

# THE SIN OF MASTURBATION

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### **Abbreviations used**

KJV – King James Version

NIV – New International Version

YLT – Young’s Literal Translation

LITV – Green’s Literal Translation

OJB – Orthodox Jewish Bible (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)

## INTRODUCTION

Masturbation is defined by Dictionary.com as follows:

- “1. The stimulation or manipulation of one’s own genitals, especially to orgasm; sexual self-gratification.*
- 2. The stimulation by manual or other means **exclusive of intercourse**, of another’s genitals, especially to orgasm.”*

Wikipedia has this to say:

*“Masturbation is the sexual stimulation of one’s own genitals for sexual arousal or other sexual pleasure, usually to the point of orgasm. The stimulation may involve hands, fingers, **everyday objects**, sex toys such as vibrators, or combinations of these.*

*Mutual masturbation (mutual manual stimulation of the genitals between partners) can be a **substitute** for sexual penetration.”*

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary puts it this way:

*“To masturbate yourself means to give yourself sexual pleasure by rubbing your sexual organs, and to masturbate somebody means to give somebody sexual pleasure by rubbing their sexual organs.”*

And, finally, the Dictionary of vocabulary.com makes it short and simple by saying that

*“to masturbate is to stimulate yourself sexually. In other words, to have sex by yourself, with yourself.”*

Some older alternative words for masturbation are “self-abuse” and “self-pollution”, while other common words for it include “pleasuring oneself”, “playing with yourself”, “solo-act”, and “jerking off”.

It is clear from the above definitions that masturbation does not involve actual intercourse, but rather serves as a substitute for it. It is also clear that masturbation does not have to reach orgasm. That is, even **before** or **without** reaching orgasm, the act of sexually pleasuring oneself is still masturbation.

However, the definitions that specifically say “genitals” make it look like the genitals are the only erogenous zones of the body whereas, in actual fact, there are many more such zones that give sexual pleasure when they are caressed or stimulated. For example, a woman can continue to sexually pleasure herself to orgasm (breast orgasm) by skillfully working on her nipples and other parts of her breast with a vibrator!

Science, medicine, psychology and sociology from their points of view all say that masturbation is perfectly OK and is quite beneficial and necessary. They are free to hold their views. This piece is concerned with the Godly, Biblical and Holy Spirit view, which, of course, is the only view that counts as it overrides all other views and is about our spiritual lives.

The English word “masturbation” cannot be found in the Bible because the word was formed from Latin in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, this does NOT mean the Bible is silent on masturbation (as many people think). There are Scripture passages that clearly relate to masturbation.

Let us now proceed to examine the Bible passages.

## EZEKIEL 16:17

*“Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them.” – KJV*

*“And you have taken beautiful things of My gold and of My silver, which I had given to you, and you made images of males, and fornicated with them.” – LITV*

*“And thou dost take thy beauteous vessels of My gold and My silver that I gave to thee, And dost make to thee images of a male, And dost go a-whoring with them.” – YLT*

In Ezekiel 16, God was reproofing Israel for forsaking Him (her Maker and Husband) and going after other gods (idols). Idolatry is usually referred to as ‘spiritual whoredom’ or ‘spiritual adultery’. Idolatry is a detestable sin before God and, throughout the Bible, God never hides His great dislike for it.

In Ezekiel 16:17, God **LIKENS** idolatry to a woman pleasuring herself with “images of men” – **dildos**, vibrators, sex toys, sex dolls and other objects. What, precisely, do we call that in today’s language? Answer: FEMALE MASTURBATION! (Yes, right there in the Bible!) If you have any doubts about this understanding of Ezekiel 16:17, then the following detailed rendering of the verse in the Orthodox Jewish Bible should dispel even the slightest doubt:

*“Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of My zahav and of My kesef, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself tzelamin (images) of zachar (male, i.e., phallic symbols), and didst play the zonah with them.” – OJB*

**GOD’S LIKENING OF DETESTABLE IDOLATRY TO FEMALE MASTURBATION SHOWS JUST HOW DETESTABLE FEMALE MASTURBATION IS BEFORE HIM. No question about that!**

Is male masturbation not equally sinful before God? That is, can God detest female masturbation but accept and applaud male masturbation? Of course, that cannot be. He is not such a God.

One may ask: When a woman masturbates using only her fingers without employing all those artificial ‘images of men’, is her masturbation then still sinful? The fact is that the image need not be a molten or graven one. There are also various printed, electronic and mental images! Hence, even if no sexual gadget is used, God who reads the heart sees the mental image being fantasized about. It may be some past or present persons admired, some film star, some popular musician, some model, etc. This is why some people who preach that masturbation is not a sin always stress the important proviso that it should not be in company with pornography, or it will become sin. But, even if pornography is not employed at the very moment of masturbation, THE MENTAL IMAGE OF PAST PRINTED, AUDIO, VISUAL OR EXPERIENTIAL EROTIC THINGS BEING FANTASIZED ABOUT DURING THE ACT are still there. And that is still a problem.

