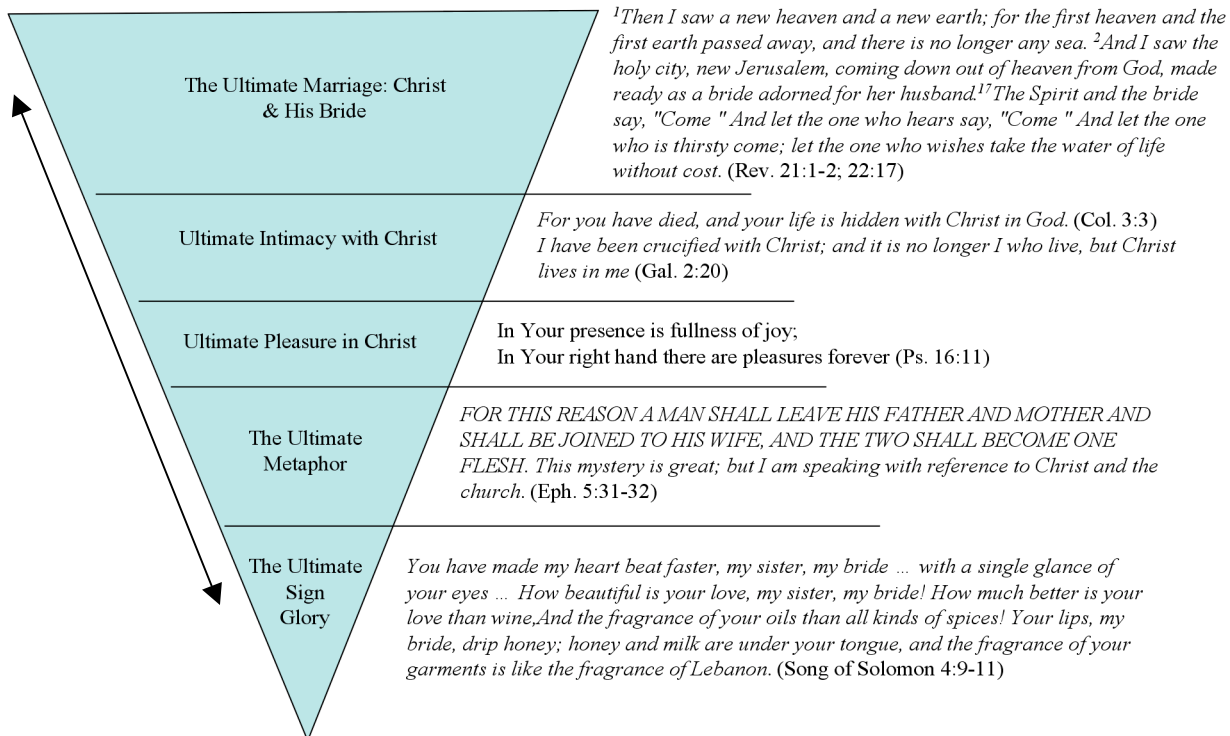


Theology of Sexual Intimacy in the Marriage Bed

“The young man who rings the bell at the brothel is unconsciously looking for God.”
Bruce Marshall—*The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith*

“Two radical points: (1) The first is that sexuality is designed by God as a way to know God in Christ more fully and (2) the second is that knowing God in Christ more fully is designed as a way of guarding and guiding our sexuality” (Piper, *Sex and the Supremacy of Christ*, 26)



Sexual Intimacy in the Marriage Bed Points Us to God

“The language and imagery of sexuality are the most graphic and most powerful that the Bible uses to describe the relationship between God and his people—both positively (when we are faithful) and negatively (when we are not)” (Piper, 26).

