

THE TRUTH ABOUT MASTURBATION



LEO JAMES
MICHAEL PIERCE

Introduction

Why write this book?

I've written this book because I've known a lot of people who have been troubled with guilt and shame for many years because of masturbation. I was one of these people. In my case, this guilt was mostly due to what I had been taught at church. I read several popular Christian books on the subject and searched in the Bible for answers. There are a great number of books, websites, and speakers who state with full confidence that masturbation is a sin and should be stopped immediately and permanently. These opinions have seeped into the common religious culture and are often taken for granted. However, when I did my own research on the issue of masturbation I realized it was not so black and white as others would have had me believe. The understanding I gained from my study has allowed me to have a much more thoughtful and helpful view of masturbation. I wrote this book to share this view with you.

One key point that I took away from my study on the subject of masturbation is that it is a complicated issue. Like nearly all issues dealing with our common human experience, masturbation is a nuanced and interesting topic for debate and discussion. This level of complexity should make the discussion of the issue more exciting, rather than frustrating.

Regardless of your religion or beliefs, masturbation is a subject that lays bare the gulf between our animalistic, primal selves and our deep, thoughtful or spiritual selves. These two selves are often brought together in intense conflict throughout our lives and few issues do this with such intensity as issues of human sexuality. How you feel about masturbation is a product of your religious views, your view on our origins, and your view on basic human instincts. It often even harkens back to

ancient debates on the inherent goodness or evil of the body and the physical world. Because of this, a study of attitudes towards masturbation is also a study on the human cultures and ideologies and philosophies. It is my hope that this book not only provides you enjoyment because of some of the interesting details and trivia, but that it gives you a peace and calm regarding masturbation, a calm because you will have learned everything you need to know in order to make a wise judgement on the issue for yourself. I have often found that there is no better antidote to fear and guilt than true understanding and knowledge.

Who's interested in this information

If you're wondering if masturbation is a sin, you're not alone. In fact, according to Google, every month tens of thousands of people from all around the world are searching for answers as to whether or not masturbation is a sin. Regardless of religious beliefs, race, gender, or economic status, the vast majority of people have masturbated at some point or regularly do. Looking at the averages for a few different studies, approximately 90% of men and 65% of women have masturbated at some point in their lives. Despite this, there has been controversy around masturbation for as long ago as written history allows us to see. (1)(2)

Given the pleasurable and very private nature of masturbation, you might initially think that no one would question whether masturbation is good or bad. However, sexuality is one of the primary areas where religions or governments or other authorities have made some of their most detailed and prohibitive rules. Sexual sin, however it is defined, is very often seen to be a highly serious matter in the eyes of these authorities. This is especially true for the primary monotheistic religions of the world- Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Sexuality is also often considered a taboo subject. When someone discovers masturbation and has never heard of it from anyone else, or is shunned when they mention it, this person might

be left feeling like they did something wrong. Looking at the whole picture now, it is not surprising that people are wondering if masturbation is acceptable.

Why this issue matters

If I told you that you weren't allowed to hop up and down on one foot, what would you say? Would you simply agree? What if your religion made this prohibition? In both cases, I would encourage to investigate the issue yourself. There are certain people who can be extremely persuasive and compelling in the arguments, but that is never a reason not to study the issue on your own. When you study be sure to read opinions on both sides. Keep an open mind- it is a very dangerous thing to be lulled into a stagnant state by an overpowering sense that you are right and that no one who disagrees with you could possibly be.

Without someone telling us that masturbation is sinful, we would very likely not have come to that same conclusion. Masturbation is pleasurable and private. Considering masturbation to be immoral is something that has to be learned. Now, of course we also must learn our manners, how we are to act in society, and how we are to treat others. There are good reasons for conforming to much of society's expectations on morals and behaviors. Throughout this book we will examine the reasons behind why masturbation might be good or bad. If the Bible does state that masturbation is a sin, what are the reasons for the prohibition? Prohibitions without reason should be disregarded. Nietzsche said that "Moral prohibitions,...,are only suited to ages when reason lies vanquished." [*Friedrich Nietzsche, The Wanderer and His Shadow*] You do not need to fear this statement- if God made a point to prohibit something you can be sure there was a reason.

The truth about masturbation matters because it is an issue of authority, individual freedom, and reason. We all have reason and should exercise it in every matter- especially when others tell us what is or is not acceptable. Authority and law and morals have allowed civilization and invention to flourish, but authority can also become a dark, deadly, and constricting force if no one has the strength of mind to question it. Freedom is the core of a life worth living. None of these concepts are absolutes, that is to say that none of these ideas are infinitely more important than the others. Freedom has its limits, as does reason. There is too a proper place for authority. These elements, in the proper amounts, can blend together to paint a lovely world to live in. In the wrong proportions they can create a nightmare. Masturbation might seem like a minor issue, but it lies in the middle of great ideological battleground where millions of lives are affected on daily basis.

Religion

Is masturbation a sin?

What is a sin? If you were to do a quick idea association exercise with the word "sin", I suspect that some of the first thoughts that would pop into your head would be thoughts of the church, or the bible, or the Quran, or perhaps the confession booth and the priest. The term sin has a strong and definite religious context. However, the idea of sin should not be compartmentalized away from everyday life.

Perhaps at one time it was more understood that everyone sins. Today however, it seems that outside of religious circles people are hesitant to categorize any of their deeds as sins. Despite that, we know that everyone, at times, does things that hurt themselves or others. If we can say that doing something that is not constructive to

the creation of a better life for you or others is sin, then I think we can all find some sin in our own lives.

Masturbation is an issue that lies on the border between these two definitions of sin. Religious preachers and teachers make claims about the moral nature of masturbation. At the same time, it is worth considering, in your own mind or with close friends or family, how masturbation may affect us in ways that are beyond rules and regulations. Ask yourself, "Does masturbation help me or others become a better person?" Rather than a flat yes or no, I believe the answer is, "maybe". Issues of this kind of complexity do not lend themselves to one word answers. We will cover this more throughout the rest of this book.

This chapter will focus on the nature of masturbation in context of the religious definition of sin. What does God think about masturbation? What do the religious texts we have teach about masturbation? The Bible? The Quran? What does Hinduism or Buddhism teach on masturbation? We'll start with a look at what the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, teach on the subject.

-According to Christianity and Judaism

Is it a sin for a Jew or Christian to masturbate? Please open your bible to the Book of Leviticus, Chapter 18...

Thanks for readings this free material from “The Truth About Masturbation”. In the full book every topic here will expanded upon and delved into in greater detail. We’ll also get to the heart of whether or not masturbation is a sin. If you found this chapter interesting and would like to see more, please, share this material with your friends and pre-order the eBook at www.TheTruthAboutMasturbation.com.

Endnotes

- (1) Gerressu, Makeda, Catherine H. Mercer, Cynthia A. Graham, Kaye Wellings, and Anne M. Johnson. "Prevalence of Masturbation and Associated Factors in a British National Probability Survey." Springer Link. 1 Apr. 2008. Web. 1 May 2015.
- (2) Kinsey, Alfred. "Alfred Kinsey's 1948 and 1953 Studies." The Kinsey Institute - Kinsey Study Data [Research Program]. The Kinsey Institute. Web. 13 May 2015.