This leads us to the big question of if someone greatly longs for her/his spouse who is very far away at the moment and masturbates with hands alone while fantasizing about **only** that her/his legitimate spouse, is the masturbation still sinful? (Notice that in this question we say the spouse ‘very far away’, meaning that he/she could not be reached in a reasonably short time. If this were not so, an offshoot question would be, ‘why masturbate when you could soon be with your desired spouse and have the real sex?’)

The big question would be answered bit by bit as we go on examining more Scriptures.

### **LEVITICUS 15:16-18**

*“16. When a man has an emission of semen, he must bathe his whole body with water, and he will be unclean till evening. 17. Any clothing or leather that has semen on it must be washed with water, and it will be unclean till evening. 18. When a man lies with a woman and there is an emission of semen, both must bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.” – NIV*

In this passage, we see how defiling an unintentional emission of semen is. It prevented people from entering the presence of God until the close of the day of occurrence. (Unclean persons or things were not allowed into the Temple of God).

Two cases are mentioned here. The first case involves a man alone, whether he is awake or is sleeping and has a ‘wet dream’. The second case involves the presence of a woman with whom close bodily contact stimulates the man to have the emission (either the preliminary little ones or the full final one). This can happen whether the man is still awake or had fallen asleep. Of course, when a man is awake he could feel it coming but could not hold it back probably because it had gone beyond the point of control. However, even when a man is asleep the biological (or even spiritual) processes can still go on and result in an involuntary emission that the man notices only when he wakes up.

NOW, IF INVOLUNTARY EMISSIONS ARE SO DEFILING, CAN PREMEDITATED, WILLFULLY PRODUCED EMISSIONS BE LESS DEFILING? No way! Male masturbation is as defiling and detestable before God as female masturbation.

In John’s first Epistle, the Bible does acknowledge that even the best Christians will occasionally slip and fall. When they then confess their sin and repent, God is faithful and just and will forgive and cleanse (1John 1:9). However, it is not acceptable for a so-called Christian to consciously continue in the practice of a sinful habit (1John 5:18). Dear Christian, consider this: If you were there in the time of Moses, would you have liked to regularly do a thing that kept preventing you from entering God’s Temple? Should we today use the excuse of Calvary to do so?

A question one could ask here is: ‘If a man masturbates but avoids the emission of semen, could such masturbation still defile?’ From what we found earlier, problems may still arise from the objects he may utilize or from the mental image he performs with. What of if he is a married man who uses only his hand and fantasizes about only his wife and is able to avoid emission of semen; is the masturbation still sinful? The great thing to consider here is whether one can possibly masturbate without utilizing one object or the other. It need not be a sex gadget. Is cream or lather not an “image” of or “substitute” for natural female virginal lubrication? Is soft cloth, pillow or foam not an “image” of or “substitute” for a woman’s exquisite softness? No man pleasures himself

with sharp stones or any hard, abrasive or spiky material. So, the “image” or “substitute” aspect is still there! THAT IS, ANY COMMONPLACE THING OR EVERYDAY OBJECT THAT SERVES AS A SUBSTITUTIONARY “IMAGE” OF (OR REPLACEMENT FOR) ANY NATURALLY ENDOWED PROPERTY OF THE OPPOSITE SEX!

Let us now examine more Scriptures.

### **JAMES 1:13-16, ROMANS 13:14**

*“13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth SIN: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16. Do not err, my beloved brethren.” – James 1:13-16 (KJV)*

[In NIV Bible, verse 16 reads: “Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers.”]

*“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” – Romans 13:14 (KJV)*

From James 1:13 we see that concerning masturbation one should not give the excuse that it is due to “natural” desire. James explains in verse 14 that one is overcome when he/she fails to fight against and dismiss lustful desires, but rather indulges in them. Verse 15 states that what is born from dwelling upon and indulging in lustful desires is sin. FROM THIS, WE CANNOT SAY THAT MASTURBATION, WHICH RESULTS FROM DWELLING ON LUSTFUL DESIRES AND DELIBERATELY ACTING ON THEM, IS NOT A SIN.

Notice what God says in the very next verse (verse 16). He immediately warns us that we should not allow ourselves be deceived! Does the wonderful wisdom of God’s word not amaze you? God knew that Satan the crafty old

serpent will contradict the great truth stated in verse 15 and deceive some people to believe that there exist some of the offspring born when lust hath conceived (for example, masturbation), yet which are NOT sin. They will thereby err and feel free to abide in sinful practices. Are you among the millions who have been thus misled? One can be sincere, yet in error. Please, retract your steps, I entreat you. *“Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth”*...not righteous deeds or harmless innocent deeds but... *“SIN.”*

Masturbation is contrary to Romans 13:14 because in masturbation one either reads, listens to or watches erotic material or just personally imagines erotic fantasies; then may bring in the gel, foam, dildo, toy, gadget, doll or other things; then ensures privacy and safety. After making some or all of these provisions, the person then commits the act of sexual self-gratification to fulfil the desires of the flesh or the lusts thereof.

## ONANISM

The word ‘Onanism’ is coined from the deeds of Onan as recorded in Genesis 38:6-10.

