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Saving Sex: Sexuality and Salvation in American Evangelicalism

Amy DeRogatis

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When it comes to evangelicals and sex, it seems, whatever the question, the answer is "no." In *Saving Sex*, Amy DeRogatis argues that this could not be further from the truth. Demolishing the myth of evangelicals as anti-sex, she shows that American evangelicals claim that fabulous sex--in the right context--is viewed as a divinely-sanctioned, spiritual act.

For decades, evangelical sex education has been a thriving industry. Evangelical couples have sought advice from Christian psychologists and marriage counselors, purchased millions of copies of faith-based "sexual guidebooks," and consulted magazines, pamphlets, websites, blogs, and podcasts on a vast array of sexual topics, including human anatomy, STDs--sometimes known as "Sexually Transmitted Demons"--varieties of sexual pleasure, role-play, and sex toys, all from a decidedly biblical angle. DeRogatis discusses a wide range of evidence, from purity literature for young evangelicals to sex manuals for married couples to "deliverance manuals," which instruct believers in how to expel demons that enter the body through sexual sin. Evangelicals have at times attempted to co-opt the language of female empowerment, emphasizing mutual consent and female sexual pleasure while insisting that the key to marital sexual happiness depends on maintaining traditional gender roles based on the literal interpretation of scripture.

Saving Sex is a long-overdue exploration of evangelicals' surprising and often-misunderstood beliefs about sex--who can do what, when, and why--and of the many ways in which they try to bring those beliefs to bear on American culture.

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