



Sexual Intimacy

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A ten-minute channel surfing exercise during prime-time television on most any evening reveals our nation's preoccupation with all things sexual—rarely in the context, however, of a Godly marriage. Satan, in an easy partnership with our human predisposition toward sin, has made a real mess of what God intended for the sexual dimension of our lives. In short, one of God's greatest gifts has been twisted into one of Satan's favorite playgrounds. In light of this daily barrage of distorted pictures of sexuality, it is imperative that God's people continue to focus on what God has in mind when He decided to give us the gift of sexuality. Obviously, the best place to start any discussion of our Christian life is the Word of God. The topic of sexual intimacy is no exception—particularly when we encounter challenges in the sexual dimension of marriage. Here are some of the basics of what God says about our sexuality:

◆ It is God's Idea

The first account of sexual intimacy in the Bible occurs in Genesis 4:1, where we are told that *"Adam lay with his wife, Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain."* The very next sentence contains a significant statement made by Eve, confirming clearly that God was directly involved in the first "married couple" coming together sexually: *Genesis 4:1--"With the help of the Lord, I (Eve) have brought forth a man."*

◆ Sexual Intimacy Is One of God's Blessings

Right after God created man and woman, He pronounced how he felt about his creative masterpieces: *"God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them ... Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was excellent in every way."* Gen. 1:27, 31 (TLB).

The Bible states further in Proverbs 5:18-19 -- "May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer--may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love."

◆ God designed Sexual Intimacy To be Characterized by Unselfishness

The Word indicates that husbands and wives are to be unselfishly focused on meeting the sexual needs of their partner (Note that the scripture is "other-person" focused): *1 Cor. 7:3 -- "The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband."*

◆ God Designed Sexuality with "Ownership" and "Availability" Mind

The Word further declares that both the husband and wife are to relinquish part ownership of their bodies to each other and that they remain available to one another sexually: *1 Cor. 7:4,5 -- "The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."*

◆ **Our Sexual Relationship is to be One of Honor and Purity**

Finally, Paul makes clear in his letter to the Hebrews that the sexual aspect of marriage is not only HONORABLE but must be kept PURE: *Heb. 13:4 -- "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."*

From these key comments from Scripture, we arrive at this description of sexual intimacy in marriage:

God intended for a man and woman to receive a blessing from Him and from each other by coming together in the sexual union. This is accomplished through remaining available to each other on a permanent and unselfish basis, relinquishing partial ownership of their bodies to each other, and honoring the sexual dimension of their relationship by mutual fidelity and purity.

◆ **The Key**

Many happily married couples with whom we have had fellowship over the years all testify to one basic discovery: The greatest blessings come from learning how to meet, and continually focusing on meeting, the needs of their soul mate in all dimensions of their marriage—including the sexual part. The possibility of steadfastness in a marriage that is based merely on physical appearance and mere sexual satisfaction is very small indeed compared to the spiritual relationship based on agape love that seeks not self-satisfaction, but instead focuses on meeting the needs of our partner. The satisfaction that flows from this “other focused” mindset is far greater than the satisfaction of selfish conquests.

◆ **TIPS FOR DEVELOPING A GOOD SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP**

1. Become knowledgeable in this area; read as much Christian-focused information as you can.
2. Keep the communication and caring lines open: sexual health is directly related to the emotional connectedness of a couple.
3. Openly discuss any and every aspect of your sexual relationship. If you cannot get past this barrier, seek help from a counselor or trustworthy mentor couple.
4. If you were told as a child that sex is “dirty” or “disgusting,” think again—and ask God to show you through His Word that this is nothing but a lie.
5. Ask God to forgive you both for any premarital sexual activity with each other or any third-parties.
6. Ask God to heal all the wounds of past sexual sin and to restore you to a place of forgiveness and purity. Your virginity cannot be restored, but your purity can.
7. Relaxation is a key ingredient in a successful experience together, so take your time and make sure you have started working through any matters that are “robbing the peace” of either soul mate.
8. Be aware that poor sexual relationships may be symptomatic of some other problem in your relationship.
9. If either mate has been sexually abused in the past, seek help together from a professional counselor or experienced pastoral counselor. It is a “we” issue—not a “me” issue.
10. Solve your conflicts and residual hurts before entering the bedroom.
11. Be creative and make love-making a priority in your relationship.
12. Don't be afraid to invite God into your bedroom by including this topic in your prayer life. He made it, and He can make it work right.