

Christian beliefs about masturbation:

We have not found any biblical verses which deal directly with masturbation. However, the practice is widely condemned by Evangelical Christian groups. Five articles on the subject are described below. They use very different approaches to develop their position. Two of the articles raise the threat of eternal punishment in Hell for the over 90% of men (and probably a lower percentage of women) who masturbate.

Masturbation is a form of adultery:

Life Bible Class teaches that masturbation is a violation of one of the 10 Commandments (*“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”*)¹ They refer to the writings of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:4: *“The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.”* LBC comments: *“In other worlds, the wife’s body belongs not only to her, but to her husband, and similarly the husband’s body belongs not just to him, but also to his wife. This is an application of becoming one in marriage. Thus all forms of sexual experience out of marriage is sinful, just as all forms of self-oriented sexual activity in and out of marriage are sinful and lustful rather than holy, loving and pleasing to God... Thus, fornication, masturbation, homosexuality, pornography etc are sinful and a violation of the seventh commandment [which condemns adultery]...The overarching principle to remember is that sex is for MUTUAL satisfaction and enjoyment within marriage ONLY.”*

Masturbation is sinful because of the sexual fantasies it generates:

True Life Stories appears to teach that masturbation is not a sexual sin of the same class as fornication (e.g. pre-marital sex).² *“But it’s sinful when accompanied, as is so often the case, by sexual fantasies and impure thoughts.”* It is also a sin when it becomes habit forming. They recommend diverting sexual energies to re-focus on *“the service of God and of others.”* (Jesus is recorded as commenting on sexual fantasies in Matthew 5:28 as noted above)

Masturbation is a form of impurity and uncleanness:

RBC Ministries admits that the Bible has no specific references to masturbation.³ However, they believe that habitual self-pleasuring is contained within the catchall terms *“lasciviousness,” “impurity,”* and *“uncleanness”* They give no reasons why masturbation falls under these categories of sin. They cite

some Biblical references: Leviticus 15:16-17; Mark 7:20-22; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3-5; Colossians 3:5. The Galatians and Ephesians are particularly serious, because they state that such people “*will not inherit the kingdom of God.*” They will be headed for Hell fire when they die. On a positive note, they reject the concept that sexual desires and feelings are intrinsically evil. That, they believe, is an ancient [Gnostic](#) heresy.

Masturbation is addictive and a misuse of sexuality:

Christ Unlimited Ministries (CUM) concludes that God created sexuality in order to be enjoyed only between two heterosexual, married spouses.⁴ Since masturbation only involves one person, it is an abuse of this gift of God. Masturbation is addictive; the individual craves “*increasingly extreme acts to maintain the same degree of excitement.*” [The author of that essay does not provide any proof of this assertion.] Masturbation usually involves fantasy which is condemned in Job 31:1-3 and Matthew 5:28. The author offers a multi-point program for overcoming masturbation: Confess the sin to God; confess it to your pastor or another committed Christian; reject anything that aggravates the sin; seek deliverance from fellow Christians who provide a healing ministry; don’t give up.

Masturbation is against natural law:

Life Bible Class has an Interactive Newsgroup.³ One subscriber “D” argues from an entirely different approach: that of natural law. He states that the “*sexual organ is and [sic] ONLY for pro-creation and for your spouse only [sic]. NOT for self pleasure!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*” His statement seems to imply that a man must not use his penis to urinate and must not derive pleasure from making love with his wife. The former is not particularly practical; the latter is unfair. When a couple makes love, why should only one spouse experience pleasure?

He probably meant to say something completely different: that sexual organs are for use only for procreation and for pleasuring both spouses at the same time. But he cites no reasoning or Biblical passage in support of his statement.

He states that masturbation is driven by a desire for lust, and that this is condemned by 1 Corinthians 6:13 which denounces fornication. But he provides no reason why lust and fornication should be linked. By definition, masturbation is done alone, whereas fornication is done by two unmarried persons. Then he warns that Christians who disagree with him may not be saved, and risk spending eternity in Hell.

