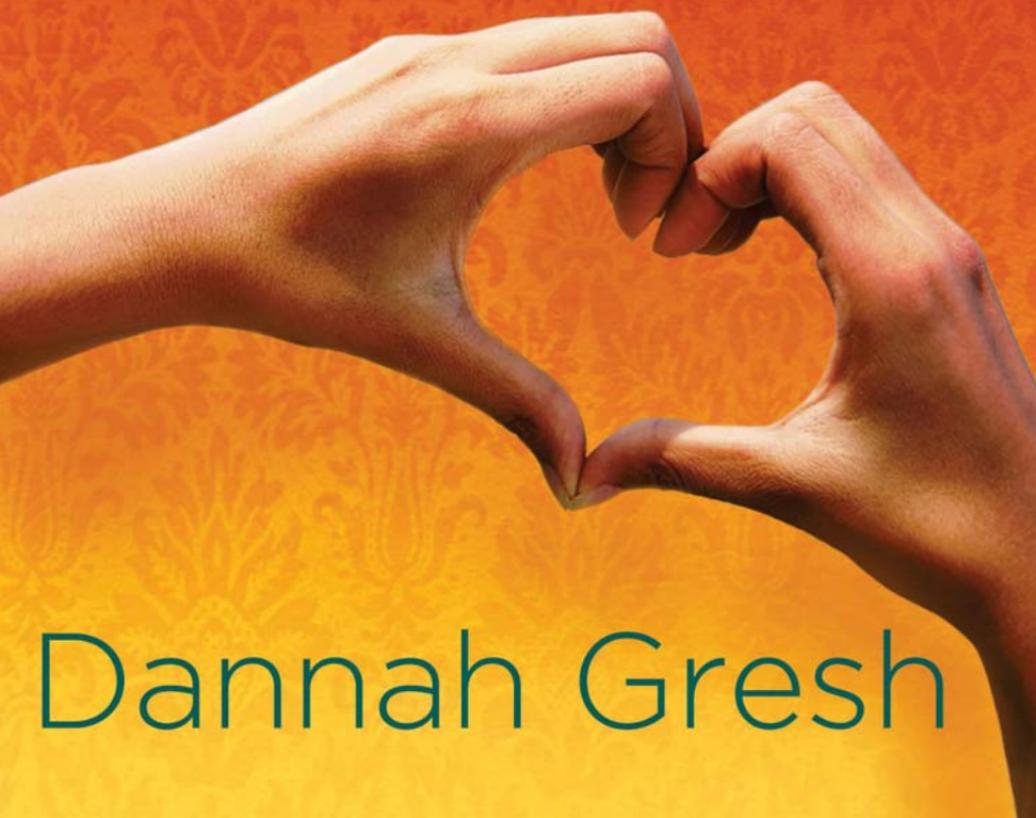


what are you
waiting for?

The One Thing No One

Ever Tells You About Sex



Dannah Gresh

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Praise for
What Are You Waiting For?

“Dannah Gresh has hit on a simple yet undiscovered truth that puts seemingly random questions of sexuality in context. I love the way Dannah doesn’t shy away from or water down the tough issues, yet she *never* compromises God’s best for you! This is a must-read for any single Christian woman.”

—DR. JULI SLATTERY, clinical psychologist, Focus on the Family,
and author of *No More Headaches*

“Dannah Gresh has totally nailed it with this pertinent and hugely needed book. Written honestly and compellingly, this is a must-read for all teenage girls—wait, this is a must-read for everyone, especially teenage guys! I am so grateful for this important resource and plan to recommend it to all my young adult readers.”

—MELODY CARLSON, author of *Diary of a Teenage Girl* series
and the *TrueColor* series

“Dannah Gresh hits another home run! *What Are You Waiting For?* is refreshingly real and relevant—definitely a timely message for today’s generation of young women!”

