

Asexuality and Christianity

Since asexuality is not widely known as a concept, religions seldom talk about it by name and certainly none of the old scriptures clearly state their views. It is mainly a matter of interpretation and much of the responses come not from the teachings themselves but from personal and cultural views.

"Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. [...] I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."

Corinthians 7: 1-2, 6-9

"So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better. A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God."

Corinthians 7:38-40

When the topic arises of religious views on asexuality, turning to the Bible and Christianity is usually the first step since it is a major religion in the west, affecting the most people.

While many passages in the holy book tell us about marriage and sexual behaviour, two sections of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians tell us about marrying only if one has the lust to do so, which may be interpreted to include asexuality as a general idea supported by Paul. Since the apostle mentions his own lack of desire to marry and encouragement for lack of sexual relations, speculation has arisen in recent years that he himself may have been an asexual, but it is impossible to really know his motives behind the writing.

In any case, it is fairly safe to assume that Paul advised using the energy and time freed up from sexlessness to give oneself to God more wholly than one may do in marriage.

It does seem sometimes that this teaching, or the concept of "being called to the single life", is overlooked in favour of modern social dynamics and expectations.

While celibacy is officially considered a good stance in religion, declaring oneself disinterested in sex is often met with disapproval.

Asexuals have been told that they are rejecting God's gift of sexuality, that they are just as bad as homosexuals because they are not "normal" or even accused of being homosexual, or people decide to pray to God for them to be fixed or for the Almighty to send the right person for them to fall in love with.

We do understand however that these are the opinions of individuals and not the teachings of the religion.

"Question: What do you call a person who is asexual? Answer: Not a person. Asexual people do not exist. Sexuality is a gift from God and thus a fundamental part of our human identity. Those who repress their sexuality are not living as God created them to be: fully alive and well. As such, they're most likely unhappy people with which to live."

Nantais and Opperman write in the Christian magazine *Vision*.

Occasionally religion is even blamed for being the cause of asexuality. Where a person has come from a Christian upbringing, accusations are made about lack of exposure to sexual matters, prudish teachings or causing a child to have guilty or antisexual views. There is no reason to believe this is true.

"For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."

Matthew 19:12