

1: Real Sex : Lauren F. Winner :

Lauren Winner: At the core of this book is an effort to offer a definition, in a Christian vocabulary and grammar, of good sex, even (as the title suggests) of real sex. I seek to set out the characteristics of good sex, and to explore who partakes of it, under what circumstances.

Article by Laura C. The work is readable and well-organized. In her second chapter, "Real Sex," she begins, appropriately enough, with Scriptural backing for what follows. The third chapter on "Communal Sex" addresses societal misconceptions about sex. The sixth chapter, "On the Steps of the Rotunda" suggests common-sense guidance about sex outside of marriage. The seventh chapter, "Chastity as Spiritual Discipline" offers positive encouragement for how both single and married Christians can conform their lives, sexual and otherwise, to Scriptural teaching. Chapter eight, "Communities of Chastity" proposes gentle correctives about how the Church can do a better job incorporating singles into its life and practices. Winner ends with a final practical chapter, "Responding to M" in which the inevitable question about past sins is addressed. Despite the occasional unnecessarily suggestive titles or subtitles--"Real Sex"; "Communal Sex"--she gives biblical and healthy ways for Christians to think about sex. What Winner means by "real sex" is sexual behavior defined by Scriptural foundations. For Christians the only "real sex" is within marriage 25, As she rightly observes: Conversely, "the faux sex that goes on outside marriage is not really sex at all" Winner grounds this vision noting obvious but important truths: Though she states her goal "is to provide companionship and strength for the journey for unmarried people who are trying to live in a Christian moral universe" 24 what Winner actually covers is more broad. There is sage advice here not only for singles but also for those who are married and the Church community in general. Throughout Winner addresses cultural lies that have infiltrated the Church. Within this discussion, she insightfully notes that society on the one hand tells us "that sex is the most important thing there is" 77 ; on the other hand "the shapers of popular culture tell us that sex is meaningless" 78 , hence the notion of "casual" sex. Yet as Winner indicates "casual sex is a contradiction in terms. It may seem casual, but in fact it is, always profound" Sexual encounters are not just about being "committed" to one another, regardless of marital status Sin "whispers to us about the goodness of something not good. It makes distortions feel good" Yet if sin did not feel good, "there would be a lot less sinning in the world. And if we felt great every time we did something good and worthy and true" 89 surely we would all be saints. These are important points. Some of the lies in the Church Winner identifies seem a bit dated. Are churches really teaching that "premarital sex is guaranteed to make you feel lousy" 85ff? Or that "bodies and sex are gross, dirty, or just plain unimportant" 93ff? One would hope that the Church has moved beyond these manifestly false assertions. Regardless Winner is surely correct in stating: Women like men crave the emotional connectivity that sex seems to offer" Whether one ultimately ends up agreeing with her or not, Winner offers practical suggestions for "Christians who are trying to live chastely" and seek "concrete guidance" They shape the type of Christians we become. What we do matters--not because good behavior gets us into heaven, but because behavior, good and bad, creates certain expectations in us, teaches us certain lessons" Having established Scripturally that sexual intercourse is intended only within the context of marriage, she suggests that single Christians may only go so far as they are willing to do publicly. She also offers her views on pornography ff , masturbation ff , and why premarital sex seems more thrilling than "married" sex ff. She reminds those both single and married what sex means within the Body of Christ. In the Christian grammar, we have no right to sex. The place where the church confers that privilege on you is the wedding; weddings grant us license to have sex with one person She additionally places chastity within the context of Christian discipline noting that The spiritual disciplines are things that we do; they are things that we practice. They are ways we orient our whole selves--our bodies and minds and hearts, our communities and rhythms and ways of being in the world--toward God A constant strength in this work is this ability to relate sexual practice to Christian practices as a whole. In singleness we see not only where our true dependence lies, but also who and what our real family is. Singleness reminds Christians that the church is our primary family" These are needed reminders. At the end of the day, single and married people need one another since the Church, not our

biological family, is what Scripture teaches is our real family. Winner concludes her work by addressing repentance. What if one has already committed sexual sins? Again she places sexual sin in a broader context pointing out that all sin is forgivable. Christians ought not to look back at past sins, but rather they need to live faithfully now. In the end, "We seek to do right because we fear the wrath of God, but more centrally because we have died to sin and been given a new self." This does not come easily or naturally. For many, adopting chastity "requires prayer, teaching, work, reformation, even weeping. It requires that we tell each other the story of the gospel, and the narrative of chastity over and over and over. If right behavior begins with right thinking, then Winner will prove a helpful guide for Christians seeking to navigate the Scylla of culture and the Charybdis of ecclesial and Scriptural teaching. Her "Autobiographical Excursion" begins: I first had sex when I was fifteen, with a guy I met at summer camp." This is one of various sexual confessions both prior and subsequent to coming to Christian faith. It points to a weakness with testimonies in general: As she later observes: Conversations, debates, and revelations about sex are everywhere in our common culture. Sexual chatter is downright ambient. According to one study, over 14, sexual references are shown on TV per year. In offering such a confessional account, it would seem that Winner has inadvertently become part of this "sexual chatter. The problem is how we talk about sex" 63 and with this qualifier perhaps opens a space for her book. Nonetheless, her accounts at times detract from her otherwise thoughtful reflections on Christian chastity and proper sexual behavior. Brazos, Review by Laura C.