—SHANNON ETHRIDGE, international speaker and best-selling
author of *Every Young Woman’s Battle*

“This is hands-down the best book about sexual fidelity I have ever read—informative, entertaining, and *very* inspiring. Dannah Gresh tackles the trickiest of topics with astonishing grace. Her explanation of the sacred power of sex is unblushing and revelatory. I know this is a book for girls, but every Christian guy should read it too. I’m already reading it for the second time.”

—NATE LARKIN, founder of the Samson Society and author
of *Samson and the Pirate Monks: Calling Men to Authentic
Brotherhood*

“If you are looking for the gospel truth on the very real issue of sex and sexuality that all singles face, this is the book for you. Dannah Gresh talks to singles where they really live. Not only is it refreshing, it is liberating—

as truth always is. Dannah does not dance around the issues but addresses them with in-your-face clarity that is sorely needed. Sharing the spiritual implications while balancing the reality of the natural world we live in, Dannah practically addresses how singles can be victorious in the battle between the flesh and the spirit.”

—MICHELLE MCKINNEY HAMMOND, author of *What Women Don't Know and Men Don't Tell You*

“All I can say is *wow!* My assistant’s teenage daughter agreed to flip through this book for me as a favor and ended up absorbed in the entire thing! As she rightly put it, *What Are You Waiting For?* brings ‘amazing insight into what no one tells you about sex—and it really can strengthen the relationship you have with God and your future spouse.’ This book is a fantastic read. Dannah Gresh has such a special way of taking an important subject and making it appealing, practical, and accessible to everyone.”

—SHAUNTI FELDHAHN, best-selling author of *For Women Only* and *For Young Women Only*

“In an age where sex is perverted and belittled—when it appears to be a tool in the hands of the Enemy rather than the God who created it—Dannah has shown us God’s pure intention for sexuality. Through an in-depth study of Scripture and confirmation in life experiences, she highlights the honest-to-goodness biblical truth behind one of life’s most precious and beautiful mysteries. Women young and old will read this book and find the inspiration and tools they need to treat God’s gift of sexuality with the respect and protection it deserves.”

—JULIE HIRAMINE, founder of Generations of Virtue and author of *Beautifully Made*

“*What Are You Waiting For?* is a well-written study of the sexual culture our teens are immersed in today and offers a culturally relevant perspective that aligns itself with the Word of God. Dannah has managed to walk the fine line of approaching this difficult subject in a way that will inspire teens to live holy lives and inspire parents to broach this delicate topic with their kids. This book is not for the faint of heart; however, neither is raising teenagers in our current society.”

—RON LUCE, founder and president of Teen Mania Ministries

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Details in some anecdotes and stories have been changed to protect the identities of the persons involved.

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To Bob

who is writing a *yada* love story with me
so the world can see the mysterious love story
of Christ and the church.

contents

- 1 let's get real — 1
- 2 clearly confused — 9
- 3 yada. yada. yada. — 14
- 4 the one thing no one ever tells you
about sex — 20
- 5 not all sex is the same — 29
- 6 friends with benefits — 38
- 7 relational love — 49
- 8 the lesbian question — 59
- 9 sex is not a solo sport — 70
- 10 our porn problem — 80
- 11 exclusive love — 92

12	the line — 107
13	starting over — 119
14	finding <i>yada</i> — 131
15	faithful love — 141
16	the yearning — 153
	discussion questions — 161
	acknowledgments — 165
	notes — 169



let's get real

this book is not for spiritual monks.

If you spend more of your time at church getting to know God's Word than out in the world living it, you probably won't like this book. It's raw and real. If you can't handle words like *masturbation*, *orgasm*, and *porn*, you should just put it down now. These are real-world words that real people use.

Frankly, I wish I didn't have to use them. I find a more poetic, subtle approach to sexuality more romantic. Not to mention tasteful. It seems to me that the Bible—while not lacking in sexual instruction, ethic, and purpose—often presents the subject in veiled terms, leaving us unblushed by its modest references to a gift so tender. I'd like to write more like that, and I have in previous books, but not this one.

