

The Christian Woman - Outline for Period 8

Sexuality

Part One: Sex and the Married Woman By Kristine Reeves
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I. Sexuality in the Scriptures

Genesis 1:1-26 God made them male and female. God invented sex. It was created by God for our pleasure and enjoyment.

Genesis. 2:24-25 For this reason a man will leave his mother and father and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were naked and they felt no shame.

Genesis. 3:7--Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized both of them were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Adam and Eve were covering more than just their physical selves. This was a spiritual issue.

Sex is not a shameful thing. God wants us to celebrate our sexuality and a pure way. Proverbs 8:19 says, "Let your fountain be blessed and enjoy the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times, be exhilarated always by her love."

II. Sex and the Married Woman

This information comes from the South Houston Bible Institute course titled, The Christian Family, and also from the Family Life Marriage Conference.

- A. Because of the marriage covenant, the body of each marriage partner belongs to the other - 1 Corinthians 7:2-5.
- B. While sex outside of marriage is immoral, sex within marriage is wholly good and is a beautiful gift from God, intended for whole-hearted enjoyment and celebration. Genesis. 1:27, 28, 31; Hebrews 13:4; Proverbs 5:15-23.
- C. While sex is not the only part of a happy marriage, it is extremely important, and a marriage will not normally be healthy when there is trouble in the sexual area.
 - 1. Husbands and wives owe it to themselves and God to learn how to remove obstacles to a good sexual relationship and how to improve their sexual enjoyment.
 - 2. The ability to freely give and receive sexual pleasure in marriage may be inhibited by wrong religious teaching about sex, by unresolved guilt over past sexual sin, by the memory of sexual abuse or trauma, by other negative experiences with the opposite sex, by other emotional problems, and occasionally by physiological problems.
- D. What might be some problems to obtaining a satisfying sexual relationship?
 - 1. Unrealistic expectations. Movies we watch, or pornography.

2. Fear of rejection.
 3. Insecurity.
 4. Past experiences
 5. Having had many partners.
- E. Give me 4 or 5 things that can happen when marriage partners deprive each other from sexual relationship?
1. Go somewhere else for sex.
 2. Communication breaks down.
 3. Rise of distrust.
 4. Feelings of self-inadequacy or low self-esteem.
 5. Overall marriage breakdown.
- 1 Corinthians 7:3-5--Husband and wife are not to deprive each other by withholding sex from each other. They should avoid having to live apart for lengthy periods of time.
- F. When conflict comes into marriage, one of the first temptations is to punish one's partner by withholding sex.
- G. In the sexual part of marriage, husband and wife have one of the greatest opportunities to practice the giving, servant spirit of Christ rather than just pleasing self--Acts 20:35.
- H. A satisfying marriage relationship grows best when a couple places value on:
1. Creating companionship. Song of Solomon 5:16.
 2. Lasting commitment. Song of Solomon 8:6
 3. Deepening Passion. Song of Solomon 4:9, 5:4
- Companionship, commitment, and passion combine to create an environment where sexual relationship can flourish. If the marriage relationship is lacking in companionship, commitment, or passion, the sexual relationship may register the problem.
1. When companionship is lacking, sex often loses its depth.
 2. When commitment is lacking, sex can seem risky and vulnerable.
 3. When passion is lacking, sex can become routine.

Part Two: Other Aspects of Sexuality B Ruth Shelburne

I want to note again that this is a CHRISTIAN woman's study and what I have to say will be in the biblical context of God's intention for us as Christian women.

- I. There is more to sexuality than sexual intercourse. Any single person wanting to come to terms with sexuality must be clear about this. Sexuality - all that it means is to be male or female - is built into every aspect of our being. Thus the single person, no less than the married person, is called to embrace and celebrate God's gift of sexuality.

- II. Controlling sexual desire while single:
 - A. Be careful about what you feed on mentally: reading, TV, Internet, music, movies
 - B. Control fantasizing
 - C. Make an unmistakable commitment to purity for Jesus' sake.
 - D. Limit time spent alone with date or fiancée.
 - E. Talk openly with each other about the problem.
 - F. Don't flirt with someone you have no right to.
 - G. Don't confuse sexual involvement with relationship.

