

50 Shades Of Wrong

After weeks on best-seller lists around the world, and months of publicity surrounding the movie, the erotic drama, *50 Shades Of Grey*, finally opened at the box office week before last. It set a new record for the highest grossing President's Day Weekend opener of all time and ranks among the biggest R-rated debuts in history. The book trilogy (including *50 Shades Darker* and *50 Shades Freed*, both published in 2012) has sold over 100 million copies worldwide and been translated into 52 languages. *50 Shades Of Grey* set a record in the United Kingdom as the fastest-selling paperback of all time. A lot of couples probably thought this was a great Valentine's Day date movie, but do not be deceived. Although massively successful, the underlying message of how a man treats a woman is anything but pure.

I have not seen the movie nor read the book, but there is plenty of information online that describes the plot and content. Anastasia Steele, a young college graduate, has an affair with a handsome young billionaire, Christopher Grey. He was abused as a child, and she wants to help him, so she is pressured to sign a contract giving him total control over her. The book then details his abnormal sexual desires (sexual bondage, discipline, sadism and masochism [BDSM], including handcuffing and whipping). After a period of reluctance, she gives in to him and experiences this sexual perversity. In typical Hollywood fashion, the relationship is depicted as sensual, but it ultimately fails because Anastasia realizes that the two of them are incompatible. The gorgeous actors and slick production masks a troubling recipe of sexual deviancy and abuse.

Although the movie is cutting edge as far as pop culture goes, the Bible details how godly men and women should interact. God made man in His image (Genesis 1:26-27). This means, among other facts, that men and women are to be pure and holy. They are not to be polluted by the Devil or the world's misguided views on sexual intimacy (Romans 12:2).

Because woman is God's masterpiece, made from man's own flesh (Genesis 2:21-23), she is inherently worthy of honor and respect. When a man marries a woman, he should nourish and cherish her like his own body (Ephesians 5:29). He should never manipulate her into doing something — intimate or not — that makes her uncomfortable or is shameful. If this is true in marriage, would it not also be true when a couple is dating? If your boyfriend is emotionally abusive and stalks, intimidates, or tries to isolate you from people you love, like the male character from *50 Shades Of Grey*, it is time to end the relationship. If your boyfriend tries to see your naked body before it is shared in the covenanted relationship of marriage, like the male character from *50 Shades Of Grey*, it is time to end the relationship.

God created sexual intimacy for mankind's enjoyment, but it is enjoyed only in the relationship of marriage. Paul wrote that men and women should marry to "avoid fornication" (1 Corinthians 7:2). When speaking of how they treat each sexually, Paul said it should be mutually respectful: "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of

her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife” (1 Corinthians 7:3-4).

Peter said that women should manifest a “meek and quiet spirit” (1 Peter 3:3-4), and men who love them should develop that spirit, not through obsessive control, but through being a holy man and directing her to God’s word (passages such as Proverbs 31:10-31 come to mind).

Real love never dishonors others. It is never self-seeking. It always protects the object to which it is affixed. Paul, by inspiration, revealed the perfect definition of love: “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

Instead of putting your energy into someone who is only interested in your naked body, love the person who vows to always love and build up your naked soul. Look for the young man or woman who will defend you, not degrade you. The Devil wants to corrupt true love, but men and women who respect the Bible and each other will not be steered wrong (Proverbs 3:1-2).

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