

Sex on campus: Duke University

by [Kori Jones](#) in the [January 25, 2012](#) issue

When asked about the hookup culture, students' responses ran the gamut. Some took the stance of "live and let live," while others said, "They really need to stop that sleeping around." Some told me that it is not the norm for students, whether male or female, to have sex whenever and wherever they feel like it, with whomever and however they so desire. Students say that the vast majority are having sex in monogamous relationships or not at all.

But it is no longer unusual to see one-night stands depicted in music, film and television. It is no longer considered aberrant for a woman or a man to speak openly about having sex with someone who is not a significant other, let alone a spouse. This does make for a new sexual revolution, especially on college campuses where the combination of alcohol and youth become excuses to do anything.

Some hook up simply because it feels good in the moment. It feels good to be touched, caressed, desired and perhaps penetrated. For some students, college is the most vulnerable and freeing time, and in the bedroom they are perhaps uniquely free from the pursuit of perfection on campus. It is a place of escape and pleasure. Some substitute sex for intimacy or love. But all in all, they are seeking some external source to satiate some internal hunger.

This is where God enters the conversation. As the true lover of our souls, God provides the only infilling that is external and at the same time internal. With the gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling within and God's love surrounding us in community, God is the answer to the insatiable hunger for love and intimacy.

I can't simply shout that message from the top of Duke Chapel or the center of Main West Quad. Some cite the power of seminars that focus on objectification or of consciousness-raising workshops. Others stress the importance of discussions and protests. All of that is fine, but my ministry has been about learning to be a "Nathan" to the students I encounter.

Nathan was, of course, the prophet who spoke truth to David after his affair with Bathsheba. Through the interpretation of a parable, the prophet Nathan showed David the mirror in which he could see himself and feel the conviction of the Spirit. A Nathan knows you well enough to speak a truth you can hear and whose opinion and love you value.

Before I can begin to have this kind of impact on students, I must first develop relationship, reputation and rapport. It is within this framework of care that I can say what needs to be said: "Women and men, you are responsible for one another." "Sex is not the end all and be all; love is." "Whether you like it or not, how you dress sets the tone for how people see you." And at the heart of every encouragement and every rebuke is God's love.