- III. Sexuality is part of spirituality.
 - A. Sexuality is not only God's gift; it is God's way of demonstrating that femaleness and maleness each express aspects of the God's nature. This is made clear in Genesis 1:27.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

To fully live one's womanhood is to reverence the mystery of being made in God's image.
 - B. God did not limit the gift of sexuality to those who He foreknew would marry. But the gift of sexual intercourse He ordained exclusively for those who marry. This is unequivocal in scripture, and we should make no apology for it. There are no exceptions. Elizabeth Elliott says that intercourse without total commitment for life is demonic. I don't know that I would go that far, but I certainly feel that sexual intercourse involves more than just two bodies - it also involves two spirits. I am saying that sexual intercourse is not just physical, it is also spiritual. This supreme intimacy was mysterious even to Paul, who wrote in Ephesians 5:28-33,

Husbands should love their wives as their own bodies...The two shall become one. This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the Church.

The church is called the bride of Christ. No stronger language could have been found to denote the intimacy which exists between Christ and His church. Unquestionably it is because of these mysteries that physical union is reserved for husband and wife, two who have given themselves unconditionally to one another before God and the world. They enter into "knowledge" which no one else is permitted to enter. It has been called the inner sanctum of human knowledge.

III. The male viewpoint on sex.

Kristine has talked to us about sexuality from the woman's viewpoint. Now let's look at some comments from the male point of view (see handout):

A. The difference between lust and a normal sexual response:

There are a lot of Bible verses that speak out against lust. In the recent past, lust was thought to be a men-only problem. That is no longer true. Women are becoming equal in this area as well. Some scripture references are

I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl. - Job 31:1

But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. - Matthew. 5:28

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God. 1 Thessalonians. 4:3-5

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. - Hebrews 13:4

These just scratch the surface. Scripture is not vague and we don't have to wonder how God feels about sexual acts. Lust feeds into sexual sins such as pre-marital sex, extramarital sex, and it can lead to bondage to such things as pornography and masturbation. There are many excuses given for lust and feeding a sexual sin. These excuses are self-deception or come from the enemy himself. There is no prophylactic for the conscience.

It is not a sin to notice that someone is attractive - male or female. Even temptation is not a sin, but we sin when we act on the temptation or fantasize about it or intend to act if we get the opportunity.

B. His needs - her needs

1. Help him and you will help yourself. It is just as important for a man to understand his wife's needs as it is for a woman to understand her husband's needs. But a wise wife who wants to strengthen her marriage will do her best to understand and meet her husband's normal needs. A husband's selfish behavior needs to be confronted in the right spirit. Yet Christians are different in that we are taught to bless those who curse us, to return good for evil, to do the loving thing to the other person even when that person is not loving to us. Returning evil for evil only furthers the damage to the relationship.
2. The sexual responses of man and woman are different psychologically and physically. Knowing these differences can help a couple to please and serve each other in a giving way.
 - a. Physically, a man is aroused and ready for sex almost at once, while a

woman's arousal and preparation are gradual. A man is more aroused by sight than a woman.

- b. Psychologically and emotionally, men and women have different "keys" to full, warm and unrestricted giving in sex.
 - 1) The wife's greatest need is relationship, before she can give freely in sex.
 - 2) The most frequent complaint of women about their marriages is that their husbands do not communicate with them or relate to them on a serious level, and neglect them except when they want sex.
 - 3) Men's greatest complaint is their wives not being turned on enough to sex. The husband's greatest need is responsiveness, real sexual interest on the part of his wife. He is made that way. His strong interest in sex does not mean he is a Neanderthal. It means he is a normal man. Women can enjoy sex as much as men, but men and women are wired differently in terms of what arouses them and what is required for good sex. For example, men are more visually stimulated than women. Women respond more to words and caresses.
 - 4) Improvement in the sexual relationship can start immediately when either partner really works on the "key" that relates to him or her.
 - 5) Trouble in other areas will affect the sexual relationship and vice versa. Getting closer sexually can help a couple work out other problems. Dealing with other problems can free the couple psychologically to give again in sex.

IV. One of the greatest gifts you can give your husband:

The wife's responsiveness and positive interest in sex is far, far more important to the husband than a perfect body. Her own response and arousal is half of the husband's enjoyment during sex. If a wife really wants to gift her husband, let her be willing for him to start foreplay spontaneously, in unusual times and places. She has a choice how she responds - she can choose to give a positive response and bless both her husband and herself; or she can be negatively preoccupied and impatient. She can feel a thrill that she still attracts her husband that way. She can treat him as a bother, or she can be thankful that he chooses to open his packages at home and not somewhere else. Holy marriage is the only place where it is not only permissible but right for a woman to seduce her man. For her to think of sex before he does, for her to sometimes initiate, for him to come to bed and find her dressed (or undressed) for sex, makes him feel like the luckiest husband in the world. Such a man is much less vulnerable to outside temptation, for so few husbands have what he has at home.

