

The 40 Year-Old Virgin (2005)

Rated R. Our ratings: V-1; L-4 ; S/N-6 Running time: 115 minutes

... I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the wild does: do not stir up or awaken love until it is ready!

...

I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields, and lodge in the villages; let us go out early to the vineyards, and see whether the vines have budded, whether the grape blossoms have opened and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love.

Song of Solomon 3:5 & 8:10-12

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote. It is well for a man not to touch a woman.

But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

1 Corinthians 7:1-2

Andy (Steve Carell) has given up any stirring up or awakening of love. His colorless life consists of working in the backroom of a large electronics superstore store, riding his bicycle back and forth to work, and collecting superhero action figures and playing video games at home. His fellow workers think so little of him that they have never asked him to join in their after-hours card games, until the time when someone

cannot make it and they need a fourth player. Andy, reluctantly accepting the invitation, tries to join in their sexual banter, claiming also to have scored with women. However, his comment that a pair of female breast is like "two bags of sand" blows his cover, exposing him as "the 40-year virgin."

His three astounded friends, who are ready to spring into action to end his virgin state, are, of course losers themselves. David (Paul Rudd) is still in love with a woman who long ago dumped him. Jay (Romany Malco) thinks himself a ladies man and skillful seducer; and Cal (Seth Rogen), is a practical tactics guy who gives Andy such advice as "never actually say anything to a woman; just ask questions." When Andy tries this on a cute clerk at a bookstore, his responding with a question works for a while, but at some point he does need an answer or two. They try to shove Andy toward a woman at a bar, and even accompany him to "Date-A-Palooza" where participants meet for a few minutes to become acquainted and then pass on to meet 19 other desperate souls.) Nothing seems to work for our 40-year virgin. Also at work is the predatory boss Paula (Jane Lynch), who drops not so subtle hints that she is available any time he needs her.

One day Trish (Catherine Keener) comes in for advice on a purchase, and the guys make sure that Andy waits on her. She works across the street at a shop where computer illiterates can leave merchandise for sale on eBay. She is obviously interested in Andy, but he is too shy to respond. She leaves him his card, and he tries to call her, but hangs up when she answers. Of course, his three friends work to get the two together, but when finally, Andy does go out with her, nothing goes according to plan. Their attempt to bed down is

interrupted not only by Andy's unfamiliarity with a series of condoms he attempts to put on, but also by the arrival of Trish's teenage daughter and boyfriend. After this, Andy and Trish agree to get together without sex, and Andy discovers real love, but of course, almost loses it, and—well go on and see for yourself, if you are not offended by raunchiness, of which this comedy has plenty.

Working both sides of the street, director Judd Apatow and co-writer Steve Carell have crafted a hilariously movie that is as raunchy as *Animal House* (minus, thank goodness, most of the fart jokes) and yet, underneath all the smutty talk, as chaste as an episode of *The Andy Griffith Show* (well, almost). The sexually-obsessed three friends took me back to my teenager days when I started working at a supermarket, and all my male co-workers talked obsessively of conquests they had made or how a girl in tight shorts shopping at the store was “stacked like a brick s-house!” As a 16-year virgin I was saved from Andy's fate by being able, with my quick sense of humor, to tease them or deflect them to other topics. Nonetheless for the almost 6 years I worked there, I was considered “odd” but not gay. What could have been another mindless sex/buddy comedy instead is a film with heart and wit, and which suggests that male-female relationships ought and can be more than a genital matter. This might be a good film for young adults not easily offended to discuss, but way too much for a church youth group. There is a delightful book entitled *St. Paul at the Movies*, but I suspect he might skip this one.

For Reflection/Discussion

1) How has our culture changed from the time of *The Andy Griffith/Mayberry* to that of *The 40 Year-Old Virgin*? How is today's culture, sexually speaking, more like that of 1st century Corinth, to which the apostle Paul addressed advice on sex?

2) Do you know people like Andy's three friends? What seems to

be their views of members of the opposite sex? How does this lead to manipulative relationships, rather than to ones of mutual respect?

3) What are some highlights of Andy's journey from a self-centered view of sex to where he and Trish wind up?

4) Read 1 Corinthians 6:15-16 and most of Ch. 7 and discuss the apostle Paul's teaching in regards to the film.

5) Compare the view of sex in the 7th chapter of 1 Corinthians with that of the author of "The Song of Songs." How does Paul's view of the imminence of the Parousia affect his view of sexual relationships? How much of this is valid for today? How can reading the New Testament both help and impede our development of a mature view of sex? Do you think we need the Old Testament as well, and if so, why?