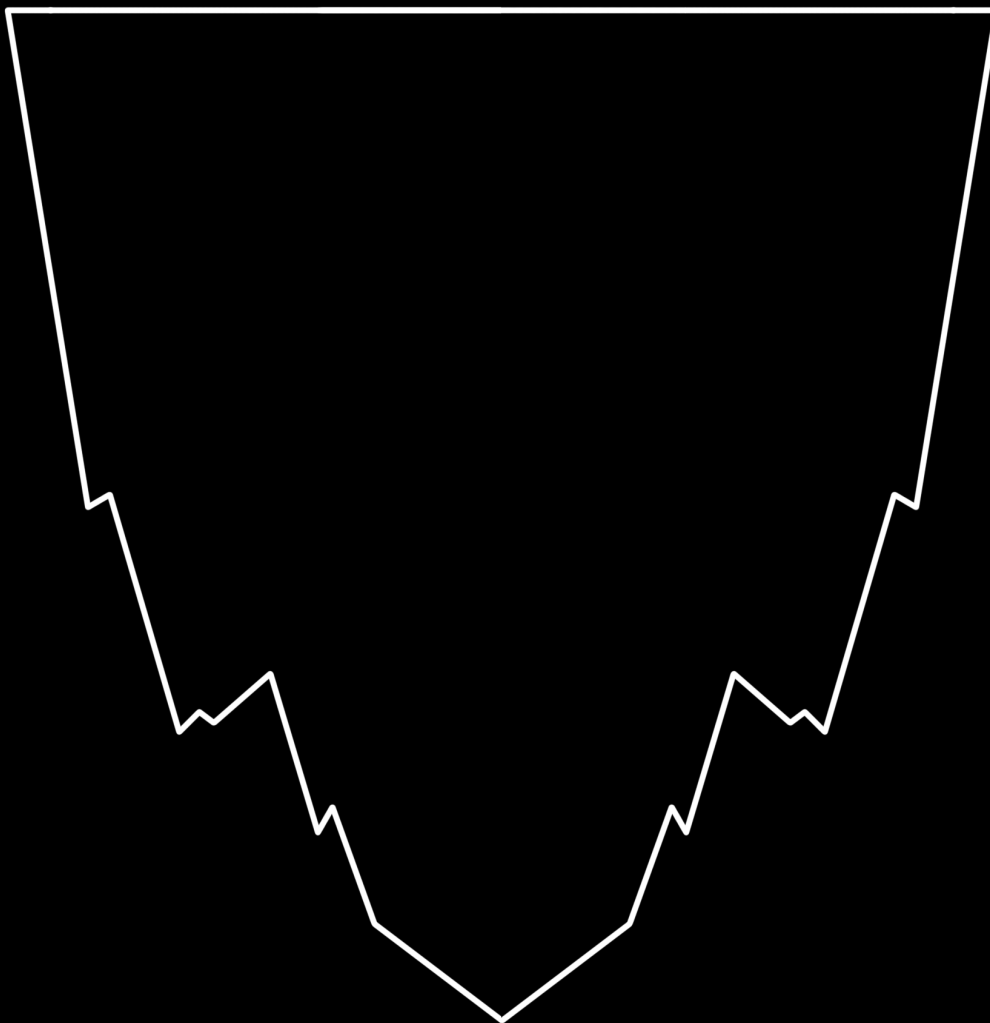




SEX &
RELATIONSHIPS

NOT FAR ENOUGH



It's clear that there are physical boundaries in relationships and that these boundaries vary depending on what kind of relationship you have. Things are deemed appropriate or inappropriate depending on your relationship. It's appropriate to hug a family member but not a stranger. If you're a girl you can hug your girlfriends, if you're a guy you can never hug your guy friends except in celebration of some kind of sporting win. Some of these boundaries, when they are broken, result in some awkwardness whilst other times it can be outright criminal. Everyone understands the importance of understanding relationships and what kind of physical affection is appropriate.

So what about guys and girls then? Talking to a friend about his love life I asked him if a girl he'd been hooking up with was his girlfriend. He explained that they weren't girlfriend/boyfriend but if they hooked up again then they probably would be. It was confusing for everyone. It can be a painful process sometimes, trying to work out what is physically OK and not OK for a relationship. Many teens lose a lot of sleep and friendships trying to work out what is good and what is too far in relationships. Most of the stress in trying to work this out is about avoiding regret. If I go too far will I do something I regret and can never take back? If I don't go far enough will I miss out? This is a stressful thing.

God has made marriage for men and woman to become 'one flesh'. In this relationship they experience deep oneness. They do life together. Sex is meant to bond them to one another in a way they are bonded to no one else. In 1 Cor 7:4 it says "The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. In marriage your body belongs not only to you but also to your husband/wife. This means you are not free to give it away to anyone else because you belong to one another. Sex is like super-glue, it is meant to bond permanently two people together. In marriage

this is part of the full experience of 'oneness' with another person. You and your wife/husband have full sexual access to one another in the safety of a lifelong promise that is as strong as death.

So the question about going too far is, "what kind of sexual contact is OK before marriage?". In marriage your bodies belong to one another but outside of this covenant of oneness...they don't. 1 Tim 5:2 says (to young men) '...treat younger women as sisters with all purity'. This means that sexually you are in the category brother/sister or husband/wife. Often we want to add the category of boyfriend/girlfriend where you have some sexual contact but not full sexual contact. The problem is that the Bible has no category for this. When you are not married to someone, you are not one with them and their body is off limits to you and yours is off limits to them.

Sex is meant to be enjoyed in all its expressions (kissing, touching, anything sexual) in the security of the oneness of marriage and not outside this. For this reason the category of boyfriend/girlfriend is a non-sexual category. Until marriage the opposite sex are to be as though they were brothers or sisters to you.

The issue in relationships is just about going sexually too far...the problem is also, in regards to commitment, not going far enough. Marriage is the level of commitment God has set for the enjoyment of oneness in sex. If you have not gone as far as marriage in committing to one another, you have not gone far enough to freely enjoy God's gift of sex.