

by **Adam Hellyer**

In the West, movies and TV are increasingly significant in shaping how society thinks. Movies have always been more than entertainment. Since the days of the Hays Code, lawmakers and movie makers have appreciated the impact film can have on our personal behaviour and morality. Here we take a biblical look at sex and nudity.

Jewish culture at the time of Jesus, had strict laws regulating morality, and keeping sex within marriage. However, the nations around Israel had no such restraints. In Egypt, it was normal for female dancers to perform nude. In Greece, athletics contests saw both men and sometimes female participants take part nude. In both Greece and Rome, religious rites and ceremonies involved striptease and sexual activity. Prostitution was rife, art and entertainment often included nudity. In Corinth, Temple prostitutes worked at the temple of Aphrodite, sleeping with worshipers. Herodotus records, that on Cyprus there was a practice, also known in Babylon, where females were required to attend the temple once in their life to have sex with a stranger.*

Our culture today is little different. It is practically expected of every young man or woman to lose their virginity before their wedding day. People are pushing for public nudity to be more acceptable. Pornography is everywhere. And film and TV love to use sex and nudity to add excitement to the entertainment on our screens. But is this a culture we should embrace? Is entertainment involving sex and nudity something that sits well with the Spirit of Jesus within us?

Bible Nudity

From very early the Bible tells us post-fall public nakedness is wrong. Adam and Eve were placed in the garden naked and unashamed. But, from the moment Adam sinned, they realise they are naked, and realised that it was now wrong. When God arrived, He did not sit them down and tell them to just be okay with it, and embrace who they were, and not be so prudish. No. He makes them garments.

God's view of post-fall public nakedness is reinforced when Ham comes across his father, Noah, drunk and lying naked in his tent. Rather than cover him up, Ham runs off to tell his brothers. For this he is cursed. God has made it plain, since the fall, nudity is something to be kept private.

God Wears Clothes

If nudity was the ultimate sign of innocence or purity, it would follow that God would reveal Himself as a nudist. He does not. Nowhere in scripture does God reveal Himself as nude. When the Bible speaks of Him or His angels, it often includes description of their clothes. Whether in the New Testament account of John's Revelation, or the Old Testament record of Isaiah's vision, where "The train of His robe fills the temple" (Isaiah 6:1).

Even in eternity, when we are fully free from sin, forever and ever, we will still wear robes, given by God. Public nudity got left behind in Eden.

Looking with lust

When Jesus upgraded the law for the New Covenant, he raised the bar on Adultery. Under the Old Covenant adultery involved sleeping with someone other than your marriage partner. But Jesus says, "I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:28) Perhaps it was a divine premonition of this divine standard that cause Job to declare, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman." (Job 31:1)

The New Testament is full of warnings against sexual sin. In other areas we are told to resist the devil, or stand firm. Of sexual sin it simply says, FLEE!

There is nothing wrong with sex. God created it. But he created it to be enjoyed within marriage. If I participate in entertainment that stirs up lust, or where I am a fly on the wall during sex acts God intended to be private inside marriage, then I have not obeyed God. I have not loved Him.

Think on these things

I can argue, "All things are lawful for me", but in reality, not all things are helpful. Paul writes, "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13).

The next time you're making a movie selection, consider the teaching of Paul. Writing to a society filled with a lust for nudity and sex, Paul wrote:

"... whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about

these things.” (Philippians 4:8)

Further reading: Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18; Genesis 2:25; Genesis 3:7; Genesis 3:21; Genesis 9:18-29; Isaiah 6:1; Revelation 19:13; Revelation 7:9; Job 31:1; Matthew 5:28; 1 Corinthians 6:12,18; 1 Corinthians 10:23; Hebrews 13:4; Galatians 5:13

*Herodotus, The Histories 1.199, tr A.D. Godley (1920)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adam serves as a leader in [Joshua Generation Church](#) where he pastors and teaches the Bible. He has a particular passion for worship and apologetics. You can follow Adam on [his blog](#) and [Facebook](#).

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