2: NPR Choice page

Sex Jumpstarts a New Conversation Lauren Winner Author of Real Sex and Girl Meets God The Dirt on Writing about Sex Justin Lookadoo Author of The Dirt on Sex Laugh It Up: Writing with Humor Lorilee Craker Author of We Should Do This More Often and See How They Run Section Five Master the Specifics: Learning from Genre Experts

While the language she uses to talk about sex is very academic, what she writes is just not logically or textually supported. She is going to be bold and different and find out what the Bible really says! Actually, the relevant texts are given a very thin gloss and then she winds up saying pretty much the same things the church has been saying for years without any meaningful critique. Prayer is a discipline. You learn to pray in small doses. You start simply with mealtime prayers and bedtime prayers. You learn different forms of prayer. You study how people prayed in the Bible. You learn how to meditate on a passage of scripture. Over time you might work up to fasting and prayer or all night prayer vigils. You work up to them, gradually. Chastity, the way single Christians are asked to practice it by the church, does not work like that. She and the church are asking people just learning to walk to run a marathon. It is widely known that in America people are getting married later and later. The average age of marriage has climbed past thirty and is rapidly heading towards forty. For some ethnicities and classes, studies show that marriage is increasingly unlikely to occur at all. This is sobering, all by itself, but consider its implications for a young Christian trying to stay chaste. Assuming that that person, without any restrictions, would start having sex around the age of 15 and that they do not get married until the age of 35, they are facing twenty years of trying for total abstinence. Two decades of abstinence sounds less like chastity and more like a vow of celibacy. Does the teen girl who signs a purity pledge know that that is essentially what she is making? And if not, when she realizes it, will she stick to her pledge? That seems pretty unlikely. Winner devotes a few pages to attempting to show that Paul specifically forbade premarital sex. Her argument is not especially thorough or convincing, though. It is clear that Winner thinks that this is basically self-evident. Once again, it is not. Women especially could expect to be married off in their mid teens. Men might hold off until the ripe old age of their early twenties, but that late by the standards of the time. The opportunities for sex before marriage were rare, and would not have been a great concern for Paul or anyone else in his day. Again, when Paul was writing people married young. The idea that someone, especially a woman, would wait until her thirties or forties until her first marriage would have been virtually inconceivable to Paul. Have we become the Pharisees of sexuality? But I feel that there is a strong case that Christians need to reexamine what it means to be a single, sexual being in a time where marriage may not take place until mid life.

3: Lauren Winner's Divorce - Tony Jones - Theologian

*Lauren Winner is an ordained Episcopal priest and the author of *Girl Meets God*, *Real Sex*, *Mudhouse Sabbath*, and *Still*, which won the Christianity Today Book Award in Spirituality. She teaches at Duke Divinity School in Durham North Carolina, and is a faculty mentor for Seattle Pacific University's Low-Residency MFA in Creative Writing.*

Splashed across magazine covers, billboards, and computer screens--sex is thrilling, necessary, unavoidable. The Naked Truth about Chastity, Lauren Winner speaks candidly to single Christians about the difficulty--and the importance--of sexual chastity. With nuance and wit, she talks about her own sexual journey. Never dodging tough terms like "confession" and "sin," she grounds her discussion of chastity first and foremost in scripture. She confronts cultural lies about sex and challenges how we talk about sex in church newsflash: Building on the thought of Wendell Berry, she argues that sex is communal rather than private, personal rather than public. Refusing to slink away from thorny topics, Winner deftly addresses pornography, masturbation, and the perennial question of "how far is too far? What does chastity have to do with loving my neighbor? How does my sexual behavior form habits and expectations? With compassion and grit, she calls Christians, both married and single, to pursue chastity as conversion and amendment of life. *Real Sex* will be an essential read for single Christians grappling with chastity, for married Christians committed to monogamy, and for those who counsel them. Discussion questions have been added to the paperback edition. Endorsements "It is unquestionably impossible to write a book about sex that is as exciting as the topic itself. But Lauren Winner comes close. She has written a book of beauty, mystery, stern challenge, and great joy. And she has written it in a humble, honest, literate, elegant voice. I hope it finds many readers. Now we pastors have a book we can give with confidence to people we serve and lead who have questions about sexuality. It is gentle, firm, honest, candid, reverent, informed, wise, apt, warm, human, and--in the best sense of the word--spiritual. But so too do words like thoughtful, commanding, unflinching, and surgically insightful. *Real Sex* is far and away the most accessible, best argued, clearest exposition of Christian teaching on sexuality that I have read in years. I commend it to every contemporary Christian regardless of his or her age and stage in life. The Ancient Christian Path of Transformation "I receive at least four internet offers a day to enlarge a body part I do not have, yet churches are increasingly reticent to speak with candor about the ins and outs of fallen and faithful sex. When Protestants do speak, we often divide to encourage supposedly liberating antinomianism or purportedly biblical shame. *Real Sex* is instead a hopeful and sober book, encouraging readers to risk vulnerable intimacy and fidelity. Chastity, it turns out, is hard, grace-filled work, worthy of our effort and prayer. And she writes with all the vulnerability, intelligence, scholarly research, pop culture awareness, and anecdotal evidence this topic requires. Reviews Christianity Today Book Award Winner "Winner, author of the critically acclaimed memoir *Girl Meets God*, weaves an intriguing tapestry from sociological, autobiographical, pastoral, and historical threads. She balances a journalistic report of how difficult chastity is for American Christians; a personal account of how she and her friends have approached premarital sex and marital sex; a survey of what the Bible, pastors, and good Christian books say about the topic; and an overview of how chastity has been understood throughout Christian history. The candor with which Winner writes about sex may alarm some Christian readers, but those who follow her arguments to their conclusions will find themselves rewarded with fresh insights about an overdiscussed but still deeply entrenched problem among Christians. Winner places real sex not in the passionate world of one-night stands and dating relationships but in the ordinary, domestic life of married couples. As such, she helpfully and perhaps even radically reframes both the Christian and cultural discussion of chastity and sexuality. The book gives practical ideas for living a chaste life, portraying chastity as a spiritual discipline. The church must teach us who God has created us to be, must inculcate in us the practices and disciplines that we require if we are to be chaste in a world where it seems like everyone is hooking up with everyone else. This book is a great resource for pastors and congregations. Winner defends marriage as a clenched-fisted, revolutionary endeavor that is against just about everything we have been taught to believe, and her defense of singleness as the primary vocation of Christians is equally defiant. She also offers practical ideas about what churches can do support

