

Dear Steve,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You stated that you and your wife were struggling with intimacy issues and wanted to know if sexual fantasy involving the same or opposite sex was a sin in a marriage.

The Bible presents marriage as a divine institution. As Christians who choose to live in accordance with God's will, we must study and respect those Biblical principles governing marriage. God himself united Adam and Eve in holy matrimony, saying, "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). "Cleaving" suggests the idea of being permanently glued or joined together. In the sight of God it means wholehearted commitment, exclusivity, and unswerving loyalty to one's marital partner. Having sexual fantasies involving another individual, real or imagined, violates this principle.

Sexual intimacy per se does not automatically assure that a man and a woman become one in a physical, emotional, and spiritual unity. To achieve the Biblical "one flesh" union, sexual intercourse in marriage must be the natural fruit of love, respect and commitment. Sexual desire must become the desire for total union and oneness between marital partners. The husband learns to accept his wife as she is because he needs to be accepted as he is. Oneness is achieved because differences are accepted as being complementary, not contradictory. Both the husband and wife need to focus on what is truly good about each other. By so doing, they celebrate their "oneness" by reserving their sexual expressions exclusively for each other.

The Apostle Paul states in Hebrews 13:4, "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral." Jesus in Matthew 5:28 defines adultery by saying "that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery in his heart."

Is sexual fantasy involving the same or opposite sex a sin in marriage? The above scriptures indicate that it most definitely is. The Apostle Paul further clarifies, "I have written to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. . . . Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders . . . will inherit the kingdom of God. . . . Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. . . . Therefore honor God with your body." (1 Corinthians 5:9; 6:9-10, 18, 20) As Christians we must be on guard that our thoughts, words and deeds will be God honoring.

We hope we have answered your question and brought to your attention the beauty and sanctity marriage has in God's eyes. When each partner concentrates on the positive aspects of the other, intimacy issues should begin to improve. In order to assist you in this process, however, you may need to seek counseling from a therapist who understands and respects Christian morals and values. Please write us again.

Sincerely,
Christian Questions Radio