Masturbation is a violation of God's purpose for sex:

Dawson McAllister of Christian Answers Network condemns masturbation for a variety of reasons:

Genesis 2:18 describes how God created sex to overcome man's aloneness. Thus, sex was meant for two people. Thus, masturbation goes against God's purpose for sexuality.

Sexual fantasies almost always accompany masturbation. He cites Proverbs 12:11, although the passage does not appear to say anything about sexual fantasies.

Masturbation can damage a person sexually; their future sex life in marriage could suffer. He offers no reason why this will happen; he does not cite any studies in support of his conclusion.

He claims that masturbation is an unhealthy way to deal with loneliness. Again, he does not provide any references or support for the statement. He claims that "*Masturbation is almost always a symptom of a deeper need.*" Again, no supporting evidence is supplied.

Masturbation leads to major negative consequences:

Lambert Dolphin suggested a number of negative consequences to masturbation, including: "(a) *increased self-consciousness, (b) lowered self-esteem, (c) depression, (d) reduced psychological and creative energy, (e) lessened interest in interpersonal relationships, and of course (f) guilt, shame, with fear of being found out.*"

MASTURBATION:

Did Jesus forbid masturbation?

Overview:

Some Christian theologians reason that

Masturbation usually involves sexual fantasy

According to Matthew 5:27-28, Yeshua of Nazareth (Jesus Christ) stated that sexual fantasy equals adultery

Adultery is a very serious sin.

Thus masturbation is generally a very serious sin.

About adultery:

It is a two step procedure for present-day Christians to determine whether adultery is a sin:

1. They first have to ascertain what the Bible says about the practice.
2. Assuming that the Bible condemns adultery, they will then have to figure out why it was classified as a sin, and determine whether those reasons are still applicable today. After all, the Bible condemns the eating of shellfish and the wearing of clothing made from mixed textiles -- like cotton and polyester. The reasons for these two prohibitions are no longer valid. Thus they are not considered sinful today -- at least by most Christians.

One of the [Ten Commandments](#) in Exodus 20:14 states: "*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*" Adultery was a very serious sin in biblical times. There was no sacrifice in the temple that would erase the transgression. The penalty was rather serious: the perpetrators were executed by stoning.

The seriousness of the sin in ancient times was aggravated by a number of factors which created social problems:

Currently, most people have access to devices that exhibit a high efficiency at preventing pregnancy and the transmission of STD's. With the exception of HIV -- the virus that causes AIDS -- the most common STDs are now curable. DNA testing is available to determine paternity. The general mood in society is to treat women as equals rather than as a piece of property. However, adultery continues to have a profoundly destabilizing influence on marriages, and continues to be a serious social problem.

Most Judeo-Christians agree that adultery remains a serious sin today, even if for no other reason than it destabilizes marriages.

Feeling lust is equivalent to adultery:

In Matthew 5:27-28, Yeshua of Nazareth (Jesus Christ) is reported as saying: "*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*" (King James Version).

In the past, many Christian theologians extended this teaching to even include husbands who had feelings of sexual lust towards their wives. They regarded all sexual intercourse as sinful to some degree. It was regarded as

a necessary evil to prevent the human race from dying out. Spouses were expected to try to suppress sexual feelings and thoughts as they had sex. This belief is a minority position today.

Beliefs about sexual lust differ among Christians:

Does masturbation necessarily involve feelings of lust?

A person who is masturbating normally fantasizes about a person of the appropriate sex. However, they can often find an alternative focus. For example, they could concentrate on their body's physiological responses, on an impending orgasm, or on some other thought not involving a human sexual object.

So, masturbation does not necessarily include lustful thoughts, and thus cannot always be interpreted as adultery, even by the most conservative Christians.

References:

1. Editorial staff at the Catholic University of America, "*New Catholic Encyclopedia*," McGraw-Hill, [1967 edition]
2. Bryan A. Garner, "*A Dictionary of Modern American Usage*," Oxford University Press, (1998), Page 20.
3. "*Fornication: What It's Not*," at: <http://freedom2201.tripod.com/>
4. "*Uncleanness*," The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, at: <http://www.studylight.org/>