us in our vocations of marriage and singleness. *Real Sex* is destined to be one of the most useful books for churches to be published this year. Willimon, *Christian Century* "A candid, readable, intelligent, and deeply Christian reflection on the meaning of sexuality and the generally unpopular and misunderstood virtue of chastity. Speaking most specifically to people who are young and single, Lauren Winner is the friendly and informed guide many are looking for in living the Christian alternative in a culture of erotic disorder. Although the author is not a Catholic, there are clear intimations of what Catholics call the theology of the body. It involves unceasing prayer, diligent discernment and a fierce battle against the lies that our culture and church communicate to us related to sexuality. *Real Sex* is full of hope--hope that frank discussion will triumph over platitudes, that sexual wholeness can be recovered even after virginity has been lost and that we can all relearn what authentic sexuality is even in the face of cultural mythology. She then proceeds to help us develop a Christian understanding of sex that is biblical, historical and God-honoring. Lots of people can write about sex; some people can write accurately about the value of restraint. How many can do those things in a candid, strikingly insightful and, yes, entertaining fashion? She shares authentically about a challenging time of life with which many will identify and empathize. Read [*Real Sex*] to help you engage the immediacy and earthiness of sexuality and spirituality today. Holst, *National Catholic Reporter* "An epidemic of sexual perversion is sweeping through our generation. Lauren Winner tackles this topic with wit and a directive to confront cultural lies about sex and challenge how we talk about it at Church. This book will help [church leaders as they] talk about sex and the issues that surround it with singles who are weighing chastity and married couples who are committed to monogamy. Winner wrote about her own sexual experiences in *Girl*, and she returns to the topic in a fuller way here. *Real Sex* is always honest, sometimes profound, and hip enough to give to your teenage daughter. Leithart, *Touchstone* "[*Real Sex*] makes a strong case for biblical sexual morality. Her approach and honesty about her own past is compelling. *Real Sex*, however, is far from an uncomfortable, prudish lecture about the evils of the body. In a straightforward and conversational style, Winner shares her own sexual history and speaks frankly about often-taboo topics such as pornography and masturbation. One of the most appealing aspects of this book is the explanation of the title. Outside of marriage, sex is not only wrong, it is inappropriate on a deep and cosmic level. Here Winner hits the nail on the head in a new, refreshing way. Anyone interested in staying sexually pure or helping others in the church do so will find much food for thought in this intriguing book. Most importantly, Winner offers precise, practical advice for those seeking to practice chastity. Winner wisely notes that attempts at living chastely fail unless they are entwined with daily prayer and Bible study. It packs a real punch in a slender package. Her purpose in writing was also to define the biblical vision for sex and the real challenges of living within that vision. The author offers tools of accountability and community dialogue to assist in determining good boundaries. It looks honestly at the current views and actions of the church and offers suggested changes; it encourages honest and intentional discussions about sex we would add: Winner grounds each issue firmly in scriptural thought, theology and common sense. One of the most appealing aspects of the book is the explanation of its title, the belief that sex was created for and only makes sense within the marriage relationship. Clergy ought to read *Real Sex* and preach from it. There is a desperate need for more good Christian minds to be thinking about and writing about sex. In *Real Sex*, author Lauren Winner has done a good job of sketching out a Christian view of sexuality for a popular audience. This is vital material for the current generation. The book is densely packed, and ranges from foundational theology to practical advice. She has met the subject of chastity head-on by providing insightful analysis and good practical advice. Hers is one book that church leaders, parents of teenagers, and Christians who struggle with chastity should read, digest, and discuss at length. Thomas, *Christian Research Journal* "Winner is a brilliant writer. Here, her honesty and her art provide a wise, engaging guide toward embracing healthy sexuality. The result is a new or very old, depending on how you look at it schema through which single Christians can view their sexuality and its ramifications not just for themselves, but also for the body of Christ. This emphasis on community in relation to sexuality is one of the most radical aspects of *Real Sex*. Winner manages to be open about her own sexual missteps without wearing them like badges of honor. And in doing so, she provides an example of how to live faithfully with past sin--learning from it without taking pride in it. *Real Sex* offers a compelling

example of how all of us--single or married--can reframe our thoughts on sex and chastity within a more holistically biblical framework. And it does so in an honest, thoughtful way that I hope will help refresh the larger conversation about chastity and sexual fidelity in Christian circles. I highly recommend it to all. The book is a gem. No other contemporary book comes close to addressing chastity as clearly, forthrightly, and convincingly as does this one. To be quite clear, if you are a pastor, a campus minister, a youth worker, mentor, or counselor, you need to be familiar with this book and have it available for others to digest. If you are a single Christian struggling with chastity or a married Christian committed to monogamy but grappling with the lure of past misadventures, you also can benefit by absorbing this helpful book. In offering this gentle and insightful volume, Lauren Winner has graced us with something of substantial value: Do yourself a favor: Read this book, begin the daily discipline of appropriating its wisdom, and then pass it along for another to read. Ryan, Presbyterian "I find the point of the book compelling: Chastity is argued for, provocatively explained, and its difficulties and objections to it illustrated. In terms of language and style, the book is well crafted. It is thought out and well-organized in scope and treatment of its topic. It is evidently written by a well-read, serious-minded person with an excellent feel for contemporary American language and cultural trends. She clearly goes against the grain of our contemporary sexual trend without becoming wild-eyed, obnoxious, or dismissive of the claims and problems of other-minded people. Winner is theologically engaging and responsible in her handling of Scripture.

4: Real Sex: The Naked Truth about Chastity by Lauren F. Winner

In Real Sex, heralded young author Lauren F. Winner speaks candidly to Christians about the difficulty—and the importance—of sexual chastity. With honesty and wit, she talks about her struggle to live a celibate life.

