

True Love

What the Bible says
about relationships
and marriage

*Dr Chris Richards
and Dr Liz Jones*



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It takes courage to write a book about God's standards on relationships and sex, and it will take courage to read it. But Chris Richards and Liz Jones have dared to be honest, spelling out the joys and responsibilities of living as God intended. To take this on board will save many tears and heartaches, bringing fulfilment and pleasure in their place. This is a book for everyone to read.

Roger Carswell, Evangelist

Young Christians today are confronted with many questions and choices about relationships. Dr Liz Jones and Dr Chris Richards look to God's Word for answers to these questions, showing that following God's pattern for living leads to real happiness. Whether we are single or married, we are set free to love God and serve others.

Dr Sharon James, author and conference speaker

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Introduction

As a young person living in the twenty-first century, following God's ways in the area of relationships is increasingly difficult. There is often a battle in our hearts between the attraction of the ways of the world and obedience to God (Galatians 5:17). Unless you are properly prepared for the battle, it is so easy to be drawn away by the world's loud voice. Here are just a few of the messages that you will be constantly exposed to:

- You're missing out if you don't have sex.
- Marriage is out of date.
- Casual sex is OK.
- Sex is the goal of a night out.
- Sex is all about me and my satisfaction.
- Sex can be experienced without consequences.
- There are no rights and wrongs in relationships, just what we prefer.
- Sex is a means of securing love.

All the messages above are lies or half-truths, but they are also powerful and tempting. As Christians, we need to be on our guard when we hear such messages because there is so much at stake. God has saved us through the work of Jesus on the cross in order that we may live a life of holiness through obedience. We are encouraged to strive for holiness: 'as

he who called you is holy, so also be holy in all your conduct' (1 Peter 1:15). Holiness is not an add-on, but the very heart of our daily walk with our heavenly Father. The Bible repeatedly reminds us that our thoughts and actions in relationships affect other people and really matter to God, who commanded us to 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 22:39).

To be successful in this battle for holiness in relationships, you need to know exactly what you believe and why, so that you can respond wisely and swiftly to difficult situations as they arise. For this purpose God has given you His word, the Bible, where you can be sure to find clear directions on sexual purity: 'How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word' (Psalm 119:9). To help you understand His word,

*You are not alone
in this struggle!*

God gives you the Holy Spirit, who also motivates you and strengthens you to apply His word to your life. You are not alone in this struggle!

The Bible tells us that God blesses those who obey Him (Psalm 18:20). However, we are also warned that, because obedience is very important to God, the consequences of disobedience can be severe (Psalm 89:30–32). Though God offers us complete forgiveness (see Chapter 9), we may have to live with the earthly consequences of our sin for the rest of our lives. Nowhere is this clearer than in God’s gift of sex.

Even when we are obedient, God does not necessarily give us all our desires. But as we pray for God’s will to be done, He strengthens us and teaches us patience. Part of faith is trusting that His provision and timing are best.

We hope that this book will help you to know more about God’s ways and desires for you in this area of your life. Our prayer is that it will help you to ‘give careful thought to the paths for your feet and [to] be steadfast in all your ways’ (Proverbs 4:26 NIV).