

SEXUALITY IN CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Apostolic Christian Counseling And Family Services

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Outline

- Biblical Foundations for Marital Sexuality

1. Protecting Sexuality and Living the Core Four
2. Sexual Personalities
3. Fantasy
4. Intentional Rekindling
5. Talking About Sex

Biblical Foundations for Marital Sexuality

Biblical Foundations

God is the Creator of Sexuality.

Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

One Flesh Design

Genesis 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Procreation and Families

Genesis 9:1, "...Be fruitful and multiply.."

Biblical Foundations

Mutuality and Giving in Sexuality

1 Corinthians 7:3-5, "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence [kindness]: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not [don't deprive] one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency [lack of self-control]."

Biblical Foundations

Sexuality is Pleasurable

Proverbs 5:18-19, "Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished [intoxicated] always with her love."

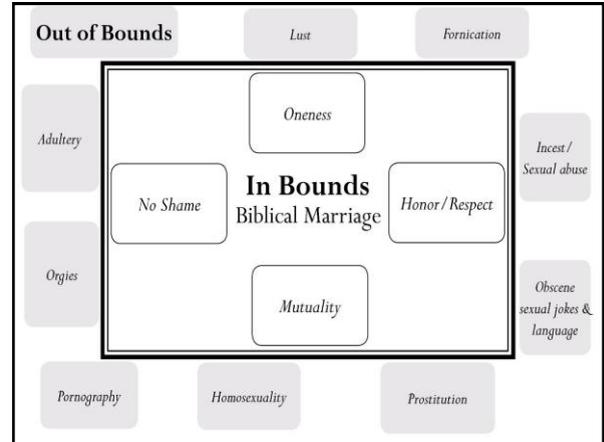
No Shame

Genesis 2:25, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

Boundaries to Protect Sexuality

Hebrews 13:4, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

1. Protecting Sexuality and Living the Core Four



Core Four Explained

- Mutuality:** while either spouse can initiate sexual intimacy, they agree together to any sexual behavior.
 - Neither spouse feels forced, coerced, or controlled.
 - Each spouse seeks to meet the other's sexual needs.
- Oneness:** sexual intimacy bonds the couple's marriage and strengthens their sense of being one ("We").
 - The couple experiences God's design for sexuality in their marriage.

Core Four Explained Cont'd

- Honor/Respect:** each spouse feels prized by the other; the best interests of the other spouse are always kept in mind.
 - Each spouse takes seriously the opportunity to prepare himself/herself to be sexual (i.e., in terms of hygiene, time/priorities, and mentally).
- No Shame:** the couple enjoys their sexual relationship and experiences pleasure without either of the spouses feeling shame.

2. Sexual Personalities

Sexual Personalities: Consider

- Your personality and life experiences impact the way you live, view the world, solve problems, etc.
- Consider how your personality and life experience impacts your sexuality.
- Some ways sexual personality manifests:
 - Predictability vs. Variety
 - Planful vs. Spontaneous
 - Cautious vs. Adventurous
 - High vs. Low Verbal Expressiveness

Sexual Personalities: Unhealthy

1. Expecting your spouse to have the same sexual personality as you.
2. Guilt or coercing your spouse into sexual behavior that makes them feel uncomfortable.
3. Expecting your spouse to always adapt to your preferences and sexual personality.
4. Neglecting to observe and learn about your spouse's sexual personality.
5. Comparing your spouse's sexual personality to secular, sinful models of sexuality.

Sexual Personalities: Healthy

1. Pay attention to learning about the things your spouse especially enjoys (and doesn't) and respond appropriately.
2. View it as a privilege to serve your spouse by bringing them pleasure and/or comfort by pursuing their preferences.
3. View the sexual relationship as one of blessing each other through giving and receiving.

3. Fantasy

Fantasy: Consider

- Sexual thoughts and fantasies are part of being human.
- The mind is actually the most important “sexual organ.”
- Sexual fantasy, left unchecked, can lead to sin and distortion of God's design.
- Sexual fantasy, in line with God's design, can help couples build anticipation and bless their sexual relationship.