We really believe that if we were not part of this people we could not be saved. So when the church has opinions about how you spend your money, how you have sex, how you vote, this is salvation. Pym, who was born in Shropshire in , wrote novels set in post-war English villages populated by vicars, spinsters, and well-meaning but slightly inept housewives. Pym was a master of the comedy of manners, simultaneously arch and generous, and she is often likened to Jane Austen. Twenty-nine-year-old Prudence is rapidly on her way to old-maid status, and Jane attempts to fix her up with the recently widowed Fabian Driver. One week, Jane pays Prudence a visit in London. I was just thinking of you, really. A married woman does feel in some way responsible for her unmarried friends, you know. It was such a ridiculous word; it reminded her of full-blown Restoration comedy women. Prudence burst into laughter, in which Jane was able to join her with some relief. Is there anything wrong between us? Now, Jane, what about a hot-water bottle? Though written over fifty years ago, in a perhaps more delicate and decorous age, this scene perfectly demonstrates the discomfort of conversation between friends about sex. Jane, surely, is curious, and perhaps she is even living vicariously through Prudence, but she is above all trying to care for her friend. Yet she is unsure how exactly to do so. All in all, her attempt to talk to Prudence about her relationship with Fabian is a dismal failure. For her part, Prudence thinks Jane, with her wholesome chocolate beverage, is a bit of a bore. It is not surprising that Prudence is miffed—does Jane really have a right to chide her about her romance with Fabian? We ought not risk looking prudish, or invasive, or presumptuous, by putting our oar in. But if sex is public, it is not communal. I can show you my midriff in public, and I can make out with my boyfriend on a park bench, but there is no communal grammar that allows you to talk to me about this body I am exposing in front of you. Underpinning everything else we say about sex is the assumption and insistence that you ought to keep your nose out of my bedroom. Sexual intimacy is a sensitive, key relationship of human existence and the development of human personality. From movies and TV shows to online mags and the nightly news, everyone is telling us that sex is private. Homer tells the tale of an anonymous couple—Mr. Y—who practice the delicate art of elbow nibbling underneath the covers. Crittenden, who has made a name for herself bashing second-wave feminism and the sexual revolution, is very much a cultural conservative, and Amanda Bright Home, on the whole, valorizes a pretty traditional and conservative view of things. No swingingly single heroine here. Rather, our Amanda is a smart and sassy Ivy League grad who has turned her back on money and professional glamour to stay at home with her kids. Most women will close the novel thinking they should marry, have lots of babies, and then devote themselves to the arts of housewifery and childcare. Amanda, shocked and angry, is worried about her friend. Susie was a big girl, the affair was none of their business. Put simply, this is a lie. And it is a fairly new lie. For most of human history, people of many different cultures have agreed that societies must order certain forms of exchange in order to survive. Communities have ordered language, establishing grammars and vocabularies that shape how people communicate with one another; they have ordered the exchange of money, property, and labor; and they have ordered the practice of sex. But Roxanne and her boyfriend use condoms, so it is easy for her to dismiss any concern I might have about kids. Today, thanks to the Pill, we can generally if not completely sever the connection between sex and child-making; indeed, the advent of reliable birth control was a major factor in privatizing sex in the West. Or what about my mom? For starters, the way I talk about sex is conditioned by the beginning of Genesis. The understanding laid out in chapter two that sex is made for marriage is vital to my belief that sex is a communal task. Marriage serves as the biblical analogy par excellence to the relationship between God and His people. Over and over in sacred scripture, that relationship is described as a marriage. When the people of Israel are faithful to God, Israel is described as a bride; when she turns away from God, she is called a harlot. Similarly, the writers of the New Testament found that one way to capture the relationship between Christ and the church was to draw an analogy to husband and wife. Through these

analogies, marriage is substantively linked to community. Marriageâ€™because of what marriage is, the analogue to God and His relationship to His peopleâ€™precedes sex. This ordering of marriage and sexâ€™the understanding that marriage contains sex, rather than that sex adorns marriageâ€™implies a resonance between sex and community. But perhaps a more important disagreement between Roxanne and me has to do with individualism. Sex is communal because it is real. Sex is dangerous and delightful and tempestuous and elemental, and it matters. What we do with our bodies, what we do sexually, shapes our persons. How we comport ourselves sexually shapes who we are. If we believe that sex forms us, then it goes without saying that it is public business, because how we build the persons we areâ€™persons who are social and communal and political and economic beingsâ€™is itself a matter of social concern. Even in America, which sometimes seems to value individualism above all else, we never hesitate to insist that formative institutions are public business. We have heated debates about controversial exhibits at art museums, because we recognize that the art we spend time with shapes the persons we are, and who we are is a public problem. As with art and education, so with sex. Because sex forms us, sex is a community matter. Sexual ethics make good sense even in a world governed by individualism. Still, the real place of disagreement between Roxanne and me is the assumption of individualism itself. But in the Christian universe, the individual is not the vital unit of ethical meaning. For Christians, the most basic images, metaphors, and signs are corporate, and the basic unit of ethical meaning is the Body, the community. Israel experiences covenantal fidelity as a people, and the People of God is a collectiveâ€™not merely an aggregate of individual persons, each doing his or her own thing, but a body. In the Bible, God elects the People of Israel as a body. He sustains them as a body. And, finally, He redeems them as a body. This talk about community is not mere metaphorizing. The community has a role in making ethics. Paul makes this clear when he instructs the Galatians to hold one another accountable for sin: But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. While one task of any community is to enforce its own codes when they are being violated, perhaps the prior task of the community is to make sense of the ethical codes that are being enforced. And that retelling is part of what enables us to live into the story. It is the community that ensures that ethics is not about the dispensing of cut-and-dried answers to moral questions, but that ethics is a story with meaning and power. Characterâ€™the making and sustaining of characterâ€™is a communal event, not an individual possession. Contra the psychologists, who would say that character accrues autonomously in individual people, Hunter shows that character is a social thing. Far from innate and purely natural, character is formed and learned in societies, and when the social prerequisites for character formation disappear, no amount of individual striving will culminate in character. It is never just for the isolated individual. The narrative integrates the self within communal purposes, binding dissimilar others to common ends. Character outside of a lived community, the entanglements of complex social relationships, and their shared story, is impossible. The Christian community senses that sex is a matter of communal concern, but we are hard-pressed to articulate exactly why. We have understandably absorbed the story our surrounding culture so forcefully tells us, trading our vision of community for American notions of individuals and free agents. A story that my friend Carrie shared with me may illustrate. Carrie was two years out of college, living in Minneapolis in a funky, rambling Victorian with six other Christian women. Her boyfriend, Thad, lived down the block. Carrie and Thad were not having sex, but they were doing everything but having sex, including spending the night with each other regularly. No one ever posed a loving inquiry, or a gentle rebuke, or even an oblique offer of an ear. They probably did not want to intrude, or seem nosy. We are called to speak to one another lovingly, to be sure, and with edifying, rather than gossipy or hurtful, goals. But we are called nonetheless to transform seemingly private matters into communal matters. Of course, premarital sexual behavior is just one of many instances of this larger point. Christians also need to speak courageously and transparently, for example, about the seemingly private matters of Christian marriageâ€™there would be, I suspect, a lot fewer divorces in the church if married Christians exposed their domestic lives, their fights and tensions and squabbles, to loving wisdom, advice, and sometimes rebuke from their community. Christians might claim less credit-card debt if small-group members shared their bank account statements with one another. I suspect that if my best friend had permission to scrutinize my Day-timer, I would inhabit time better. Speaking to one another about our sexual selves is just one admittedly risky instance of a larger piece