We don't live in a modest world. And the fact is, I'm not a spiritual monk.

And you probably aren't either.

My intention isn't to shock you as I approach this topic more directly than I have before. And I don't think I will. It's not as if you

haven't heard about oral sex or girls kissing girls. My intention is to be relevant and to bring some practical clarity to the sadly common temptations our culture presses at you. I believe this is also a biblical approach. After all, think about the two letters Paul sent to the Corinthian church. While many subjects are covered in these letters and we can't be sure exactly what was in the letters *from* the church to the apostle that precipitated his response, it seems that the Corinthians were asking a lot of practical questions about marriage and sex. They were conflicted by the promiscuous culture that surrounded them. So they wondered, "Is it even good to be married?" (Perhaps you wonder that too.) "Because sex is perverted, shouldn't we also abstain in marriage?" (That one was way off course!) "If my spouse is unsaved, should I get divorced?"

The apostle answered their questions.

One by one.

He clearly addressed their uncertainties and confusion—and I hope to do the same for you. Well, I hope we can find some answers together. If you press into your questions and I press into my research, we can link the two to find some answers to the questions our cultural experiences tend to raise.

You and I live in a rather promiscuous culture, and questions about sex burn through our minds. And while I really hope you'll build a great sexual theology as you think over what you find in these pages, I also want you to have a practical understanding of how to live it out. So I've spent a lot of time with college-aged young women in intimate conversation about the burning questions that run through their heads—the ones the world tries to address in its sexual excess but the church often runs from.

“Is masturbation a sin?”

“How do I know if he’s the one?”

“What if he has a problem with porn?”

“What if I’m a lesbian?”

And hold on to your seat—there’s more!

It is my hope that these very direct, very practical pages will give you the answers you need to live out what you believe. After all, what good is a sexual theology if it doesn’t speak to the issues of this contemporary day and age, where few are spiritual monks?

So what am I if not a spiritual monk?

Am I a girl gone wild?

No.

I am a biblical woman who loves God’s Word and feasts on it each day.

I am a sinful woman who has been healed by the perfecting love of my Savior.

I am a wife and mother who is honored to serve the Father in those roles.

I am an author empowered by the Holy Spirit to write and live out Truth.

I am a girl who occasionally watches *The Ellen Show*, and I think she’s sweet and funny and generous.

And that’s where it starts to get complicated—when my private, God-loving self interacts with a real world that doesn’t acknowledge Him as God. Just like you, I am trying to live out my faith in a very crazy world. Which is why I’m so glad to have found some tremendous clarity in God’s Word, which gives you and me a very clear definition of sex to consider. This definition answers every burning question and

is thoroughly relevant for today. Once I discovered it, confusion over sexual questions was easy to resolve. I even came to understand why as a little girl I was predisposed to dressing up like a princess and dreaming that my prince would one day come. No one taught me to do that. It was a natural yearning as my heart began its search for my life partner.

For me, that dream came to its culmination during a thrilling moment of made-for-TV romance!

I was in college, and I was in love. Had been for two years. One problem: my prince was graduating, while I was obligated to one more year of servitude at Cedarville University. My boyfriend, Bob, had a

engagement hazing

Pity the guy who falls in love on a Christian college campus, where the traditional hazing of a newly engaged couple is unique from the state school or private institution. If you get engaged on one of these campuses, here's what's in store, according to my friends on Facebook, whose experiences may vary a bit from that of other grads from these schools:

Cedarville University	the guy gets thrown into Cedar Lake
Grove City College	the guy gets "creeked" in Wolf Creek
Patrick Henry College	the guy gets "bobtized" on Lake Bob

part in “Senior Night,” a hilariously dramatic look back at the class’s four years. Naturally I planned to attend, but my heart was so sad. In fewer than twenty-four hours, he would be gone and I would be left behind for a quiet summer of classes.

