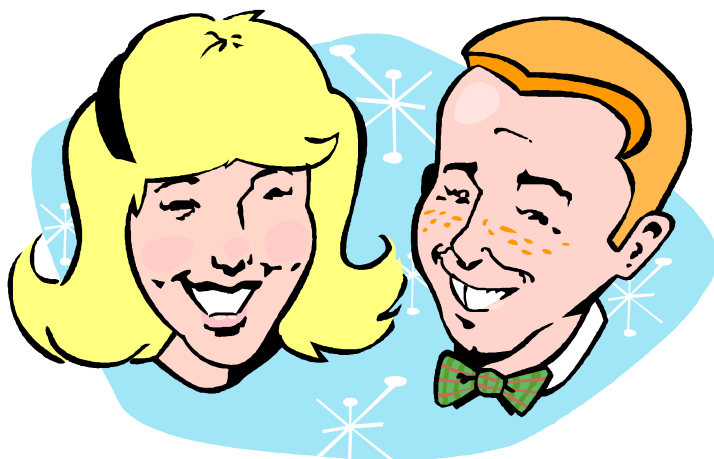


Booklet 1

Helps for Young People



Newlyweds

Sex Songs

Dashboard

A Model Marriage?

Q: I watch the MTV show *Newlyweds: Nick & Jessica* a lot. What do you think of this reality show about Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey's marriage? Is it harmless?

A: Harmless for whom? The first couple years of marriage can be the hardest of all. I can't imagine what the stress of having cameras catching every selfish argument and awkward moment would do to newlyweds. I can't help but think that the show is extremely unhealthy for Nick and Jessica's relationship.

But how does it affect us? Well, the show does reveal two positive truths about marriage. First, it destroys the myth that marriage—even between two beautiful and rich people—is all about bliss, romance and sex. Instead, we learn from Nick and Jessica that marriage can be hard, requires good communication, and includes a lot of forgiveness.

However, *Newlyweds* could be harmful if anyone looks to Nick and Jessica as marriage role models. In fact, very few newlyweds could provide a good example of what it means to be a healthy husband and wife. For Christians, the standard of a lifetime marriage is set in Scriptures like Ephesians 5:22-33, and probably best learned from a much older, much more Christ-like couple in your life.

There is one other thing I would like to bring up. Jessica has been very public about being a Christian and standing for abstinence until marriage. But Jessica's faith has not been expressed on the show and she often swears. On top of that, her public image has also become much more sexual in recent years with very revealing outfits and provocative magazine photos. So, another problem is that Jessica's use of sexuality in magazines, music and TV advertising can hurt others who are trying to hold on to their commitment to purity.

What's Wrong With Sex Songs?

Q: The Bible's Song of Songs is about erotic love. It's essentially an explicit love song. If Solomon could write that in the Bible, then what's wrong with sexual lyrics in secular love songs?

A: Song of Songs definitely contains explicit and erotic imagery, and it certainly proves the Bible isn't anti-sex. God created sex—and all the passions that come along with it. But there are three problems with connecting Song of Songs to sexually explicit secular love songs: context, motive and audience.

First, scholars say the couple in Song of Songs is married. So the book addresses sex within the context God designed—marriage. Are the explicit songs you're thinking about describing sex within marriage, as God intended it?

Second, what's the point of most sexually explicit love songs today? Is it to capture the beauty of God's creation of sex between husband and wife—or to represent sex as something fun, carefree and casual? Does it lead your mind toward God, or toward immoral and impure fantasies?

Third, who is the intended audience for Song of Songs—and who is the intended audience for today's sexually explicit songs? Do you honestly think reading Songs of Songs will warp your view of sex the way that large doses of sexually explicit secular lyrics will?

Yes, there is room even in Christian art to capture the beauty of sexual love, but it takes maturity and wisdom to appreciate that beauty. Even the young woman in Song of Songs warns that love should not be aroused until the time is right (Song of Songs 2:7, 3:5, 8:4).

Is Dashboard Christian?

Q: Is Dashboard Confessional a Christian group? Are they OK to listen to?

A: Chris Carrabba, who leads Dashboard Confessional, says he's a Christian, and he used to be in a Christian band called Further Seems Forever. Carrabba, a deep poet, writes many love songs—and songs about romance gone wrong. His lyrics are tame compared to much of the stuff you hear on the radio. But at times, Carrabba, who isn't married, seems to be singing about sex. I say "seems" because his lyrics are sometimes so vague, it's hard to know what he's saying. Meanwhile, Carrabba's lyrics are rarely about things of faith. Dashboard's lyrics probably won't corrupt your mind, but they probably won't get you thinking about God, either. Whether or not to spin Dashboard's tunes is between you and your parents.

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