

Question: My friend says that consensual sex between an unmarried couple who say they love each other is not wrong. What would Jesus say?

In a previous article, I discussed why it is a serious mistake for a couple to become involved sexually before marriage (see website below, WWJD 6/10/2011). However, there are those who think love justifies a sexual relationship between two people who are not married. These people are evidently using a different definition of love than what Jesus and the Bible have taught. We need a common standard for defining what love is and what loves does or does not do.

Jesus would have us to make God's love our defining standard for love. This kind of love unselfishly considers the welfare of others in the decisions that are made. Thus, a biblical definition of love always includes obedience to God's commandments and teachings. The apostle John wrote: "This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands" (I John 5:2-3). In other words, love for God and his children expresses itself by obeying his commands. This would include his commands prohibiting sexual relationships between two unmarried people (Hebrews 13:4). Any definition of love that leads to disobedience of what God has taught is not a godly love.

This teaching of God is further illustrated by the Ten Commandments that are the foundation of the law of God. The first four commandments—have no other gods, do not make idols, do not misuse the name of God and keep the Sabbath—fulfill the command to love God. The remaining six commandments—honor father and mother, do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not lie and do not covet—explain how to love my neighbor (cf. Romans 13:8-10). To disregard these fundamental principles for life is a failure to love either God or our fellow human beings.

For each individual to redefine love to suit his/her own purpose makes each person a law to himself, a sure prescription for a chaotic world of conflict and hurt. The Bible's definition of love as something that obeys God's commands restores harmony to our world. To disregard God's commandment against sexual immorality as proposed by some people will end up doing harm to each one involved. By God's definition, sexual

immorality even by consenting adults is only an expression of selfish lust. God's laws were designed to protect all of us from the hurt that comes from this. Don't fall prey to the false logic. Too many have already paid the tragic price in bitter tears and heartbreak as well as diseased bodies. Trust Jesus. Obey God's commandments, and you will find true love and eternal life both now and forever.

[Send questions or comments to University Church of Christ, 801 N. 12th, Murray, KY 42071 or phone 270-753-1881. This article is reproduced on the web: www.nchrist.org] 2013/07/26