of Christian discipleship: Household Sex Wendell Berry provides us a good starting point for thinking about sex and community. Berry believes that modern life is bedeviled by the veneration of autonomy. We moderns conceive of ourselves as disparate, self-sufficient, and isolated atoms. Whether we realize it or not, our highest pursuits—in science, in politics, in personal happiness, in culture, in morality, and, at times, in religious life—function to maximize a sense of our own distinctiveness. We calibrate career success in terms of how well our jobs attend to our specific desires.

5: Table of contents for The making of a Christian bestseller

The making of a Christian bestseller: an insider's guide to Christian publishing. Ann Barnhill --Sex jumpstarts a new conversation / Lauren Winner --The dirt on.

It might be like lassoing the moon, or like putting on an old sweater, or like nothing at all. Or it might be like describing what you saw one afternoon at the Met. Winner writes at the outset of her new book *Wearing God: Like untrained and ill-prepared mountain climbers trying to summit Everest, we continue up the side of the unknowable*. Winner, a former orthodox Jew whose conversion to Christianity she chronicled in her memoir *Girl Meets God*, parses centuries of people trying to make sense of God by drawing comparisons to concrete objects and ephemeral ideas. Try as we might, God is easier depicted as a concept or in a simile than by direct approach, and we often hear the same words over and over again: Or, really, old territory: Winner cites Galatians 3: There is a chapter on smell in which Winner deftly sketches the social connection between scent and virtue—the less you have of the former, the more you have of the latter—and asks us to consider what Jesus, in his often-homeless, wandering state would reek of. The God of Christianity is often made to seem abstract and inaccessible, and images can only tell us so much about a thing before we run up against some sort of obstacle. But a composite of Scriptural images of God can create a helpful mosaic; where before we saw only two or three pieces, now we see something approaching a whole. This comparison of human hiddenness with elements like sodium and lithium does a lot of work for Winner, and brings to mind the Biblical idea of the fruit of the Spirit: What color is joy, I wonder? What does kindness look like when God reveals it? Catherine of Siena, a medieval Christian mystic; Nhat Chi Mai, a Buddhist nun who self-immolated in a demonstration for peace in Vietnam in ; the Raging Grannies, a group of older women who sing protest songs at Moral Monday demonstrations in Raleigh, North Carolina. The Bible calls God a mother hen and a laboring woman, Winner responded, not unkindly. God is also imaged throughout the Bible as bread and wine, substances many middle-class American women have a complicated relationship to. I, too, have looked at my stomach or hips and refused bread and butter when I was hungry, but I never stopped to consider that a piece of bread might be an invitation to be nourished by Christ; might, in fact, be more important than the size of my jeans. Winner ends the book by considering the tradition of apophatic theology—the notion that we can better think about God by saying very little about God. But what else can we use, when words are all we have? Our language is capable, but the object of worship surpasses capability.

6: Interviews: A Conversation with Lauren Winner

Somehow this gentler, more chastened Winner seems a bit more likeable than the one leading the crusade to change how my husband and I have sex. Join the conversation Leave a Comment 0.