After a quick bite at Colonial Pizza, Bob and I made our way to the university’s chapel. I found some friends to sit with. He made his way backstage.

I laughed my way through much of the night, but then Dr. Jim Phipps and Professor Meg Wheeler, the night’s emcees, began to talk about all the guys who’d recently been thrown into Cedar Lake. Getting thrown into the lake was every guy’s reward for flashing a diamond

Moody Bible Institute	the guy gets duct-taped to the flagpole
Wheaton College	both get to climb Blanchard Tower and ring the bell
Wesleyan College	the girl gets thrown into the water fountain
Trinity International University	the girl gets “candle lighted”

Just in case you’re in the dark about “candle lighting,” let me illuminate you! All the girls on a dorm floor are called together by a Candle Lighter, who’s been secretly notified of the engagement. The leader passes an unlit candle around, and when it gets to the newly engaged girl, she lights it while her dorm mates squeal in delighted celebration. Then they listen with rapt attention to her proposal story.

in front of his girl and hearing the word yes. A rite of passage coveted by every college couple, lake activity was rampant just before graduation. A yearning washed over me as they talked about all the happy proposals.

“What would a proposal like that look like?” The question was posed. And I wondered along with the audience.

Then...

Bob Gresh came out onto the stage...

...with a black velvet box in his hand.

He was searching for me in the audience as the spotlight followed him.

My heart was thumping so heavily that I was certain it was shaking the solid twenty-foot pew I sat on—and everyone sitting on it with me.

“And then I’d take her by the hand,” he said, offering the audience the play-by-play as he approached me.

“And I’d lead her to the stage.” I followed him as he talked.

A single chair was waiting for me. I plopped into it, weak at the knees.

Then my prince bowed on one knee and took my left hand in his. “Dannah Barker,” he asked, looking lovingly into my eyes, “will you marry me?”

I paused.

Tears welling.

My breath had truly been taken by the moment. Apparently so had the breath of everyone in the audience, who had now caught on to the fact that this was real. And some lovesick twenty-one-year-old

guy had just put his heart out for the taking or rejecting. The only sound in my ears was my loudly thumping heart and Bob's nervous breathing.

Finally I nodded and barely mouthed the answer: "Yes!"

Bob slipped a brilliant diamond onto my left ring finger and then stood, pumping his fist into the air in victory. The audience collectively took a deep breath and then jumped to their feet in wild applause.

My prince had come!

I recently reached the milestone of being with him more years than I've lived without him, and he has spent *all* of those years romancing me. It's never, ever stopped. Girl, this is the kind of guy you

Quirky Proposals

I've heard about some pretty quirky proposals. There was the guy who carved his proposal into sixteen pumpkins and one who posted it on twenty-three hay bales. But most astonishing of all was one where the quirk took an unexpected twist: Reed Harris decided to pop the question to Kaitlin Whipple by hiding a ring in her Wendy's Frosty. Unfortunately, Reed also invited Kaitlin's friends to witness the moment, and one of them challenged her to a Frosty-drinking race. The poor girl swallowed the ring whole. Reed had to drive her to the hospital so she could actually see it—on an x-ray!¹

want to marry. I'm talking about the kind of guy who welcomes you home from a long trip with lit candles leading the way to a bubble bath so you can relax. I'm talking about the kind of guy who whisks you away to New York City, having arranged for the two of you to spend days visiting every scene from your favorite romantic movie until your heart melts. I'm talking about the kind of guy who texts insane love notes to you all hours of the day. (Last month's goofiest text was, "I love you more than Toast Chees." Unless you understand how much the man loves Toast Chee crackers, you cannot appreciate the romance of that one!)

Do you want that kind of never-ending romance (okay, minus the Toast Chees)? Dare to dig in with me for a few raw and real chapters about God, sex, and romance. Let me start in the next chapter by backing up a few years from Bob's amazing marriage proposal to a time when I was asking a lot of questions myself.