

# When Past Sexual Sin Haunts Your Wedding

by John Piper/May 7, 2014

*The following is a transcript of the audio.*

\*\*Frisco, a listener, writes in to ask this: “Hi Pastor John. I want to propose to my girlfriend, and as I prepare for marriage thoughts of my past mistakes come to mind. I think back to women I slept with before I was saved, and mistakes I made with my current girlfriend who, Lord willing, I will marry. People often speak of the purity to be saved for marriage, and how terrible it is to squander that. What truths do you have to share with a man or woman such as myself, struggling with regret related to past sexual mistakes and their current consequences in the context of marriage and engagement?”

I am real eager to address this. This is a real and huge issue and it always has been because millions of people have been converted and will be converted to Christ out of a life of sin, not before a life of sin. That is normal. Evangelization of the world means we are rescuing people after they have done horrible things, not before. So he is not in an unusual or unique position. What shall we think about these previous sins? Or probably in his case, serious sins committed after faith. So I think the main thing I want to say to Frisco is this. Virginity is a precious gift that you cannot give to your fiancé, nor she you. That is a great sadness and a great loss. But there are gifts you can give her and God will multiply those gifts so wonderfully that the loss will not be destructive. That is what I want to say.

And here is what I mean. Frisco, you said that you have heard people say: Save yourself sexually for marriage and it is a terrible thing to squander that. Well, I say: Yes, yes, yes. That is exactly right. That is exactly what I think Paul and Jesus would counsel any virgin. **1 Corinthians 6:18:** Flee fornication. Your body belongs to God as a single person and it will belong to your future spouse. Be good to think about this, 1 Corinthians seven. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights. That means sex. And likewise, the wife her husband for the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. In other words, you belong to each other, to no one else. You belong to God in your singleness, united to him in your body by the Spirit. And in marriage you belong to God through union with your spouse as well. That is a precious, biblical gift that should be presented in marriage. And that is a gift you don't have to give.

And you will want to teach your children to have it. So what is the gift you do have to give to this fiancé with whom you have had sexual relations? What gift can you give her that God might be pleased to make so wonderful the gift you can't give her will not destroy? And here it is. The gift you can give is this. You can look you fiancé in the eye and say: I failed you. I failed God and I am deeply, deeply sorry. I hate what I did. I hate the hurt it caused you and me. I hate the

dishonor that I brought upon the Lord. I hate the disrespect I showed you in not caring for you better. And I repent. I turn away from that sin and sinful forces that drove it. I renounce them. And I turn to Jesus Christ my Lord and my Redeemer and I receive from him his full and blood bought forgiveness and I cherish it with all my heart. I tremble at the thought of despising his blood now. And by the Spirit that he has given me, I resolve in his strength never, never, never, never to betray him or to give my body to any woman but to my wife. I offer you my forgiven, redeemed, cleansed soul and body in marriage to cherish you and honor you and be faithful to you. I invite you into this new forgiven, redeemed, cleansed union with me. I know there will always be scars and the memories. But God is merciful and in his time and his wisdom and his way he will make these scars of sin the emblem of his mercy and the signs of his cross.

That is the gift, Frisco, which you can give as a wonderful gift to your fiancé. And I pray that God will seal that gift for both of you.