She balances a journalistic report of how difficult chastity is for American Christians; a personal account of how she and her friends have approached premarital sex and marital sex; a survey of what the Bible, pastors, and good Christian books say about the topic; and an overview of how chastity has been understood throughout Christian history. The candor with which Winner writes about sex may alarm some Christian readers, but those who follow her arguments to their conclusions will find themselves rewarded with fresh insights about an overdiscussed but still deeply entrenched problem among Christians. Winner places real sex not in the passionate world of one-night stands and dating relationships but in the ordinary, domestic life of married couples. As such, she helpfully and perhaps even radically reframes both the Christian and cultural discussion of chastity and sexuality. The book gives practical ideas for living a chaste life, portraying chastity as a spiritual discipline. The church must teach us who God has created us to be, must inculcate in us the practices and disciplines that we require if we are to be chaste in a world where it seems like everyone is hooking up with everyone else. This book is a great resource for pastors and congregations. Winner defends marriage as a clenched-fisted, revolutionary endeavor that is against just about everything we have been taught to believe, and her defense of singleness as the primary vocation of Christians is equally defiant. She also offers practical ideas about what churches can do to support us in our vocations of marriage and singleness. *Real Sex* is destined to be one of the most useful books for churches to be published this year. Willimon, *Christian Century* "A candid, readable, intelligent, and deeply Christian reflection on the meaning of sexuality and the generally unpopular and misunderstood virtue of chastity. Speaking most specifically to people who are young and single, Lauren Winner is the friendly and informed guide many are looking for in living the Christian alternative in a culture of erotic disorder. Although the author is not a Catholic, there are clear intimations of what Catholics call the theology of the body. It involves unceasing prayer, diligent discernment and a fierce battle against the lies that our culture and church communicate to us related to sexuality. *Real Sex* is full of hope--hope that frank discussion will triumph over platitudes, that sexual wholeness can be recovered even after virginity has been lost and that we can all relearn what authentic sexuality is even in the face of cultural mythology. She then proceeds to help us develop a Christian understanding of sex that is biblical, historical and God-honoring. Lots of people can write about sex; some people can write accurately about the value of restraint. How many can do those things in a candid, strikingly insightful and, yes, entertaining fashion? She shares authentically about a challenging time of life with which many will identify and empathize. Read [*Real Sex*] to help you engage the immediacy and earthiness of sexuality and spirituality today. Holst, *National Catholic Reporter* "An epidemic of sexual perversion is sweeping through our generation. Lauren Winner tackles this topic with wit and a directive to confront cultural lies about sex and challenge how we talk about it at Church. This book will help [church leaders as they] talk about sex and the issues that surround it with singles who are weighing chastity and married couples who are committed to monogamy. Winner wrote about her own sexual experiences in *Girl*, and she returns to the topic in a fuller way here. *Real Sex* is always honest, sometimes profound, and hip enough to give to your teenage daughter. Leithart, *Touchstone* "[*Real Sex*] makes a strong case for biblical sexual morality. Her approach and honesty about her own past is compelling. *Real Sex*, however, is far from an uncomfortable, prudish lecture about the evils of the body. In a straightforward and conversational style, Winner shares her own sexual history and speaks frankly about often-taboo topics such as pornography and masturbation. One of the most appealing aspects of this book is the explanation of the title. Outside of marriage, sex is not only wrong, it is inappropriate on a deep and cosmic level. Here Winner hits the nail on the head in a new, refreshing way. Anyone interested in staying sexually pure or helping others in the church do so will find much food for thought in this intriguing book. Most importantly, Winner offers precise, practical advice for those seeking to practice chastity. Winner wisely notes that attempts at living chastely fail unless they are entwined with daily

prayer and Bible study. It packs a real punch in a slender package. Her purpose in writing was also to define the biblical vision for sex and the real challenges of living within that vision. The author offers tools of accountability and community dialogue to assist in determining good boundaries. It looks honestly at the current views and actions of the church and offers suggested changes; it encourages honest and intentional discussions about sex we would add: Visit her website at www.

7: Real Sex: The Naked Truth About Chastity - Reformation21

Twenty-six-year-old Lauren Winner's Girl Meets God should be the definitive conversion memoir for the Mountain Dew generation. The book chronicles her compelling ten-year journey from her days as a devout member of a Reform temple in high school in Virginia, her conversion to Orthodox Judaism during her undergraduate years in New York City, her.

Winner started a lot of conversations when she published her memoir, "Girl Meets God," about her journey from Orthodox Judaism to evangelical Christianity. Now, with the publication of her new book, "Real Sex: The Naked Truth About Chastity," Winner, a former Beliefnet books editor, again is turning heads with her frank arguments about Christian sexual ethics. Winner spoke to Beliefnet about everything from why masturbation is a "separation from reality" to how she and her now-husband reined in their sexual impulses while they were dating. What is the sexual ethic of "Real Sex? Whenever I speak with youth groups or college student groups about sex and chastity, I often start by asking them, what does the Bible tell us about sex? So I start from the positive point that sex was created by God, our bodies were created by God, and they are good. In the book, you share a lot of personal information and personal stories. Have there been moments when you wished you could re-write history? Sexual sin in my life is something that I feel real shame and discomfort about. This is not something about which I feel cavalier. It is also something that I think God forgives. Can you explain the concept of "on the steps of the Rotunda? There were two really important pieces of wisdom in that. It was a decision made in community with someone who knew us well and was able to give us guidance that took our particular stories into consideration. Second, the pastor recognized that there are public dimensions to sexuality and private dimensions to sexuality. What is the disconnect there? While a large percentage of college-aged Christians are not having sex, a lot of them are. But, though the church is often accused of being too obsessed with sex, and while I think people in the church are very well-meaning about wanting to help unmarried Christians stay chaste, some of the tools that the church gives unmarried Christians are a little thin. Recent studies have come out to show that abstinence pledge card programs tend to delay sexual activity in teenagers by 18 months. So the average non-pledge-card-signing teenager has sex at 18, the average person who signs a pledge card has sex at 19 and a half.

8: Interview with Lauren F. Winner, author of 'Real Sex' - Beliefnet

The author of a frank book on chastity talks about sex ed, 'just say no,' and 're-writing' her own sexual history. Lauren F. Winner started a lot of conversations when she published her

