradition and spirituality have tended to see a certain incompatibility between sexual pleasure and sanctity. Living a sex life somehow does not seem to fit into living the divine life fully.28

**SUMMARY**

The foregoing survey, schematic as it is, demonstrates clearly that the Bible does not provide us with a simple yes or no code of sexual ethics. No single text or collection of texts constitutes
anything like a coherent biblical theology of human sexuality. Scripture is not even concerned with sexuality as such, regarding it instead as one aspect of life, properly viewed only within the context of the whole person and the whole of human life with all its relationships and responsibilities.

The Old Testament contains such a plurality of customs, laws, and insights related to sexuality, that no single voice can be said to prevail. Throughout the Old Testament, however, one can clearly perceive the influence of taboos regarding cultic purity and of the patriarchal form of marriage and society. While monogamy seemed to be held up as an ideal state (Gen 2:24), polygamy and, for the male, even concubinage were tolerated. Only adultery with the wife or betrothed of a fellow Israelite was consistently condemned, and this in such a way as to make clear that the reason for the condemnation is to be found not in the nature of human sexuality but in the familial and societal responsibilities owed to members of the same community. The Old Testament view of women ranged from regarding them as chattel (Exodus) or objects of disdain (Sirach) to the affirmation of their personhood (Deuteronomy). Women function in the biblical narratives in a variety of ways from leaders, prophets, and judges to mere sex objects. Recognized as good in itself, sexual activity was condemned when even remotely associated with the fertility rituals of Israel's heathen neighbors. Yet marriage and erotic imagery were often used (Hosea, Canticle of Canticles) to describe the sacred covenantal union between God and Israel.

As in the Old Testament, every statement in the New Testament regarding human sexuality is historically occasioned and conditioned. Jesus did not proclaim any new sexual ethic as such. Of indirect but profound significance for any Christian ethics of sexuality, however, are Jesus' teaching on the essential equality of men and women, his prohibition of divorce affirming fidelity within marriage for both sexes, and the primacy he gave to the law of love; in short, his personalism. Jesus' affirmation of human dignity led him to resist legalistic casuistry and to insist on the "weightier matters" of the Law, namely, its spirit and intent. Jesus humanized the Law in the sense that, for him, it was precisely our joy, our holiness as wholeness, human welfare and well-being, that constituted the will of God. Jesus' affirmation of human dignity and his attitude toward law resounded in St. Paul, particularly in his championing of Christian equality (Gal 3) and freedom (Gal 4). In opposition to exaggerated asceticism, St. Paul affirmed the goodness and lawfulness of sex (I Cor 7) but unhesitatingly expressed his personal preference for celibacy in light of the return of Christ in glory, which Paul regarded as imminent. St. Paul's eschatology, the depraved moral climate of his day, and the influence of Stoic philosophy on his thought must all be kept in mind for the correct interpretation of his references to marriage and sex related matters.

Employing the historical critical method of interpretation, contemporary biblical scholarship makes it clear that we cannot validly abstract statements regarding sexuality out of their biblical context and use them as proof texts to validate any twentieth-century theology of human sexuality. It is not that Scripture has failed to answer current problems and questions regarding premarital sexual intercourse, masturbation, birth control, and the like. Our questions simply were not asked by the biblical authors; hence, answers to these questions should not be expected from them.

Looking at the plurality of the statements and attitudes on human sexuality in the Bible, the
inconsistencies among them, and the historical circumstances that gave rise to them, critical biblical scholarship finds it impossible on the basis of the empirical data to approve or reject categorically any particular sexual act outside of its contextual circumstances and intention. In view of the weight of contrary historical evidence, anyone who maintains that the Bible absolutely forbids certain forms of sexual behavior, regardless of circumstances, must likewise bear the burden of proof.

This is not to say, however, that the Bible leaves us without ideals or any guidance whatever. Scripture provides us with certain fundamental themes as a basis on which to construct a modern theology of human sexuality. Despite changing historical circumstances and perspectives, the biblical authors consistently give common witness to the nature of God as gracious and loving, and to the ideal of fidelity as a foremost expression of our loving response. While the Bible does not provide absolute dictates about specific sexual practices, it declares that sexual intercourse is good, always to be seen, however, within the larger context of personhood and community.

