

Sexual Bonding

There's a reason why breaking up from a sexual relationship is much more emotionally painful and much harder to forget than one that didn't involve sex. There are several neurochemical processes that occur during sex, which are the "glue" to human bonding.

Sex is a powerful brain stimulant. When someone is involved sexually, it makes him or her want to repeat that act. Their brain produces lots of dopamine—a powerful chemical, which is compared to heroin on the brain. Dopamine is your internal pleasure/reward system. When dopamine is involved, it changes how we remember.

The other part is oxytocin, which is designed to mainly help us forget what is painful. Oxytocin is a hormone produced primarily in women's bodies. When a woman has a child and she is breastfeeding, she produces lots of oxytocin, which bonds her to her child. For this reason, mothers will die for their child, because they've become emotionally bonded due to the oxytocin that is released when they're skin-to-skin with their child.

The same phenomenon occurs when a woman is intimate with a man. Oxytocin is released, and this makes her bond to him emotionally. Have you wondered sometimes why a woman will stay with a man who's abusing her? We know now that it's because she bonded to him emotionally because of the oxytocin released during sex.

Men produce vasopressin, which is also referred to as the "monogamy hormone," and it has the same effect as oxytocin has on a woman. It bonds a man to a woman.

These "bonding" agents narrow our selection to one person. That is wonderful in a marriage relationship but really bad in a dating relationship because you lose your objectivity when you're searching for your potential lifemate.

Impaired Judgment

According to neuropsychologist Dr. Tim Jennings, "When you have premarital sex, your reward circuitry is bonded to them now, and it will be much deeper and hurtful. Oftentimes, in breakups of people who've been sexually active, they can't tolerate the sense of emptiness, so they rush into another relationship. The neuro circuits did not have time to reset, and so they're impaired in their ability to bond with the next person, and they may become sexually active with them. This is just a repetitive cycle, and there are real impairments in bonding going on."

Becoming Bonded With Porn

These same neurochemicals are present when viewing pornography. A man will become bonded with whatever he is engaged in during the moment these chemicals are released. When your relationship is being carried on with an image, you become bonded to whatever you're viewing.

Dr. Doug Weiss, a marriage counselor, advises men to have eye contact with their wives during sex because they become bonded with that person. By doing this, he explains that, over time, individuals will decrease the "neural pathway to pornography and sexually inappropriate thoughts and believes and glue to healthy sexuality to [their] wife. When your brain thinks sex, it thinks, 'Where's my wife?' And that is a great way to fight this battle."

Discovering how our minds were designed to operate by a magnificent Creator reveals truth in the way we are to live.

Cycle of Sexual Sin

For someone viewing porn, one of the functions of oxytocin is to separate the experience and the excitement from the intensity of the shame. According to neuropsychologist Dr. Jes Montgomery, “Usually by the time they turn the computer off, they are already sinking into a sense of failure and shame, and the function of oxytocin is to tell the brain, 'Wait a minute. You don't want to remember that. You want to hold on to this excitement and this amazing magic that you just experienced.'”

Knowing how these neurochemicals interact and change the brain help us understand why sex is meant to be kept within the boundaries of marriage. You see the overtones here about God's design for His pure temple. This is another reason why the devil attacks our sexuality so much—because in attacking human sexuality, it actually interferes with human bonding.

So, for those practicing sex outside of marriage, they are creating a bond with their partner, thus inhibiting their discernment of whether they should remain in that relationship. God wired and designed our brains for a specific purpose: to bond ourselves with the person we marry.

Jennings, Weiss and Montgomery are just several of the many experts featured in the *Conquer* series 6-disk DVD set who provide amazing insight that help set men free from sexual sin, while providing practical steps to live in purity.

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