Fantasy: Unhealthy

1. Using sinful means (i.e., porn) to ‘supercharge’ your sex life leads to distortion of God's design.
2. Comparing your spouse to sexual fantasies that he/she can't live up to builds discontentment.
3. Asking your spouse to participate in or accept sexual ideas and fantasies that fall outside of the sexual boundaries God has given or that violate the core four, is harmful to your marriage.

Fantasy: Healthy

1. In the context of a healthy marital relationship, sharing sexual thoughts and fantasies can help to build positive anticipation for sexual intimacy.
2. Healthy fantasy can help one or both spouses transition from the ‘daily grind’ of life to becoming more open to sexual intimacy.
 - Note: It is often very important (particularly for women), to start thinking about sexual intimacy, prior to the act of sex. Therefore, a husband may need to help his wife nurture sexual thoughts and feelings using the combination of things that help his wife in this area.

Fantasy: Healthy Cont'd

3. Reminders of previous positive sexual encounters you have had together can help kindle sexual thoughts and feelings.
4. Fantasizing about a time or situation in the future that you both would find conducive to sexual intimacy can help build sexual excitement.

4. Intentional Rekindling



Intentional Rekindling: Consider

- Every couple experiences times where their sex life is more or less vibrant or “on the back burner.”
- The busy-ness of life, stress, fatigue, parenting, work, etc. can all compete with a couple’s sexual intimacy.
- The Bible warns couples against being apart sexually for too long without good reason.

(1 Corinthians 7:3-5)

Intentional Rekindling: Unhealthy

1. Not being aware of your spouse’s emotional and sexual needs.
2. Using ungodly means (e.g., pornography or sexual novels, etc.) that move you away from your spouse sexually instead of turning you toward your spouse.
3. Believing you can just wait until life slows down some day to make time for sexual intimacy.
4. Allowing sexuality to become only an act of releasing physical tension and not a true connection of emotional and sexual intimacy.

Intentional Rekindling: Healthy

1. Make time for your sex life... even if that means you need to think creatively about your schedule.
2. Be intentional about creating some special times (i.e., monthly) where you are able to fire up passion in the bedroom.
 - This is a time of focused attention on each other that both spouses look forward to; not a time of increased pressure!
3. Get away every now and then to focus on your marriage and enjoy your sexual relationship.

Intentional Rekindling: Healthy Cont'd

4. Recognize that while sometimes your sexual relationship can be spontaneous, other times it will need to be planned.
5. Think about what opens your spouse’s heart and then act on it.
 - Romance, communication, etc.
 - Who initiates sex and how, etc.

5. Talking About Sex

Talking About Sex: Consider

- Couples vary in terms about how much they talk about sex.
- Spouses may miss an opportunity to share with each other how they are feeling about their sexual relationship.
- Practicing good communication and being vulnerable with each other about sexuality helps the couple to stay well-connected.

Talking About Sex: Unhealthy

1. Talking with others indiscriminately about your sex life as a couple exposes what is supposed to be private and sacred.
2. Drifting apart due to lack of communication about sexual needs, fears, barriers, etc.
 - Fear of initiating and expressing sexual interest.
 - Not expressing a desire.
 - Not sharing that something makes you feel uncomfortable.

Talking About Sex: Unhealthy Cont'd

3. Critiquing your spouse - especially during or right after sex.
4. Avoiding dealing with a sexual hurdle.
 - Shame and embarrassment about dealing with a sexual issue, concern, or question (whether an individual or couple issue).

Talking about Sex: Healthy

1. Make time to talk about what is working well for the two of you sexually and what area(s) you would like to work on together.
2. Read a high quality book on marital sexuality.
 - Solid books written from a Christian perspective are available.
 - Generally speaking, avoid secular books on this topic.
3. Talk to your physician about your sexual health, as needed.
4. Seek counsel to overcome sexual hurdles.

Questions for Reflection

- Is sex something I'm giving to my spouse, or withholding?
- Is sex something I am demanding, or offering?
- Is sex something I am using as a tool of manipulation, or as an expression of generous love?
- If God looked at nothing other than my sexuality, would I be known as a mature Christian, or as a near pagan?

Additional Resources

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