

Masturbation: A Form of False Intimacy ¹

By Dr. Harry W. Schaumburg

There is no biblical prohibition that refers *specifically* to masturbation, and because of that fact there are a number of Christian leaders who endorse the practice. They assume that the practice is morally neutral, neither right nor wrong, but simply allowed when better forms of sex are not available. It is frequently recommended as a technique in cases of sexual dysfunction. In any consideration of endorsing the behavior, take into account whether the person(s) have decided to abandon biblical authority and create a new approach to sexual morality based on feelings, intentions and satisfying lustful desires. Second, consider whether the practice conflicts with biblical thinking on sexual morality. Third, carefully consider God's design for sex. Fourth, ask yourself if you are more interested in justifying a behavior that you are unwilling to give up than seeking the complete will of God for your life. Fifth, seriously consider the following scriptures:

- “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh, to gratify its desires” (Romans 13:14).
- “Do not be conformed to the world” but rather “be transformed by the renewal of your mind” (Romans 12:2)
- “. . . to abstain from the passions of the flesh” because they “wage war against your soul” (1 Peter 2:11).
- Belonging to Christ, we have “crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24).
- We are urged to “walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do” Galatians 5:16-17).

In any discussion of masturbation, we must always consider God's design for sex. God designed sex to be *exclusive* with another person of the opposite sex, a wife or husband. God designed sex to be *profound*, which masturbation is not; it is shallow. God made sex to be *fruitful*, but masturbation treats sex like a commodity rather than a capacity for producing life. God made sex to be *selflessly* God-centered, not self-centered and self-satisfying. God made sex to be *complementary*, joining a husband and wife in an expression of one flesh union.

Masturbation refers directly to the practice by which a person brings himself or

¹ The material is based on Andreas J. Kostenberger's book, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, page 393 and Daniel R. Heimbach's book, *True Sexual Morality: Recovering Biblical Standards for a Culture in Crisis*, pages 222-223 .

herself to orgasm without anyone else involved². Male or female passions are aroused by the person themselves. It is non-relational, same-sex arousal, and same-sex fulfillment. Imagining a heterosexual relationship does not make the reality heterosexual. While not as serious a violation of God's design as physical adultery, or prostitution or even sexual immodesty, it is still outside the biblical pattern and something to be avoided in order to be living consistently with the will of God and abstaining from sexual immorality (1 Thess. 4:3).

In summary, solitary self-stimulated sex should be considered wrong because:

- Sex is a part of a personal relationship with another person; masturbation is non-relational.
- Sex is to be exclusive; masturbation typically involves sexually impure thoughts.
- Sex is to be special and intimate; masturbation is frequent and shallow.
- Sex is to be fruitful (productive) in that man is designed to enter a woman and to create, both at a relational and reproductive level; masturbation treats sex like a commodity to be consumed.
- Sex is to take place within the context of selfless love; masturbation is designed to satisfy oneself.
- Sex is multi-dimensional; masturbation separates the physical from everything else.
- Sex is to be complementary; masturbation is non-unitive.

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² Physical stimulation by a husband of his wife, or the wife of her husband, as a part of love-making, is not masturbation.