*“6. Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. 7. But Er, Judah’s firstborn, was wicked in the LORD’s sight; so the LORD put him to death.*

*8. Then Judah said to Onan, ‘Lie with your brother’s wife and fulfil your duty to her as a brother-in-law to produce offspring for your brother. 9. But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so whenever he lay with his brother’s wife, he spilled the semen on the ground to keep from producing offspring for his brother. 10. What he did was wicked in the LORD’s sight; so he put him to death also.’ – NIV*

Clearly, Onan was having full intercourse with the lady. Hence, it was NOT masturbation. The only semblance to masturbation is the deliberate spilling of semen on the ground. His reason for such action was his unwillingness to raise offspring in his late brother’s name. Onan’s deed is what

is commonly called ‘withdrawal’ method or technically called ‘*coitus interruptus*’, in which a man who feels he is about to ejaculate suddenly interrupts the coitus, quickly withdraws his organ from the woman and spills the semen elsewhere so as to prevent pregnancy.

Hence, Onanism is not directly under masturbation but could better be discussed under Birth Control or Family Planning or even the wider issue of man desiring to exploit and enjoy God’s provisions without accepting God’s directives on how, why, where or when to enjoy or not enjoy those provisions.

The Law provided for a surviving brother to go in to the widow of a late brother who had died childless, and raise children in the late brother’s name. If Onan was determined not to bear children who would not be legally and officially recognized as his own, then why take advantage of the provisions of the Law and enjoy the widow but wastefully spill life-producing semen instead of depositing it where God designed for it to serve its intended purpose? It goes back to the old issue of ‘enjoyment without responsibility’ or trying to eat your cake and have it too. (Compare Onan’s behavior to the upright and responsible behavior recorded in Ruth 4:1-17, about which God was **not** offended with anybody, including that nearest kinsman who had decently declined.)

Onan thought he could outsmart God, and he got what he deserved. Please, never think to outwit God in this life – it never works! Don’t listen to Satan’s old lie that God is trying to prevent you from enjoying yourself and that you’d be better off by being a god yourself, deciding for yourself what is good and what is evil, setting your own moral standards, following your heart and doing your thing your own way. That lie seemed appealing at the Garden of Eden, but it brought death. Today, it will only lead you to everlasting doom.

[Note: Though I have explained Onanism in the above way, we should also take cognizance of an argument put forth by some people. They contend that we should not completely rule out the possibility that wasteful spilling of precious semen was among the many things for which God punished Onan. They cite the example of an incident of armed robbery and explain that in a law court, though the case is that of armed robbery, the culprits could face associated many count charges like breaking and entering, malicious damage, unlawful possession of firearms, attempted homicide, etc.

Do they seem to have a point there? In masturbation too, there is usually the spilling of semen.]

## CONCLUSION

As a minister of God who, by God's grace, has had the privilege of counselling and helping people resolve marital problems for over the past three decades, I have deep knowledge of the adverse effects masturbation has on the marital lives of people. Moreover, the Lord has been showing and telling me many things about the demon of masturbation and the various things that take place in the spirit realm as people engage in that sinful act.

However, I have deliberately chosen to limit this writing about masturbation strictly to what is found on the pages of the Bible – God's written Word. The Bible should be the final basis for all Christian beliefs and teachings. It is hardly silent on any issue of this life. The real truth about any and all things that pertain unto life and godliness are inside its pages – only if we would allow the Holy Spirit to show it to us and teach us.

I have witnessed God deliver many people from various habits, bondages and addiction. Masturbation is not an exception. If you realize your error and are deeply repentant, God can deliver and keep you as He has done for many others. But there must first be your realization and acceptance of the truth and a renewal of your mind through a change of your belief, mentality and attitude about the issue of masturbation. And that has been the very purpose of this writing.

I pray that God help His children in Jesus' name. You can reach me with your questions, comments and prayer requests via my email address given at the end of this piece.

GOD BLESS YOU.

### **NOTE:**

*If a man's **pure** semen is required for medical analysis, the easiest and most direct way would be for him to masturbate and collect it in the specimen bottle or test tube. (This could even be done right there in the hospital laboratory). The alternative method of having actual intercourse but wearing a condom to collect it entails the need for a legitimate spouse. What then of*

*unmarried persons? Would they have to go and fornicate? Indeed, even between spouses there is the risk that due to one thing or the other the desired **purity** of the specimen could be compromised.*

*Hence, in such medical situations masturbation is excusable since it does not arise from a desire to pleasure oneself but arises from the specific medical need.]*

*Dear friend, if this book has been a blessing to you, then own a copy for reference; and, please, do the good work of helping your friends and others get copies of this liberating truth. May God bless you.*

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## **About the Author**

The author, an erstwhile university lecturer in Mathematics and Statistics has been a full-time gospel minister for the past three decades and is now a Bishop in Mount Olive Church of Christ, Nigeria – a full-gospel evangelical and deliverance ministry. He is married to Maddie, a co-minister, and they are blessed with five children.

*Cover design by the author.*

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