Struggles in the Marriage Bed

Differences in Sexual Desire

- How often does the average husband and wife think about having sex?
 - Average husband ~ multiple times per day
 - Average wife ~ 2-4 times per month
- Is this difference due to God's created design or the fall (sin)?
 - What is the hormone that drives the wife's sexual desire? Estrogen. Estrogen's impact on sexual desire is like a "warm gentle summer breeze"—at the peak of estrogen (~10-12 days of the menstrual cycle) a wife might agree, "Yes, let's make love."
 - God's design is beautiful ... at the peak of estrogen, the wife's body is set up for optimum pleasure and ability to conceive ...
 - Ovaries release eggs, vaginal elasticity & lubrication is high
 - Towards and during menstruation,
 - Estrogen drops to its lowest level—minimum vaginal elasticity & lubrication
 - Progesterone reaches its highest—the body retains water (bloating) and the body aches (tender breasts and aching back).
 - The wife does not feel sexual or have much sexual desire
 - What is the hormone that drives the husband's sexual desire? Testosterone. Testosterone's impact on sexual desire is like "a gale force hurricane"—stays constant and even increases during times of physical activity.
- Differences in Sexual Desires Due to God's Created Design
 - Due to the significant hormonal difference, perhaps a part of the difference in sexual desires is due to God's created design.
 - If God designed a difference, what is God's purpose for this difference in sexual desire?
 - **For the Husband**
 - **Sacrificial love**—this is no more practical way to teach the husband how to love with his wife's interest in mind. Therefore, it is not romantic or attracted to whine or beg your wife to make love—respect her stated desires.
 - **Service**—the marriage bed is not just about you as the husband but provides yet another area to serve your wife.
 - **Self-control**—the last fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23.
 - **Satisfaction in Christ**—during times of abstinence, the Lord will teach you He is the ultimate source of true and lasting joy and pleasure (Psalm 16:11; Matt. 5:6). Though God created sexual relations between husband and wife to be thoroughly satisfying and pleasurable; however, you have to believe the One who created your sexuality and your ability to experience sexual pleasure can overwhelm us like no other! Even more, when God made marriage between husband and wife to be a picture of the relationship between Christ and his bride, the church, you have to believe the all-wise God also had the marriage bed in mind! Therefore, the sexual pleasure between husband and wife is meant to point us to the ultimate joy and pleasure found in our intimacy with Christ!

- **For the Wife**
 - **Sacrificial love and service**—Gives the wife an opportunity to be the “only” one who can minister, serve and meet the physical needs of her husband in a God glorifying way. It also allows the wife an opportunity to put the needs of her husband before her own.
- Differences in Sexual Desires Due to Sin
 - **For the Husband:**
 - **Sin:** the lust of the flesh, cultivated by the habit of pornography and/or masturbation, which seeks to find satisfaction and pleasure in sexually-related activities and experiences, can cause a husband to desire sex (primarily with his wife, secondarily through fantasy) more than God’s created design. He can also sin by being selfish and thinking the marriage bed is all about him and not willing to serve her in this area.
 - **Sinned Against:** There might be times in which a husband experience a lower than normal sexual desire due to being sinned against—sexual abuse.
 - **For the Wife:**
 - **Sinned Against:**
 - Statistics report every 2 minutes, someone is sexually assaulted¹, ranging from unwanted touch to attempted or completed rape. 1:6 women have either been the victim of attempted or completed rape (sexual abuse)². We as men truly do not understand the sexual pressure experienced by most women—just as women tend not understand the sexual temptation men experience due to images of females.
 - Another way in which a women might have been sinned against regarding sex is being taught that sex was bad, evil, and dirty by well-intentioned parents, family members, or other teachers.
 - **Sin:** A wife can sinfully withhold herself from her husband in sinful ways—to manipulate or punish him. She can also sin by being selfish and not willing to serve her husband in this area.
 - 38% of women said they felt like they weren’t having sex often enough!!!
 - Have an honest talk with your husband and remember 1 Corinthians 16:14! Let all that you do be done in love.
 - Ask your husband if there is anything you have done to contribute to his lack of interest. (not respecting him, being controlling or critical of him?)

¹Does not include children 12 years old or younger

² Statistics from www.rainn.org, (Rape, Assault, Incest National Network)

B. How Do Husbands and Wives Get Over the Guilt of Their Past?

1. Confession, Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness

- Sexual sin cuts deep because it distorts and defiles God's intended picture of his intimate relationship with us as his children through our union with Christ.

(1 John 1:9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- Ask God to sever that tie and to remove it forever.
- If you are being assaulted in your mind by those thoughts or pictures from your past and you know you have asked for forgiveness, then those thoughts aren't from God.
- The enemy is throwing your past in your pathway. Ask the Lord to protect you from the enemy and to put a hedge of protection around you. Ask for prayer support from brothers and sisters in Christ!!!

(Psalm 69:5) *You know my folly, O God, my guilt is not hidden from you.*

(Hebrews 10:22-23) *Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

2. Replacing Guilt with Proper Thinking

(Philippians 4:8) *Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

(Romans 12:1-2) *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

- Remember the finished work of Christ on the cross is sufficient to cover even the vilest of sexual sin. God is fully aware of the sins of our past, present, and future when he chose to save us (cf. Ps. 139:16).

