



## Language of the Body

What is sexual identity? What is the purpose of the marital embrace? To answer these and other questions, Pope St. John Paul II invites us to consider the “language of the body,” which goes deeper than the surface understanding of “body language.” Yes, our actions through the body “speak,” and what they say either corresponds or fails to correspond to the truth God has written on our hearts. For example, all people of all times have understood instinctively that a kiss is a sign of love and affection. But Judas used a kiss to betray Jesus, and so he “lied” with his body.

Let’s apply this to human sexuality. In the marital, sexual embrace, the body speaks a God-given language that says, “I am completely yours. I belong totally to you.” This is the language of the life-long covenant of marriage. Any other use of that act is a betrayal, a lie, a contradiction.

### The Empty Promises of Misused Sexuality

To love another person means to will their good and to do what is best for them. In the case of sex before marriage, which we call fornication, people may mistakenly believe that this is how they show each other true love. But their bodies speak of a total gift of self that does not exist in reality, because the life-long covenant of marriage is missing. Sadly, some young people will even use sexual relations as a tool to keep a boyfriend or girlfriend. This bodily lie can seem attractive in the moment, but it inevitably carries with it negative consequences spiritually, emotionally, socially and often physically.

When discussing pornography, some may argue that, “Nobody is getting hurt.” In the use of pornography, there is no union, no relationship, and no true gift of self. The men and women in the images are not giving themselves in a manner that is for the good of themselves or the other, but are allowing themselves (or being forced) to be used. Those who view them are valuing them for nothing more than their bodies. A similar moral problem involves the act of masturbation, which is a misuse of sexuality because it does not express self-giving love but is rather an act of self-absorption.

Another sensitive topic is same-sex attraction. It is unfortunate that the world tells people that if they feel attracted to members of the same sex, they have only two choices: to fearfully live in the closet, or to “bravely” embrace their “true sexual identity” and do what they wish. Acknowledging one’s attraction yet living a pure life is not even proposed as a realistic choice, because the world equates love with sex, and says that no one should have to live without love. But love does not equal sex. Once again, to love another person means to will their good and to do what is best for them. See pages 63-64 in the *Parent’s Guide* for helpful advice.

### Questions to engage with your son/daughter

1. In what ways can looking at pornography now cause problems for marriage later?
2. Do you understand why fornication, adultery, contraception, pornography, masturbation and homosexual acts constitute lies in the language of the body?