The book chronicles her compelling ten-year journey from her days as a devout member of a Reform temple in high school in Virginia, her conversion to Orthodox Judaism during her undergraduate years in New York City, her baptism in the Anglican church while in graduate school in England, and finally back to New York where she began work on a doctorate and struggled to integrate her love for Judaism with her Christianity. But while she may fit a certain niche chronologically, Winner herself resists easy categorization. By her own admission, Winner is not attracted to anything lukewarm. Perhaps it is appropriate, then, that the following interview took place over tea in a coffee shop, while a torrential downpour soaked her hometown of Charlottesville, Virginia which was experiencing one of its worst droughts in recent memory. She returned here in the spring of to work on her dissertation and to be closer to her mother. When did you begin writing *Girl Meets God*? Three years ago, I wrote part of the opening chapter as an essay for *The Best Christian Writing*. What provoked you to begin writing a chronicle of your spiritual life? What more specifically prompted me to start writing were the experiences I describe in one of the chapters about my move back to New York: Fearing their disapproval, I literally hid behind a fruit cart! And, like many people, I find that writing helps me make sense of my own thoughts. So, I began scribbling things down. Also, a number of spiritual memoirs were quite instrumental in the kind of gradual conversion I experienced. I read Christian memoir and Christian fiction pretty voraciously before I ever actually converted. In hindsight, I see that reading about Christianity let me experience it vicariously. Through the reading of these memoirs, I was able to dip my toes into "church" through books without attending myself. My recognition of the importance certain memoirs had been in my own conversion also prompted my writing. Whose stories moved you the most? In my own conversion, one of the things I struggled with was the realization that I would need to leave the Jewish community that I had felt such a part of. It was comforting to learn that I could leave that and land in some other equally welcoming and authentic community. As opposed to my sitting down and reading Karl Barth, and coming to faith through the church dogmatics? Lewis or Thomas Merton. I do think that there are certain intellectual components to my faith life. I was very intellectually attracted to Christianity before I was more personally intrigued by it; I was drawn to the study of Christianity as a religion major in college, long before I ever considered attending church myself. Christians have, for a very long time, lived very much as Enlightenment people. We talk about knowing God through our minds. In fact, I think Christian tradition offers something much richer than that. Memoir has the ability to offer an introduction to faith that can speak to people who might be left cold by apologetics. After they read it, they can do what they want. The Myers-Briggs is a personality assessment test that I think carries a great deal of veracity to it. Anyway, an "F" is someone who is more of a feeler vs. As opposed to something charismatic or Pentecostal? Even Roman Catholicism seems a more earthy choice, in some ways. So, it would appear that you moved from a relatively insulated, warm, Jewish community to one that seems to me a little more austere or removed. In fact, it may be the least emotional of the Christian faiths [laughs]. And I do sometimes miss the warmth of the Jewish community. I was talking with a woman who had also converted from observant Judaism to Christianity, and I mentioned that while I went to church and had after-church lunch with some of the members, as well as occasionally attending a Wednesday night bible study, my life still felt fragmented. I definitely miss the all-encompassing community of Orthodox Judaism. But my Christian experience has changed since that conversation, too. It may mean living in intentional community with other Christians. It may be something as simple as joining a small group or Bible study. But Christianity is inherently communal. It seems to me that the wisdom here is the same for both faiths--a sort of prescription for practicing and moving through. Have you found anything particularly different between the two faith traditions in terms of your spiritual dry spells? Judaism, because it is based on a daily observance of the law, gives its practitioners a lot of tasks. Observant Judaism dictates diet, dress, and all manner of things--so if you happen to get caught in a spell of doubt or

despair, there are all these religious practices to keep you tied into Judaism. What is your prayer life like? At this point, the center of my prayer discipline is the practice of Lectio Divina. Initially this was very foreign to me, and uncomfortable. In your book you mention that prayer is very gratifying. Prayer is a necessary and useful component of spiritual practice--like the sacraments--and I believe it is always efficacious whether I feel anything or not. Orthodox Judaism carries with it a lot of physical restrictions, and yet, do you feel that Judaism appealed to you because you were, in a sense, more "earthbound" then? I think Christianity seems less abstract, which is one of the things I was trying to explore in my chapter on Ascension Day. On the other hand, this incarnate God is up in heaven somewhere. So, both religions experience--forgive the academic jargon--a dialectic between abstraction and concreteness, between absence and presence. Still, I miss much of the ritual and celebration of Judaism. A good friend here is not Jewish, but is sending her children to preschool at the synagogue. I saw her last week and she said, "Lauren, they [meaning the Jewish school] have a holiday practically every week. Keeping the celebration of holidays in mind, what made you choose the Anglican Church, rather than what would seem to be a more obvious choice--Roman Catholicism? I can only really speak about it as a call. It was just very clear to me, for reasons I could not have even begun to articulate at the time, that I was supposed to be in the Anglican Church. The choice to remain an Anglican still feels very clear to me although I have some discomfort about certain things going on in the church today. Many of my Jewish relatives were less than thrilled about my conversion to Christianity, and I think some of them sort of hoped that it was just a phase I was going through. Do you consider yourself in any way radical? You seem to have gone to extremes--from a Reform synagogue in high school to Orthodox Judaism as an undergraduate in New York and then to Anglicanism as a graduate student in Cambridge. Clearly, your faith journey has not been one I would categorize as lukewarm. I think most of my friends would describe me as intense. Do you feel the restlessness that characterized you when you were younger, or is that behind you now? I suppose I was restless, but we can probably chalk a lot of that up to just having been a teenager. How can you separate being a teenager from being restless? So, as someone who judges rather than perceives, I generally prefer and feel comfortable with closure, organization, and decision making. I have two more years on my dissertation, which means I have two more years to figure out what to do. Now, I feel a little more able to ride that out. I definitely love teaching at the university level. But there are a lot of trappings of the profession and of the academic career that do not have a hold on my heart. Though your book is titled *Girl Meets God*, one of the questions I found myself asking when I was reading it was, "When does girl meet world? Do you ever ask yourself the question When will my life actually start? Academic life, while wonderful, is also pretty insular, and all about ideas. I would answer that in two parts; unfortunately you may feel that neither of them really answers the question. I do have thoughts and feelings about academia as an institution, but the way they take shape in my head is less "this is not the real world and I need to get out there and live. But in a lot of ways, an academic life has protected you from having to go out and "get a job. I was working thirty-plus hours a week while I was in New York, for a web site called Beliefnet. And although my Ph. How has it been to practice your Christian faith here as opposed to New York? I think that church life in Manhattan is very strange. And I much more quickly became an active member of my parish church here. Has a part of your identity search been about your roots as a southerner? The South has a big hold on me, as opposed to New York. I think in some ways being Jewish in the South, at least on the mythic level, remains complicated. Do you think New York held more appeal for you when you were becoming an Orthodox Jew? I think being in New York was about getting away from my family. I never wanted to be a New Yorker. I would say that culturally, I went about as far away as I could. One of the things I appreciate is the way she speaks to mystery. Mystery is a word that gets bandied about in the Episcopal Church and certain evangelical circles too, but not in a very satisfying way. Both mystery and grace are instrumental in all conversions. Grace is constitutive of all conversions. All you can say is that grace intervenes.