3. Guilt is no Longer Necessary

(Isaiah 1:18) Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be a white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

(Psalm 103:2) As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

(Rom. 8:1) Therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

(Isaiah 43:25) I, even I, am he who blots out your transgression, for my own namesake, and remembers your sins no more.

(Isaiah 38:17) Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.

Some Special Issues

A. Husbands: Be Sensitive to Your Wife's Body Image

- Most women struggle to a certain degree about how her body looks This may inhibit her as a lover.
- As a husband, never make a negative comment about your wife's body, even in jest.
- Find your wife most attractive when you see her grow in Christ-likeness
- Provide consistent & confident reassurances about your wife's body

Husbands—Be A Loving Mirror

"One wife explained how she was able to grow in (sexual) responsiveness: "One day on our honeymoon, I (Pam) had just stepped from the shower and, looking into the mirror, I began to criticize my body. (My husband) Bill was sitting on the bed, admiring his new wife. As I would comment on an area I thought needed improving, he would counter with how beautiful it was. This went on for a few minutes until he could stand it no longer. . . . He stood up, wrapped his arms around me, and told me to look straight into his eyes. "I complied, intrigued by the mystery of what my new husband was up to. He very seriously and lovingly said, 'I will be your mirror.'"

"My eyes will reflect your beauty. You are beautiful, Pamela. You are perfect, and if you ever doubt it, come stand before me. The mirror of my eyes will tell you the true story. You are perfect for me, "Over the last fourteen years, whenever self-doubt was looming on the horizon, through three pregnancies and baby blues, my mirror has never stopped telling me how perfect I am for him. Because of his continual confidence-building, I have grown more sexually adventurous. In Bill's eyes I am beautiful, and in his arms I am safe."

(Sexual Intimacy in Marriage, by William Cutrer & Sandra Glahn, 67-68)

B. Wives & Visual Images

- Most men struggle with visual images of the opposite sex
- As a wife, take heed to your husband's subtle or explicit requests to not keep certain magazines laying around the house or, as you may want to spend time together watching television, to not watch certain shows/reality shows that serve as a source of temptation.
- Listen to your husband if he asks you not to buy or wear certain outfits, to avoid being a source of sexual temptation for other men.

Protecting the Marriage Bed

(Heb. 13:4)—“Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

(1 Cor. 7:5) – “Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

- Never allow any other person to share in the personal and physical intimacy meant only for husband and wife
- Husband and wife need to discuss and agree upon boundaries—makes decisions easier in the midst of spontaneous situations
- Never alone with the opposite sex
- Never discuss intimate matters with opposite sex
- Discuss workplace situations—lunch, traveling in a car, business trip, etc.
- Lighting in bedroom—complete darkness can be the context for adultery of the heart

Satisfying Sex Life

- Contrary to some popular books on marital sexual relations (Ed Wheat—Celebration of Sex), the goal for most wives is not orgasm. Most men grow up with the notion that you are “a man” or a “great lover” is you experience a simultaneous orgasm; therefore, men can pressure their wives or try too hard to make their wives have an orgasm.
 - We as men cannot conceive this concept
 - Quiz:
 - When a man hears the word “romance” he thinks “sex.”
 - When a woman thinks of romance, she is thinking “intimacy—knowing and experiencing one another in a non-sexual way.
 - When a husband makes love to his wife, his goal is “orgasm”
 - When a wife makes love to her husband, her goal is “more intimacy”
- Survey of 2000 Christian married women (Archibald Hart, *Secrets of Eve*):
 - (who rated themselves as even more sexually satisfied than women in the population at large):
 - 26% Have Difficulty Reaching Orgasm
 - 25% Experience Orgasm “Always”
 - 33% Experience Orgasm 75% of the Time
 - 15% Experience Orgasm 50% of the Time
 - 10% Never Experienced
- Consider some additional findings about Christian women:
 - 80% Rather have physical closeness than orgasm
 - 70% Rather have emotional closeness than orgasm
 - 53% Want time together
 - 40% Desire physical release

Why should the marriage bed never grow boring?

- Don't rely upon *geometry* (sexual positions) or *geography* (sexual locations) to keep the marriage bed exciting.
- Your love for one another grows with each passing year, due to the ups and downs of life that you will experience as a couple. You think you love your wife (to-be) now, but your love for her will grow deeper and richer throughout your years of marriage.
- You both are changing and growing by the grace of God. You are not the person you were a year ago are you? Because of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, the Lord is bringing about change in each of your lives with each passing year.
- Over the years, you will experience one another in the marriage bed as different people growing in the conformity to Christ and with a deeper and richer love for one another, therefore your marriage bed will never grow boring.