Nothing puts a man down like being rejected sexually when he makes advances. This is so painful to the male ego and so frustrating to his need that sometimes a man will actually stop approaching his wife sexually rather than risk rejection. Of course there are times when a wife truly is not up to having sex and a sensitive husband will accept this.

V. About female frigidity:

- A. It may be that the man's overall treatment or neglect of his wife has made her emotionally unable to respond sexually. That doesn't diminish his hurt and anger when she turns away. In such situations a vicious cycle develops where each spouse's resentful reaction provokes the other and feeds the destruction of the relationship.
- B. It is urgent for one or both partners to break the cycle on their respective sides. They have to communicate frankly about their reactions to each other and agree to the behavior modifications that will reduce the problem both ways. But even if only one partner recognizes the problem, that partner should do what he or she can to control the damage and break the cycle of negative response and counter-response. That often seems humanly impossible, unless people know how to hand their resentments up to God, and to communicate in a way that does not put the other person on the defensive.
- C. Only a small percentage of sexual dysfunction in males or females is organic and physical. Most is psychological and emotional, and some is simply due to ignorance. If a woman is frigid, it often has to do with distorted parental or religious attitudes about sex; resentment at her husband's relational neglect, his insensitivity or other abuse; shame or revulsion from her own experience of sexual sin, abuse or trauma; feelings about her husband's sexual experience with other women; or resentment and shame for things that happened between the couple before marriage. Opening up these emotions, facing them honestly, and resolving them through steps taught in scripture, can make a big difference. So can recovering the Biblical view of sex as pure and wonderful within holy marriage. Sometimes Christian counseling or even Christian sex therapy is necessary, but things can be a lot better. There is healing.

All of us have differing ideas, expectations, and standards about sex. Especially men differ from women. A satisfying sex life is the result of a satisfying marriage relationship. Sex is a thermometer that can measure your individual well-being and the health of your relationship.

VI. Sex in marriage can be improved by understanding differences such as:

	MEN	WOMEN
ATTITUDE	Physical	Relational
STIMULATION	Compartmentalized	Holistic
	Body-centered	Person-centered
	Sight	Touch
	Fragrance	Attitudes
	Actions	Words
NEEDS	Respect	Security
	To be physically needed	To be emotionally needed
	Physical expression	Intimacy
SEXUAL RESPONSE	Acyclical	Cyclic
	Quick excitement	Slower excitement
	Difficult to distract	Easily distracted
ORGASM	Shorter, more intense	Longer, more in-depth
	More physically-oriented	More emotionally-oriented.

When you focus on _____
COMPANIONSHIP

COMMITMENT

PASSION

Your attitude toward sex tends to:
be tender and pleasurable.
be an expression of the overall relationship.
begin with conversation and time together.
be deep and meaningful.
be the most profound experience of life.
be a very serious thing.
be fun.
be explosive and impetuous.
be playful and passionate.

Elisabeth Elliott writes to women:

The essence of sexual enjoyment for a woman is self-giving. Give yourself wholly, joyfully, and hilariously. (Have we ever talked about the hilarity of sex? No one had prepared me for how rollicking it can be at times!) You will want to bring forth, for your lover, your own treasures. They are not to be revealed ahead of time to him nor in retrospect to anyone else. These are your own gifts, unique and exceptional and not to be delivered over to the commonplace. Hold them sacred. It has been said "My moments signed by God need not be appraised in the marketplace."

One last thing I want to address is sex manuals, videos, adult videos. Unless they are produced by very careful Christians, I think they are suspect, and certainly some border on pornography.

Elisabeth Elliott writes:

There was a man in one of my Greek classes when I was in college who, when we would be discussing at great length some particle or mood in a New Testament passage, would mutter, "If you get too technical you're going to miss the blessing." So with sex, beware of some of the how-to-do-it books. Sometimes there is danger in analysis. You can't examine a burning coal by carrying it away from the fire. It dies in the process. There is something deadly about the relentless scientific probe into the mechanics of sexual activity reducing this precious gift not merely to banality but to a bodily function as devoid of meaning for the human being as it is for an animal.

When God made man and woman he said it was 'very good' and that certainly included sex. God ordained sex before the fall, and His intention was that it should bless our lives, give us pleasure, and populate the earth.

Unwin writes:"

The energy which holds a society together is sexual in nature. When a man is devoted to one woman and one family, he is motivated to build, save, protect, plan, and prosper on their behalf. However, when his sexual interests are dispersed and generalized, his effort is invested in the gratification of sensual desires. Any human society is free to display great energy or to enjoy sexual license; but they cannot do both for more than one generation."

This is seen clearly in the rise and fall of the Roman Empire.

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Extra Handout: The sexual relationship from the male viewpoint:

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