

Chapter 8

Masturbation: Sexual Perversion or an Act of Sexual Freedom? An Analysis of the Act in Relation to the Story of Onan (Genesis 38:1-10)

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Introduction

The gift of sexuality and sexual organs is one of the highest gifts humans cherish and will ever remain indebted to God. Through this gift humans are able to multiply their species as well as use it as an outlet to their sexual desires. The when and how aspect of it, however, remains a hotly contested issue. Some would want to argue that one is free to have a sexual outlet of his/her desires whether with another person or just by oneself yet others argue that it should be restricted to the matrimonial bed alone. Those who argue against sexual self-gratification often make recourse to the Onan story in the book of Genesis (38:1-10) as biblical evidence that such a practice is abhorrent before God. Using the Onan story as a case study this paper seeks to wade into this debate and analyze whether what is popularly known as *Bonyoponyo* 'masturbation' can really be regarded as a sexual perversion worthy of every condemnation or that humans should be left free to express themselves that way if they so happen to feel so.