**Kosnik's Notes**

1. It is an assumption of this study that neither the Old nor the New Testament can be simply identified with revelation. The Bible constitutes an inspired witness to the revelation not of propositions or decrees but of God himself, in a history which finds its fullness in Jesus Christ. (Vatican Council 11, Constitution on Divine Revelation, no. 2).


7. This attitude was not peculiar to Israel. The 4th century A.D. biography of Pythagoras (6th, 5th century B.C.) recounts the advice of Pythagoras to women: "If you come from your marital consort, it is a divine privilege even on that very day to visit the holy shrines; but by no means, of course, if you are coming from forbidden intercourse." H. Schelkle, Theology of the New Testament: Morality, translated by W. A. Jurgens (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1970), 3:265.

8. Recent evidence from Ugarit shows that even the prohibition of transvestism (Dt 22:5) and of intercourse with animals (Lev 18:23) must be seen as motivated by opposition to the sacred cult of Canaan rather than as expressing a biblical sexual ethic. Prof. Cyrus Gordon in an article discussing "Ugarit and Its Significance," [Arts, The Journal of the Sydney University Arts
Association, 9 (1974):26-27] explains the commands in this way:

In the Baal cycle, Baal mates with a heifer and sires a bull calf (UT, 67 V 17-23; 111 33-37). Variations of the pagan cult reverberate as the Golden Calf in Sinai and as the Golden calves worshipped at Dan and Bethel . . . Leviticus 18:23 prohibits copulation with animals precisely because it was an abomination wherewith the older inhabitants of the Promised Land had defiled themselves and the Land (verses 24-25) . . . The biblical prohibition against transvestism can now be explained as opposition to what was sacred in Canaan. In the Epic of Daniel, the murder of Aqhat is avenged by his sister Rughat, who wears a man's garb and wields a man's sword (I Aght 206-7). It is interesting to note that Dt 22:5 not only outlaws transvestism, but also the bearing of men's weapons by women. Again Ugarit provides the background against which Israel reacted.

This is not to say, of course, that the repulsion felt by the biblical authors toward these practices is not pertinent to the development of a biblically founded sexual ethic, but simply that the prohibitions in themselves do not directly constitute such an ethic.


11. It is not clear whether the laws prohibiting sexual intercourse or marriage with a brother's wife (Lev 18:16, 20:21) presume levirate marriage as an exception or intend to prohibit it.


15. See Martin McNamara, Targum and Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 8; See also Bab. M. 30b, 88a: "Why were the shops of Beth Hino destroyed . . . because the shopkeepers stuck to the letter of the law and did not advance to equity."


18. Ibid., p. 320.


24. A special consideration of the biblical position on homosexuality will be given in chapter five.


26. Ibid., p. 259.


Possible Exam Questions for this Reading

**Genesis**

1. How is sexuality viewed in the Book of Genesis?

2. With what does the older Yahwist tradition associate sexuality?

3. With what does the later Priestly tradition associate sexuality?

**Patriarchal Society**

1. What are some indications of the inferior position of women in Hebrew society?

2. What are some examples ways in which the Book of Deuteronomy tries to raise the status of women?

3. What are some indications of the importance given to bearing children, especially males?

4. What was meant by "levirate marriage" and how does this make a difference in interpreting the "sin of Onan?"
Fidelity and Personhood

1. What are some indications of the high regard given in the Old Testament to marital fidelity?

2. With what is secular prostitution sometimes associated or not clearly distinguished?

The New Testament

Jesus

1. How does Jesus, following a trend set by some of the earlier prophets, deal with the requirements of the law?

2. What seems to have been Jesus attitude toward women?

Paul

1. How does the expectation that kingdom will be coming soon affect the view of marriage?

2. What are the various meanings associated with the Greek term porneia?

3. How did Stoic philosophy influence Paul's views of sexuality?

4. What is an indication, in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, of a high regard for marriage?

5. What is the basic tension regarding sexuality that we find running throughout scripture?