9: Real Sex | Baker Publishing Group

Girl Meets Grace: Lauren Winner's New Reflection on Her Divorce and Desolation God's faithfulness sustained Winner when her faithfulness to God faltered. Join the conversation on Facebook.

A Conversation about Sex and Marriage Posted on: The Naked Truth about Chastity, Brazos, Lauren Winner, a young Jewish woman, made her mark as an author in *Girl Meets God*, the story of her encounter with Christ and her conversion as his disciple. In *Real Sex* she undertakes the task of rethinking her assumptions about sex which she absorbed and incorporated into her own life style during the sexual revolution. This is an honest, courageous book. The author is brutally honest with herself about herself, about the state of her soul, about her own sexual choices and about the difficulties in the exercise of chastity. This is a Biblically informed, theologically sound book. It is not a jeremiad against the joys of a little sexual hanky panky. Rather, it describes the meaning of sex in the context of what it means to be human, especially to be a human being who has been called by God into a covenant relationship of which marriage is the most profound and significant symbol. Winner demonstrates how sex is intricately tied up with our personal identity and with our relationship not only with the warm body in bed beside us but with our neighbors, the church and ultimately with the God who invented sex. Finally, this is a helpful book. In contrast she offers concrete, meaningful suggestions about Christian sexual discipline and formation. In so doing she presents a compelling critique of our ultra individualistic culture and how it has infected and controlled the way Christians see their responsibility for each other. You are encouraged to purchase and together read and discuss the entire book. But here are a few excerpts, which will help you reflect upon your relationship to each other, your relationship to the church, the meaning of marriage and the significance of sex for your marriage. I chafe against [this teaching]. Sometimes it feels outmoded, irrelevant, burdensome. But to rely on my experience here would be to rely on something frankly broken and distorted. Sometimes it is scary or inconvenient to trust the church. The church is here to teach me how to handle sex, money,. For if our ethics of sex should not be primarily grounded in experience, our pastoral response to sex must take account of it. By pastoral, I mean something broader than simply what clergy do; I mean the compassionate and wise response of all brothers and sisters in the Christian community to those siblings in Christ Struggling with questions of sex and chastity. We Christians insist that bodies and what we do with them are important. In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul invokes porneia when he is forbidding Corinthians from patronizing prostitutes. In the next chapter, Paul uses porneia again, this time telling the unmarried and the widows that it is better to marry than to burn with desire. In this second passage, logic tells us that porneia must mean sex outside of marriage—“if the only two options are marriage or smoldering with desire, it follows that sex outside of marriage is not an option. And, according to Paul, this sin is no minor peccadillo. Paul understands sex as part of the ordering of creation. This is not just a lesson in reading. It is also a pastoral point. Consider, as an example, the recent experience of my friend Kara, a campus minister in Illinois. Who created us, and for what ends? Our bodies and how we inhabit them point to the order of creation. Put simply, this is a lie. And it is a fairly new lie. For most of human history, people of many different cultures have agreed that societies must order certain forms of exchange in order to survive. Communities have ordered language, establishing grammars and vocabularies that shape how people communicate with one another; they have ordered the exchange of money, property, and labor; and they have ordered the practice sex. But Roxanne and her boyfriend use condoms, so it is easy for her to dismiss any concern I might have about kids. Today, thanks to the Pill, we can generally if not completely sever the connection between sex and child-making; indeed, the advent reliable birth control was a major factor in privatizing sex in the West. For starters the way I talk about sex is conditioned by the beginning of Genesis—“Marriage serves as the biblical analogy par excellence to the relationship between God and His people—“Marriage—“because of what marriage is, the analogue to God and His relationship to His people—“precedes sex. This ordering of marriage and sex—“the understanding that marriage contains sex, rather than that sex adorns marriage—“implies a resonance between sex and community. But perhaps a more important disagreement between Roxanne and me has to do with individualism. But in the Christian universe,

the individual is not the vital unit of ethical meaning. For Christians, the most basic images, metaphors, and signs are corporate, and the basic unit of ethical meaning is the Body, the community. The community has a role in making ethics. Paul makes this clear when he instructs the Galatians to hold one accountable for sin: But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. While one task of any community is to enforce its own codes when they are being violated, perhaps the prior task of the community is to make sense of the ethical codes that are being enforced. And that retelling is part of what enables us to live into the story. It is the community that ensures that ethics is not about the dispensing of cut-and-dried answers to moral questions, but that ethic is a story with meaning and power. Speaking to one another about our sexual selves is just one admittedly risky instance of a larger piece of Christian discipleship:

A list of all the songs passages in Shaksper which have been set to music THE DARK BRIGHT WATR (Book of Wirrun, Vol 2) The red butterfly Change your magnetism change your life Moodle course design best practices 3ilingualism Language Disability New approaches to integration in psychotherapy Astrology of a Living Universe The bible of options strategies second edition The wizards of reconstruction. Jonas of Kiiivjarvi Early clinical features of the Parkinsonian-related dementias Bradley F. Boeve European unemployment Four Little Blessings (Love Inspired #433) Blackberry dtek50 user guide Technique Practice of Object Italian Literature I Straw Sandals, Chinese Short Stories, 1918-1933 HIPAA NPI Road Map Preventing cancers (and other diseases by reducing tobacco use Buffalo Bills Life Story, an Autobiography National family health survey (NFHS-3 2005-06, India. Tropical greenhouse design and construction handbook Ethnicity and family therapy Crash ride t gephart Redevelopment and race U.S.China agreements Memoirs of Horatio, lord Walpole Intuitions about tension and relaxation The incomparable Aphra. British journal of radiology supplement 25 Sleeping Through the Night. . . and Other Lies Quiz history chapter 17 king ashoka history alive textbook Logic, Meaning and Computation Solitudes of Luis de Gongora y Argote Judith herman trauma and recovery Theory of Computation (Texts in Computer Science) Marguerite Duras (Beginners Guide) Differential equations with boundary-value_problems_8th_ed. ASE Test Prep Series (A1)