



# TRUTH AND LOVE

♀ ♂ ♀♂ ♂♀ IN A SEXUALLY  
DISORDERED WORLD





'Here is wisdom, factual , medical and biblical to guide our thinking about our sexuality and especially about homosexual practice; here too is fuel for our compassion and prayers.'

Ann Allen

'In a day when there is such confusion on matters of human sexuality, we need a clear biblical exposition of the issues. This is it!'

Peter Maiden, International Director of OM

'One of the best books available on this highly important subject. Balanced, biblical and readable, it is urgently necessary in the contemporary confusion of our culture. I hope it is widely read.'

Eric Alexander

'A biblical and pastoral approach to the whole issue of sexuality... the contemporary battleground for the soul of the church.'

Philip Hacking





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EDITED BY **DAVID SEARLE**

**CHRISTIAN FOCUS**

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DCS

## Foreword

You may ask, 'Why a book on *truth and love*? Who needs that?'

The answer is, more of us than one might think! Because the truth is, those of us living in the multicultural, pluralistic culture of the west are increasingly confused about sex, morality and personal identity.

It's not surprising, really, given the melting-pot of competing ideologies that surround us today. The voices are so strong and penetrating—especially in the all-powerful media—that Christians, as well as everyone else, inevitably absorb these messages into their thinking. Subtly, and perhaps almost unconsciously, our views are gradually shaped and moulded as the world around us changes. Old certainties are undermined, replaced by the shifting sands of relativism. Our confidence in what we *think* we think, becomes shaky.

On the public stage, politicians continue to erode the unique status of marriage in society. They undervalue the place of loving, dutiful motherhood and responsible, committed

fatherhood as the rock on which solid family life is built, and stable communities flourish.

No doubt it is meant well, trying to address the tragic fact of tens of thousands of single parents struggling to cope alone with their families. But devaluing marriage to 'level the playing field' for all is hardly the answer. The tragic epidemic (it may soon be the majority) of children growing up without one or other of their parents will not be solved this way.

We must face the facts: the widespread confusion surrounding our closest relationships is one chief cause of major societal problems throughout the western world.

But where do we turn for answers? There are few voices willing to suggest that the morality which has been the anchorage of our civilisation for many centuries may have something to offer after all. Pope Benedict XVI has spoken out fearlessly; but outside the Roman Catholic Church, how many are listening to him?

We all know that when struggling to build flatpack furniture successfully, the only way to avoid confusion and disaster is to consult and follow the maker's instructions. Building sexual relationships successfully is a subject of far greater importance—for every human

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being, and every human society. Sex is a wonderful and exciting gift from God himself, and we are right to celebrate it. But handled wrongly, it is both dangerous and destructive. It can, and does, go terribly wrong.

An alternative title for this book might have been: *Sex—handle with care!* Sex has brought immense happiness to countless millions. But it has also dealt sorrow and heartache to just as many. It need not, and it should not; hence this little book. In it the contributors present lucidly, and without need for apology, our Maker's instructions on how to handle one of the most wonderful gifts he has given to us—our human sexuality. If we will trust *his* guidance, we shall find it really is the way to lasting fulfilment and greatest joy.

*Dr William J U Philip*





## Introduction

After centuries of neglecting the problems that arise from our human sexuality in the vain hope that these problems will somehow go away if we ignore them, it is surely right and proper that Christians today should be urgently addressing them. However, it is clearly important that the method we adopt must be both appropriate and valid. Otherwise, any conclusions will be flawed, and the problems on which we have worked to throw light will be as clouded as they have been in the past.

There are two possible approaches to problems associated with our human sexuality. One way of proceeding might be to begin with an investigation of what people who are affected by such problems themselves feel and think. From there, the expertise of those who have sought to work with them in a supportive role could be tapped. In this way, up-to-date thinking would become available for those seeking to come to terms with sexual problems.

But grave doubts must hang over this method of working. The opinions of any section of contemporary society are bound to

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be as shifting as the pattern left on the sand by the ebbing tide. Truth itself becomes relative, and accommodates itself to the current vogue in any culture's thinking. An alternative approach must therefore be sought.

Christians believe, and those ordained to positions of leadership in virtually every Christian denomination and fellowship avow, that Scripture is the final source of authority in all matters of faith and conduct. Our method, therefore, must be to seek to assess as accurately and fairly as possible, what the Bible says on all problems which arise from our human sexuality. This will at least give us a starting point from which to work, and a basis for our endeavours to provide pastoral love and care, and full acceptance into Christian fellowship of those who in the past may have felt excluded.

When we begin with Scripture, we at once discover that every living person has departed in thought and motive from the will of God in sexual behaviour, and since none is righteous in this area of living, there is no room for censorious attitudes. Dr Merville Vincent (quoted in John Stott's *Issues Facing Christians Today*, p. 302) says: 'In God's view I suspect we are all sexual deviants. I doubt if there is anyone who has not had a lustful thought that

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deviated from God's perfect ideal of sexuality.'

To uphold the standards of sexuality given in the Bible could be costly for any Christian church in her relationship to today's society. For standards are changing so rapidly that many of the younger generation no longer are aware that Christians believe God has provided clear standards for our sexuality. But unless the church is to be influenced by society, instead of herself acting as salt and light in society, we Christians must not shrink from such distinctiveness, nor from the possible adverse response which may result. The light must be put on its stand; the city must continue to be seen standing high on the hill.

There is one obvious difference between starting with the way things are at present—how people think and behave—and starting with the Bible. The Bible starts with heterosexuality, and assumes it throughout, not with sexuality in a non-specific sense; whereas it is common today for discussion to begin with an indeterminate sexuality and only then to consider its different expressions. The Christian Scriptures know nothing of a floating sexual identity which may issue in a range of different sexual actions. Its basis

throughout is unambiguously heterosexual —man and woman created sexually for each other. While Christians must always be sensitive to what is happening in society, it is crucial that we do not adopt a starting point which in this case would effectively silence the Bible's main voice and message on the issue.

In the following pages, various aspects of sexuality are dealt with. But whether the treatment explains biblical teaching (as in chapters 1 and 7) or applies that teaching to contemporary society (as in chapters 2, 3 and 9) or deals pastorally with personal issues (as in chapters 4, 5 and 6), the starting point is always Scripture. For our firm conviction is that God has spoken fully and finally in and through his Son, Jesus Christ. Using the Christian Scriptures as the starting point, each contributor seeks to show the relevance for today of orthodox Christian morality. How successful this endeavour has been will be measured by the usefulness of this book.

*DCS*